

ERRATUM

Paragraph 13

Delete - "Results in standardised tests of reading and spelling taken around the time of entry to the college show average levels of reading and spelling below those expected of 14 year olds."

Paragraph 81

Delete - "The college has further information on attainment in the form of standardised reading and spelling tests which indicates that at the beginning of Year 10 students' reading and spelling is at a level below that expected for age. "

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITBY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Whitby

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique Reference Number: 121667

School Inspection Number: 184006

Headteacher: Rachel Totton

Reporting inspector: W S Walton
1210

Dates of inspection: 13 – 17 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708207

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	14 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	N Slater
Date of previous inspection:	December 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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M Hackney, Lay Inspector		
J N Hedge	Equal opportunities	
D M Green	English	
J Seed	Mathematics	Key Stage 4
P Sellwood	Science	
	Design and technology (DT)	
	Information technology (ICT)	
	Art	
J Webster	Geography	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
M Harding	History	
	Religious education (RE)	
D Harris	Modern foreign languages	Resources
A Lees	Music	
P Wall	Physical education (PE)	Post 16
H Turton		Curriculum and assessment Efficiency

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The Registrar
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London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

1 What the college does well

- Most students achieve their expected levels of attainment and many with SEN do better than expected.
- Overall standards of teaching are good and a significant proportion is very good.
- Standards of behaviour and relationships are very good.
- There are very good arrangements for the support and guidance of students.
- Leadership is very effective and the college gives good value for money.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, especially at Post 16 and there are very good arrangements to monitor and encourage the progress of students.
- The experience of students is significantly enriched by the close partnership between the college and its community.

2 Where the college has weaknesses

- I. Not enough of students with the potential for high attainment fulfil that potential at Key Stage 4.
- II. Insufficient time is given to the study of mathematics at Key Stage 4.
- III. Insufficient time is provided for the full development of RE.
- IV. Liaison with contributing secondary schools is insufficiently developed in art, DT, modern languages, geography and PE to ensure effective continuity between Key Stages 3 and 4.

This is a good college whose strengths far outweigh its 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.

3 How the college has improved since the last inspection

Many improvements have been made. Teaching is better, there is no unsatisfactory teaching and there is more very good teaching. Arrangements for staff development are very good and there is much evidence of teachers using a range of styles to involve and motivate students.

Standards at A Level and the proportion of students obtaining five or more passes in the GCSE have improved. The number of students excluded from college has been almost halved. Levels of attendance are now above national averages and unauthorised absence is well below national levels. Curriculum at Key Stage 4 is much more balanced and its breadth has been increased at both key stages to give better opportunities to students across the attainment range.

The profile of personal, social and religious education has been raised although RE needs

further development. The provision for ICT and the standards attained by students have improved substantially. Equal opportunities policy and practice are much better. The concerns for pedestrian safety around the main entrance to college have been alleviated and the quality of accommodation has improved substantially from the building of the Learning Resource Centre. The college has a very strong set of policies and procedures in place to maintain and improve standards.

4 Standards in subjects

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

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
GCSE Examinations*	C	D		
A/AS – levels*	D	N/A	<i>well below average</i>	E

(* Average points scores per student)

Standards at A Level and the proportion of students obtaining five or more passes at GCSE have improved in recent years. In 1998 the proportion obtaining five or more passes at grades A* - C was in line with national averages and those of similar schools measured by the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students obtaining five or more passes at A* - G was better than national averages and much better than those of similar schools. The average points score was in line with national averages but below that of similar schools. The average points score per student has remained unchanged in recent years which means that the proportion of students obtaining the highest grades is declining. In 1998 A Level standards were below national averages for the first time in many years. In 1999 the college had its best ever A Level results. Standards in GNVQ courses are above national averages. Students with SEN make good progress and do very well in GCSE. In line with the national position girls do better than boys in GCSE but there are no consistent differences at A Level.

5 **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 10-11	Good	Drama, history, RE, science	-----
Sixth form	Good	Drama, English, ICT, art, RE, science, pre-vocational and vocational work	-----
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

The quality of teaching is a major strength. There is no unsatisfactory teaching although some of the work does not sufficiently challenge the most able students. Three quarters of teaching is at least good and more than one third is very good or excellent.

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

6 Other aspects of the college

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good in lessons and around the college. Very good relationships among students and with staff. Students show respect for people and property. They mature markedly as they progress through the college.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are in line with national averages. Levels of unauthorised absence are much lower than found in most schools.
Ethos*	Positive. A caring environment in which all students feel valued. Insufficiently demanding of high attaining students in some classes at Key Stage 4.
Leadership and management	Clear, far-sighted and effective. Good co-operation between management and governors.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, very good Post 16. Very good arrangements for assessment of progress.
Students with special educational needs	Well known to staff. Fully integrated into the college. Very well supported. Make good progress socially and academically.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. Very strong provision for social and moral development and good arrangements to develop cultural awareness.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Effective use of staff, accommodation and equipment. Excellent Learning Resource Centre. Some congested circulation areas and inadequate accommodation for PE and DT.
Value for money	Good value. Efficient use of resources. Improving quality of education and outcomes.

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

7 The parents' views of the college

What most parents like about the school

- V. Students achieve a good standard of work
 - VI. They are well informed about progress
 - VII. Their children like the college
 - VIII. They find it easy to approach the college with problems
- They are satisfied with homework

What some parents are not happy about

- IX. They don't feel encouraged to play an active part in the life of the college

Because of the timing of the inspection the response to the questionnaire was not as strong as might have been expected – 100 replies were received. The great majority of replies and of parents who attended the meeting with the registered inspector were happy about the provision made by the college. The inspectors support their positive views. Thirteen per cent of responses to the questionnaire disagreed with the statement that parents are encouraged to join in the life of the college but the feeling of the parents' meeting was that parents have an appropriate level of involvement. The inspection evidence shows that parents are strongly encouraged to work with the college to support the education of their children and college activities.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

8 In order to raise further the standards of students' attainments and the quality of the college's provision, the governors and senior managers should:-

- . Raise the level of expectations and academic challenge for students with the potential for high attainment by higher expectations of the quality and quantity of their work and by ensuring that work in college and at home extends their levels of knowledge and understanding. This will entail a review of setting arrangements, teaching styles and differentiated work. (Paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 6, 14, 19, 21, 25, 26, 66, 68, 82, 88, 122, 129, 147, 152, 174, 186)

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

- . more time should be given to the teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 4; (Paragraphs 2, 19, 32, 101)
- . more time should be provided for the further development of RE; (Paragraphs 2, 3, 32, 38, 173, 176, 183)
- . liaison with contributing secondary schools should aim to develop common understanding of the requirements of art, DT, modern languages, geography and PE at the beginning of Key Stage 4, to secure better progression from Key Stage 3; (Paragraphs 2, 19, 35, 112, 119, 126, 146, 170)

§

INTRODUCTION

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Characteristics of the college

9 The Whitby Community College has a mixed comprehensive population of students mainly aged 14-19. There are a small number of mature students following the full time courses and during the period of the inspection several more made enquiries about admission arrangements. The overall size of the college, which is close to the national average for comprehensive schools, is similar to that at the time of the last inspection but there has been a significant change in the balance of pre and Post 16 students. In 1994 30% of students were following Post 16 courses compared with 40% this year. Because of falling rolls the number of students entering at 14 has reduced but an increasing number are choosing to remain in full-time education at the college beyond 16. The change may be attributed partly to the expanding range of Post 16 courses designed to meet the needs of students across a wide spectrum of interests and attainments. All the students come from the two 11-14 secondary schools in Whitby. The college catchment covers a wide area from Fylingdales to Staithes along the coast and inland along the Esk Valley and the North Yorkshire moors. Although the majority of students live in Whitby several live in isolated farms and small hamlets. A recent survey commissioned by the North Yorkshire TEC found relatively high unemployment along the coast and more than half of the unemployed were not claiming benefit. At present about 10% of students in Key Stage 4 are claiming free school meals which is significantly less than the percentages at the two contributing secondary schools. There are very few students from ethnic minority groups. The number of students with special educational needs is below the national average. Overall standards of attainment on entry to the college are close to those expected nationally of students at the end of Key Stage 3. In 1999 100 of 139 Year 13 students chose to continue in further or higher education on leaving the college.

10 The guiding principles of the college have been reviewed since the last inspection. The college aims to equip all its students for a successful lifelong experience of learning which will be both challenging and rewarding.

§

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11 Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 4¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	147	144	291

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 pupils Achieving Standard specified	Boys	60	141	147
	Girls	83	140	141
	Total	143	281	288
Percentage achieving Standard specified	School	49	97	99
	National	44.6 (43.3)	89.8 (88.5)	95.2 (94)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	N/A
National	N/A	N/A

Attainment in the Sixth Form²

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	62	65	127

Average A/AS Points score

Per candidate

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
School	16.7 (20)	17.5 (19.1)	17.1 (19.9)	0.9 (1.2)	1.6 (1.1)	1.2 (1.1)
National	N/A	N/A	17.6 (17.1)	N/A	N/A	2.8 (2.7)

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	N/A
National	N/A	79.1

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	27	74
National	N/A	72.5

.....
1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete Reporting year:			%
	Authorised	College	7.2
	Absence	National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised	College	0.4
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

2

2

2

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	16
	Permanent	2

2

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	37
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

2 **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

2 **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

2 **Attainment and progress**

12 Overall standards of attainment are better than those reported at the last inspection.

13 Standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science indicate that students' attainments are above national averages and those of similar schools, measured by the proportion of students eligible for free school meals. Results in standardised tests of reading and spelling taken around the time of entry to the college show average levels of reading and spelling below those expected of 14 year olds. Standards observed in the inspection at the beginning of Key Stage 4 are below those expected nationally in geography, art and DT. Previous experience and standards in modern languages are very uneven. Overall standards on entry to the college are close to national averages.

14 Many students make good progress in Key Stage 4. The most marked progress is made by those who enter with low levels of attainment including those with SEN. Last year the 21 students in Year 11 on the register of SEN averaged almost nine passes at GCSE. Twenty of them obtained passes in English and mathematics. In general students with average attainments on entry achieve the results expected of them but those with high attainments do not always achieve their expected grades. In GCSE in 1999 30 students averaged one grade better than predicted and 31 were one grade below expectation. In 1998 the percentage of students obtaining the top A*-C grades was better than national averages in English literature, music, geography, graphics and food technology, close to them in English, mathematics and history and below them in science, modern languages, art, RE and resistant materials. Over the three years to 1998, the last year for which national comparisons are available, the average points score per student and the percentage of students obtaining 5 or more passes at grades A*-C have been close to the national average. The percentage obtaining 5 or more passes at grades A*-G has been above the national average. Although results at A*-C and A*-G have shown a steady improvement, the average points score has remained unchanged in contrast to the rising national trend, which indicates that the proportion of students obtaining the highest grades (A*-B) is falling. In 1998 the proportion of students with 5 or more A*-C passes was close to the national average and that of similar schools measured by the proportion of students known to be entitled to free school meals. The proportion obtaining 5 or more grades A*-G was better than national averages and much better than that of similar schools. The average points score was in line with national averages but below that of similar schools. In 1999 there was a fall in the proportion of students obtaining 5 or more A*-C grades and an improvement in the proportion of 5 or more A*-G grades. Over several years girls have out-performed boys in the GCSE. The difference between them has been in line with national averages. In 1999 the performance of girls was well below that of the previous year and very close to that of boys. A growing number of students choose to study GNVQ health and social care or manufacturing at Intermediate or Foundation level in Key Stage 4. No national comparisons are available but in 1998 more than two thirds of students were successful at the Intermediate level and three quarters at Foundation level.

15 Standards of attainment at A Level have improved each year since 1995, with the exception of 1998 when, for the first time the average points score per student fell below

the national average. The average points score over the three years to 1998 was well above the national average and the results of 1999 were the best yet achieved by the college. In 1998 in subjects with more than 10 entries the percentage of students obtaining the highest A/B grades was better than national averages in English, art and design, chemistry, physics and electronics, close to them in biology and geography and below them in mathematics, English literature and history. There are no consistent differences in the standards reached by boys and girls at A Level. Attainments in Part 1 and full award GNVQ courses are above national averages.

16 Overall command and use of language – breadth of vocabulary, fluency of speech and quality of expression - are satisfactory. Many recently arrived Year 10 students are reluctant to engage in oral work but students gain in confidence as they move through the college and respond positively to the emphasis placed on oral work. Some students with special needs on the Post 16 Foundation course enter into discussion with considerable enthusiasm and confidence. GNVQ students make confident presentations and have a good command of technical language. The quality of some debate observed among Post 16 students of art and design was exceptional and A Level students of history demonstrate a good range of oral skills. Many students of modern languages speak very haltingly in the target language. This weakness is receiving attention and there is gradual improvement as students begin to experience some success. In response to underachievement in reading and spelling on entry, the college gives much attention to basic literacy. Overall standards are satisfactory and there are very few students who do not read sufficiently fluently to meet the reading requirements of the curriculum. The college does not place much emphasis on reading for pleasure. Listening skills are very good. Although there are a small number of students in Key Stage 4 with short spans of attention the great majority listen and observe carefully, sometimes over long periods. Overall standards of writing are satisfactory. Much effort is made to improve spelling, which is often weak, through spelling workshops and paired support but there is no common approach to spelling and written work across the college. The presentation of written work is often good and many students take pride in it. Good use is made of drafting and many students word-process and spell-check their work. There is some fluent and extensive writing in English and history. Some Year 11 students are able to make imaginative and appropriate use of metaphor and simile in their work in English.

17 A small number of students in Year 10 have still to grasp the basic rules of number but the great majority have a sound range of numerical skills which they are able to employ in many areas of the curriculum outside mathematics. In science they are able to measure, record and interpret results of experiments. In geography and science they make use of tables, charts and graphs to display and interpolate information. They measure accurately and draw to scale in DT. GNVQ students follow a key skills programme and along with those studying business education constantly draw upon mathematical skills to research and interpret information.

18 Standards in ICT and its use across the curriculum are good and improving. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection. Students at both key stages have a good range of skills which they use in lessons and in their own time. Most can communicate information through word-processing, desk top publishing, databases and spreadsheets. Improvements in hardware and software, in organisation of provision and in staff skills are resulting in the realisation of the potential of ICT as a source of information and means of communication across the curriculum.

19 At the time of the inspection students in Years 10 and 12 were still coming to terms with Key Stage 4 and Post 16 work respectively. Standards of progress in class are always

at least satisfactory and Year 12 students in particular are quickly settling to new levels of personal responsibility required by Post 16 work. Students in mathematics make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4 but because of the limited time allowed and the organisation of sets many students are unable to consolidate their learning and reach high levels of attainment. Uneven prior experience leading to the need to spend time on foundation work in modern languages results in levels of attainment below national averages. The amount of time allowed and the intermittent delivery of the statutory element of RE do not allow students to make levels of progress anticipated by the agreed syllabus. With these exceptions overall levels of progress in the college by Year 11 and Year 13 students are at least satisfactory. Students with SEN are well supported, respond well to the attention given to their personal needs and make good progress. Students make very good progress from a low knowledge base in geography at Key Stage 4 and in Post 16 work in art and design. Good progress is made in many subject areas and stems from good teaching and the responsiveness of students. Students respond positively to the high expectations of teachers but in some areas of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 some of the most able students, especially boys, are not being sufficiently challenged. Some of the work does not extend these students sufficiently and work is accepted which does not properly represent their capabilities. Most Post 16 students are motivated to do well and take their studies seriously. Many are mature people, well organised with a good range of learning skills. Systems for targeting, monitoring and evaluating progress are much stronger than they were at the last inspection. The college is committed to the pursuit of quality and has set quality standards against which it measures its performance. It has established individual and overall attainment targets and has the will and organisation to achieve them.

2

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20 The overall response of students is good, maintaining the standards observed at the last inspection. During this inspection response was at least satisfactory in all lessons, very good in a third at Key Stage 4 and a half at Post 16. The difference between the two key stages arises mainly from the increased maturity and commitment of Post 16 students. Standards of behaviour in class and around the college are very good, confirming the view expressed by parents before the inspection. Students are courteous and helpful. They respond very well to established classroom regimes and expectations of behaviour. Students behave sensibly in the very crowded circulation areas at break times and between lessons. They show much consideration for others. Students appreciate having open access to the building. Buildings and equipment are treated with respect and students are able to leave work, including advanced level coursework, in open areas confident that it will not be interfered with. Students can be trusted to use ICT facilities and the Learning Resource Centre without supervision. Levels of litter are relatively low. Students have regard for safe working practice in laboratories, workshops and PE. There is very little evidence of bullying. Any incidents are taken very seriously and followed through promptly by senior staff. The number of students excluded from college last year was almost one half of that at the last inspection. Permanent exclusions are rare.

21 Most students have good attitudes towards work. They work hard and take pride in the presentation of their work. They are proud of their achievements and work which is displayed around the college. Post 16 students are largely well organised and self-motivated with a good range of independent learning skills. Younger students, particularly those who are recently arrived in the college are much more dependent on teachers but the great majority are able to remain on task and work productively, individually and in groups,

when not directly supervised. Students grow perceptibly in confidence as they move through the college. Many of the new intake are reluctant to volunteer answers to questions and join in discussions whereas older students are very much at ease with oral work. A small number of Key Stage 4 students, mainly boys and including some with the potential for high attainment, do not feel sufficiently challenged or motivated by some of their studies and their levels of concentration and productivity are low. Levels of concentration and co-operation are usually good. In individual and group practical work in music, drama and PE they are very good and students show a good sense of responsibility as team members. Students have good attitudes towards responsibility. Older students support younger ones, students help in the library, organise events and work for charities, provide support for literacy workshops and undertake representative duties.

22 Students with SEN are well integrated into the college. Although some students have short spans of attention their behaviour is good and they are kept on task in lessons which are well structured and use a range of teaching and learning approaches. Relationships with support assistants and in withdrawal sessions are good. Several students attend support sessions voluntarily. SEN students are very tolerant of each other and teachers skilfully foster constructive relationships with them. Students with learning difficulties make significant gains in social and study skills and grow in confidence.

2

Attendance

23 Attendance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The college has placed much emphasis on the importance of good attendance. It has revised its registration arrangements and very quickly follows up all unexplained absences. The level of attendance in Key Stage 4 is broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. In Years 12 and 13 attendance is better than national averages but unauthorised absence is higher than the national average. Student absences are generally due to holidays taken during term time and to illness. Students generally arrive punctually in the morning, although on occasion there are problems with the late arrival of buses and the train.

24 Morning and afternoon registration and tutor time start promptly and in all tutor groups there is an efficient start to sessions. This has a very positive effect on students' attitudes, attainment and progress. Registers are taken in lessons which start on time, but at times a small number of students in Years 10 and 11 display a casual approach to good timekeeping.

2

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

2

Teaching

25 The quality of teaching is a strength of the college and standards are significantly better than at the last inspection. The good progress made by most students relates directly to good teaching. Since the last inspection the range of teaching and learning styles has been broadened and almost all lessons use a variety of approaches to maintain a good learning atmosphere. Overall the work provided matches the levels of attainment of

students but at Key Stage 4 some of the work in many subjects does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able students. The use of ICT has improved considerably across the curriculum as has the standard of marking and day to day assessment. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or better in three quarters of them. Teaching is very good in rather more than one third of lessons. There is little difference between standards of teaching at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. Teaching is consistently strong in drama, science, vocational education and RE. It is strong in history at Key Stage 4 and in English, ICT and art at Post 16. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Teachers of modern languages have a very good command of their target languages. In mathematics teachers are particularly skilled in advanced work and teachers in the vocational area have a good grasp of the requirements of GNVQ. Subject knowledge is strong in history, art, ICT, music and science. In business studies there is a good team approach to ensure that students benefit from the complementary experience of teachers. Teachers of students with SEN know their students very well, are very sensitive to their needs and skilled in maintaining interest and motivation. Lessons are well planned and resourced with clear objectives which are usually shared with students at the beginning of the lessons and revisited at the end of them.

26 The enthusiasm which teachers have for their subjects is transmitted to students. Teachers of drama and PE have high expectations of commitment, effort and standards of performance. Some of the questioning by teachers in English and science is very demanding, requiring students to think deeply and apply their knowledge. Some of the open ended work and that provided to match the needs of students of different levels of attainment provides adequate challenge for most students but does not extend sufficiently those capable of high attainments. Teachers are aware of this shortcoming and, for example, in geography differentiated work is being developed to provide greater challenge to all students.

27 Most modern language lessons successfully employ a variety of approaches; good use of the target language, good interaction with students and good use of the OHP, but occasionally too much time is given to explanation and teachers do not always insist upon students using the foreign language. The teaching of electronics of a very high standard – challenging work, high expectations with very good use of problem solving and practical work. In drama students are stimulated by interesting material and the commitment of the teaching. The teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 4 suffers from lack of time to cover the curriculum in depth. Lessons have little variety with too much explanation and too little time for consolidation. There is insufficient investigative and group work. Some teaching of English does not allow students to express their ideas fully and insufficient opportunity is given for interaction among students in business studies. Some teachers of the vocational subjects are very skilled in the tutor/facilitator role and provide effective feedback to students.

28 Most lessons are well sequenced with appropriate time given to different activities. A very common and effective pattern to lessons, which make a prompt start, is to begin with a statement of objectives and some revisiting of previous work through questioning to check the knowledge base. Explanations, questions, discussion are followed by students working on tasks individually or in groups. The final stages of lessons are given to discussion and review. Lessons make good use of work sheets, film or video and, increasing ICT. There is good co-operation between class and support teachers to ensure that the time of the latter is used effectively. Usually lessons proceed at a good pace but occasionally, for example in DT and English, there is insufficient sense of urgency.

29 A very strong feature of teaching is the level of respect accorded by teachers to

students. Relationships in the college are very good. Reinforcement is always positive and students are given much encouragement. Students are confident of the help and support which is available to them and they readily approach teachers for assistance. They also appreciate the quality of marking, helpfulness of comments and the quick turn-round time of marked work. The atmosphere in lessons is positive and often enlivened by good humour. Homework is set regularly and students feel it is appropriately demanding. It extends and reinforces lesson work. Sometimes it is used to develop research skills and often forms the basis for discussion in lessons.

2

The curriculum and assessment

30 The college provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a reasonable range of choice for all students. In Key Stage 4 all of the subjects of the National Curriculum as well as RE, are included. The core of English, mathematics, double science, a foreign language, DT, PE, personal and social education combined with RE, uses 21 of the 30 teaching periods. This leaves nine periods for students to choose three further subject options from a good range. There is open access. The balance of subjects caters for the intellectual, social and physical development of students. The college has shown considerable commitment to vocational education, reflected at Key Stage 4 by the inclusion of GNVQ Part One programmes in health and social care and manufacturing. These programmes recruit well although as with other subjects, traditional views skew the male/female balance in some areas.

31 The Post 16 curriculum is unusually comprehensive and well organised. The relative isolation from other Post 16 provision has encouraged the college to develop extensive opportunities for students across the full range of ability. The 21 A Level courses are complemented by pre-vocational and vocational courses covering entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels of study as well as opportunity to improve English and mathematics GCSE attainment. Co-operation with FE institutions and innovative use of video conferencing distance learning systems, have introduced new studies in psychology, BTEC horse studies and BTEC childhood studies into the range of choice. This Post 16 programme attracts 60% of Year 11 students to stay at least one more year in the college. It is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of a significant and growing number of mature students as part of the community education service provision.

32 The length of the taught week meets national requirements. The deployment of teaching time is generally appropriate but there are some issues, particularly in Key Stage 4. English and mathematics are operating below national averages for these subjects, creating a tight schedule for examination preparation. The use of single periods does not facilitate the best conditions for the achievement of practical projects in DT, art and design and music. Time for the RE core programme is well below the national recommendation and this, linked to modular delivery in a cycle of subjects, limits attainment of the objectives of the agreed syllabus by the end of the key stage. Although the statutory requirements for curriculum access are met, core RE has insufficient time and poor resources, posing particular challenges for the teachers.

33 At both key stages there are good programmes to meet the needs of students with SEN. These programmes are sufficiently flexible to respond to short term needs. Provision is made mainly through the range of pre-vocational courses at Post 16 and through setting and differentiated work at Key Stage 4. Very good progress is being made in the design of programmes, with matching support, to meet specific individual needs.

34 The organisation of attainment groupings in English, mathematics and science generally works well and is based upon Key Stage 3 evidence and other data secured on entry. In mathematics, however, the effectiveness of teaching is reduced by sets which contain students with a wide range of attainments. Some optional subjects such as history and geography continue with mixed ability teaching but GNVQ induction exercises help to decide whether individuals should be in foundation or intermediate level teaching groups. The availability of specialist staffing and the structure of timetable blocks, places constraints on grouping by ability in modern foreign languages. This prevents fine-tuning and inhibits coverage of work for the higher tier examination.

35 Considerable effort is made to achieve continuity of learning between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. All of the main departments have good contacts with the feeder schools. There are regular meetings of the headteachers to refine continuity. Even so, continuity issues still have an impact on Key Stage 4 attainment in some subjects. The science department is now involved with some joint teaching in contributing schools to strengthen practical skills as a preparation for the requirements of the examination course. Skills in art and design, geography, DT and PE are less well developed at 14 than elsewhere and this creates particular problems at the start of examination courses. Students have a varied experience of foreign languages on arrival at the college. This requires diagnosis and consolidation, reducing progress and affecting examination attainment. Students rarely choose to study two foreign languages when they make their choices at the start of Year 10.

36 The personal, social and religious education (PSRE) cycle of modules is well planned and the comprehensive programme has evolved over a number of years. A committed team of specialists cover modules in RE, health education (including sex and drugs education reflecting the policies endorsed by the college governors), and the consideration of values and attitudes in the context of personal and social development.

37 Careers education and guidance is also prominent, achieving quality standards accreditation from the York and North Yorkshire Guidance Services. Very efficient co-ordination and leadership of the team of teachers, backed by excellent materials and facilities in the Learning Resources Centre, produce a fresh and relevant programme. Good partnership with the contracted careers advisors, well-designed lessons and properly planned and co-ordinated work experience, have produced very favourable comments from parents, students and employers. The guidance and advice is realistic and recognises the rather unique nature of employment opportunities in the local area. This quality provision continues through to all Post 16 students and is much valued when linked to the strong support of the Post 16 pastoral team, producing good progression to further and higher education and employment.

38 Post 16 students broaden their academic or vocational studies with a core programme for one year students in Year 12 which provides career education and guidance, first aid and options such as counselling skills, information technology and training for the community sports leaders award. All have the opportunity to participate in work experience, adding this to their National Record of Achievement. 2-year students usually take general studies, unless they are already studying four A Level subjects, with the option of taking the advanced general studies examination at the end of Year 13. The recently introduced modular provision for religious education is based upon consideration of ethical issues, designed to meet the statutory RE requirements for this age group and respond to the criticisms in the last report. Most, but not all, follow this programme, which still needs further development and improved resources if it is to meet the spirit of the agreed syllabus for RE.

39 Extra-curricular provision for sport is good although there are fewer competitive team activities for Post 16 students than in many schools. Some inter-form competitions are held. Activities take place at lunch time and after college and attract reasonable support. Music and the performing arts contribute strongly to the extra curricular events. Students are encouraged to take part in the twice-termly 'Words & Music' events. Concerts and music groups are popular, allowing staff, students and members of the community to work together, using drama, music and dance. Senior students commit themselves to a range of community events and schemes to help younger students. Letters of support from local agencies confirm the value of their contribution. Some students raise money to fund adventure travel, for example voyages on ocean going sailing ships and a recent trip to Venezuela. Despite the travel problems across the large geographical area served by the college, a significant number of students participate in after college events and value the experience.

40 There are good procedures in place to for the assessment of student attainment and progress both at a subject and college level. SATs, reading and spelling scores, feeder school data and external assessments are linked with teacher evaluations to create a good base line for projected examination grades and the monitoring of individual progress. This is backed up by termly reviews to help individuals meet negotiated targets. This system carries through into the Post 16 sector. At each key stage the value added by the college is monitored and judged by close comparison of examination attainment against national statistics. This information is used to help departments devise more diagnostic assessment systems and give developmental feedback to the students. Most departments are making increasingly effective use of the wealth of data available to them. It is also the basis for curriculum review and development. Students are clearly aware of the procedures and understand how they are assessed and what their grades mean. Assessment, reporting and recording requirements for SEN are in place. There are sound referral procedures, appropriate individual education plans and good liaison with the feeder schools to maintain continuity of learning.

41 The college has built on the positive features identified in the last inspection report and has amended the curriculum to address some of the issues it raised. Generally good progress has been made with sound, detailed, consultative planning now evident to meet the many assessment and curriculum changes which have been announced nationally.

2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

42 The college's guiding principles underpin a very real commitment to supporting students' personal development. An extensive audit as part of the formulation of a coherent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policy has identified the extent to which the taught and extra curriculum already contribute and reveals the progress the college has made in strengthening both the spiritual element and students' awareness of other cultures so as to redress imbalances noted in the previous report.

43 PSRE and RE play their part alongside other subject areas in developing spiritual awareness and self knowledge. Post 16 art, for example, offers strong opportunities and music and drama lessons provide opportunities for reflection which are often spiritual. Issues with a spiritual dimension are explored in science. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by the wide use of ICT. CD ROM and Internet are widely used

for research and investigation allowing access to works of art and settings in this country and abroad which provide cultural and spiritual stimulation.

44 Year groups gather twice weekly for well planned assemblies, alternately topical and thematic, designed to develop values related to the self, society, relationships and the environment. Assemblies during the inspection were thought provoking and well received. A Buddhist story with appropriate music set a contemplative scene for reflection by Year 10 on their roles as team members. Less spiritual but equally instrumental to life enhancement was a Year 11 assembly which developed the concept of risk-taking from a piece of cement salvaged from the Berlin Wall. A powerful and anecdotal portrayal of ethnic conflict in Kosovo was perfectly pitched at Post 16 students and moved effortlessly and naturally into prayer. These were valuable experiences for students but not corporate acts of daily worship as required by Circular 1/94 and, in this respect, the college remains in breach of its statutory duty.

45 The college's behaviour policy builds a code of conduct from clearly stated principles - respect and consideration for others, the community spirit, sense of awe and wonder, recognizing the importance of truthfulness and the value of integrity. These principles are fostered by encouraging students to consider a range of moral and spiritual issues through PSRE and tutor work and developed via a behavioural framework based on mutual respect. Students become aware of the principles which distinguish right from wrong by the example set by staff, the content of the curriculum, for example, in modern languages where environmental issues are considered, in history which deals with conflict in Ireland and Nazi Germany, and in English and drama. The policy is realized in displays around the college, the effective working of the anti-bullying policy, fair play on the sports field, safety and good practice in laboratories and in the careful moral framework in which sex education is delivered.

46 In lessons, tutorials and extra curricular activities, students are encouraged to relate positively, to take responsibility, participate in the community and develop an understanding of citizenship. Students have unrestricted access to accommodation and resources outside lesson times and the College's trust is repaid with responsible student behaviour and high levels of individual maturity. For some, responsibility is acquired via membership of year and college councils or as senior students; for Post 16 students as "buddies" to the new intake or by helping younger students with spelling or languages. There is much group work in teaching at all levels. Collaboration imbues the GNVQ philosophy at the college and social education is further promoted through productions, fieldwork, visits, exchanges and through a diversity of activities such as fund raising for charity, planning the summer ball and in the participation involved in producing the successful Apollo and College Voice newspapers. Drama and music groups feed into primary schools and the local community and there is involvement through Young Enterprise and the Science and History Fairs.

47 Students have curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to appreciate their own culture and become aware of the diversity and richness of other cultures through geography, modern foreign languages and RE and through links by email, Internet and on the sports field with students from Sweden, Australia, Japan and Austria. A World Challenge expedition has taken students to Venezuela. In drama, programmes of work like "Mississippi Burning" explore issues related to race, prejudice and justice. The canteen provides a week of ethnic menus with appropriate background music as its contribution to the geography department's well considered action week.

48 The college has been very successful in applying aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education to the enhancement of the personal development of its students. There is much good practice which has led to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in which everyone is valued and young people are encouraged to develop the skills necessary

for adult life. The ethos of the college admirably promotes social development. The recent audit will enable the college to develop further its cross-curricular response to personal development.

2

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

49 The college provides very good support and guidance for all its students. Parents have a very positive view about the quality of pastoral care. The level of support has been well maintained and extended since the last inspection. Students are helped to take full advantage of educational opportunities appropriate to their individual needs. Post 16 students value the very good advice and assistance they receive on their A Level and GNVQ courses and when making decisions about their future. Form tutors and year leaders remain with the same tutor groups throughout their time at the college and are readily accessible to students, whom they know well. Students speak highly of the quality of support they receive which, together with good relationships make a strong contribution to their progress and attainment.

50 Very strong liaison exists between the college and the feeder secondary schools which supports Year 9 students and parents very well during the transition period. Of particular note is the good pastoral care given to Year 10 students who are asked to complete a 'Settling In' questionnaire as part of their tutorial programme. Good careers advice is available to all students through a well organised programme of study and work experience.

51 Procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are very good. A common approach is consistently well implemented throughout the college and information is passed on between year groups. Attendance is very well monitored and absence followed up and the system now in place has improved the college's procedures for promoting good attendance. Parents are contacted the same day in the event of unauthorised absence. The computerized completion of registers meets statutory requirements and recording is consistently accurate.

52 Procedures for monitoring discipline and behaviour are very good and accord with the college's Code of Conduct. Teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and they develop a reliable and mature attitude towards their studies. A consistent approach towards discipline hand in hand with a strong system of commendations and sanctions ensures that the college is an orderly and safe environment. Bullying is promptly dealt with and recorded in the incident book by year leaders.

53 Students with SEN receive very good support in classrooms which enables them to take full advantage of all educational activities and extra-curricular provision. Students have access to outside support agencies with whom the college liaises effectively.

54 Good arrangements meet statutory requirements for the implementation of child protection procedures. This is effectively managed by the Head of Key Stage 4 who has special responsibility for this area. All staff are aware of procedures and have attended a training course organised by the educational social worker.

1Health and safety issues are well monitored and successfully promoted. Clear guidelines for good practice are available to all staff and students are constantly made aware of safety issues in classrooms, especially during science, PE and whilst using equipment. Good provision is made for first aid. An accident book is kept up-to-date and arrangements are made to assist any student who is unwell. Dining facilities are adequate and midday meals are well organised and served hygienically. Attention is paid to fire risk, and regular fire drills are held when the buildings are evacuated. Provision for PSRE includes a well organised programme of health and sex education and drugs awareness.

55

Partnership with parents and the community

56 Since the last inspection the college has worked hard to improve its contact with parents and to establish a high profile within the local community. A good partnership has been developed with parents and most are very supportive. They feel that the college encourages them to play an active part in students' learning. All students have a personal planner and parents assist the college by signing each week to agree that homework assignments have been completed on time. Good home/college links have been established by form tutors and year leaders who contact parents directly on issues such as attendance, underachievement and the celebration of success. In accordance with statutory requirements, the newly produced home/college agreement was forwarded to parents at the start of the new term and a group of parents are currently monitoring the agreement in action.

57 The parents of students with SEN are well informed about individual education plans and the progress being made. The majority of parents support the College well by attending regular review and assessment meetings.

58 The quality of information provided for parents is very good and the majority of parents feel well informed. The prospectus is very well presented and contains helpful information about the curriculum and the College's organisation. Regular consultation evenings are held in each year group and good opportunities are provided for parents to understand the curriculum. For example, parents are invited to attend consultation evenings with group tutors and the careers adviser. There are workshops for Year 10 study skills and Year 11 revision skills, as well as the opportunity to discuss subject/course choices with individual subject tutors. Annual reports meet statutory requirements and provide information on attainment, progress and targets for improvement.

59 The college's community links are strong and provide students with enriched experience as a result of their involvement. Mature students work alongside Year 12 students on some courses and both share research facilities in the Learning Resource Centre. Together with the feeder secondary schools and local primary schools a good partnership has been developed with the Whitby Area Business and Education Partnership and this has enriched and extended the college's curriculum and extra-curricular provision. Post 16 students, for example, assist at the annual Whitby Primary Science and Technology Fairs, and the college hosts such events as the Year 8 Equal Opportunities Conference for secondary schools, work experience 'thank you' evening for employers, and the Whitby Schools Art Exhibition. Very good liaison and curricular links have been established with Scarborough Sixth Form College, University of Hull, Redcar College,

Bishop Burton College of Agriculture and Yorkshire Coast College embracing the Post 16 provision.

60 Many students are involved in community projects. Whitby ArtNet provides the college with mutual support from a variety of artists and Year 12 and 13 students work with Media Vision on the development of production skills. The Youth Enquiry Service/Community Education enabled Year 12 GNVQ Art and Design students to design new marketing material and a logo. Year 13 Art and Design are working on developing a new image for the coffee bar area at Rafter's. A project to improve areas of Pier Road with Whitby Seafront Traders Association also involved students. Two students recently designed the new regalia for Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay Town Crier. Students support a variety of national and local charities and decide which charity they wish to support through the student council which provides them with a good opportunity to make decisions and to experience the nature of society and citizenship.

61 The college's links with local business and industry are very strong and make a very positive contribution to students' progress and achievement. Many students are actively involved in young enterprise. All students go out into the community for work experience which is well organised and provides good experience of the world of work. The college has a good work experience partnership with British Steel on Teesside. Local employers provide students in Year 10 with a variety of work experience placements, and students in Year 11 have the opportunity for extended work experience through the Bridging Project. Students in Year 12 arrange work experience or shadowing on placements related to their studies or intended careers.

55 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

55 Leadership and management

62 The management strengths reported at the last inspection have been maintained. The college has now a complete range of policy statements, including equal opportunities and SEN, which are reviewed regularly. It has been very successful in meeting the objectives of its action plan, written in response to the outcomes of the last inspection.

63 The college benefits from thoughtful and intelligent leadership from the governing body, the headteacher and the senior management. There is a shared commitment among management and staff to the pursuit of quality and to achievement through caring. Lines of communication are very clear. Governors are well informed through links with the management and the faculties. The attachment of senior managers to faculties provides effective short direct lines of communication between senior and middle managers. The headteacher and senior team are very sensitive to what is happening. The college is a listening organisation. Faculties and departments are well led and managed although better co-ordination of the two language departments would be helpful.

64 The governors contribute effectively to decision and policy making and there is a clear and appropriate division between their policy-making role and the management role of the headteacher. Governors are closely involved in the production of the development plan

and have recently reviewed the structure of their sub-committees and timing of their meetings to ensure that financial and educational planning are fully integrated. They have developed long term projections to seek to anticipate future demands on college resources but to some extent these have been confounded by the increased in Post 16 staying on rates. They meet their statutory obligations except that there is no daily act of collective worship.

65 There is a very good development plan for the college and the faculties which sets out longer term intentions and priorities and detailed requirements for the present year. Faculty plans have regard for overall college targets. There is a clear planning cycle which begins with a review of the effectiveness of the plan of the previous year. Targets, success criteria, costs and training implications are clearly identified in the annual plan.

66 Since the last inspection the college has been very effective in carrying through its action and development plans. Levels of attendance have improved substantially through the communication to students and parents of its importance and rigorously following up all cases of unexplained absence. A radical review of Key Stage 4 curriculum has enabled all students to follow a very broad and balanced curriculum whilst maintaining flexibility to respond to individual need. Vocational courses have been further developed at both key stages to improve the inclusiveness of the provision. Greater importance has been given to the PSRE, general studies and RE programmes, all of which have discrete timetable allocations and continue to be areas for development. The quality and quantity of provision for ICT and the standards attained by students have improved substantially. Specialist staff, in-service training, up to date equipment and software and new courses have all contributed to improvement in work across the curriculum. The equal opportunities policy is more comprehensive and far-sighted than found in many schools. Work has taken place with students in the feeder schools to try to avoid gender imbalances in subject options in Key Stage 4. In-service training for staff has raised awareness of gender issues and considered teaching and learning styles to improve motivation of boys and girls respectively. A range of overseas contacts have been established. Much work has taken place and continues to take place on the development of teaching and learning styles. It has resulted in structural changes in the curriculum, for example in the development of GNVQ courses, in raised awareness among staff and encouragement to extend their practice, in a requirement to introduce a range of teaching styles in schemes of work and in improved facilities for independent learning and research. In most lessons the work set is appropriate to the levels of attainment of students but there is some evidence of insufficient challenge and extension for high attaining students. The college is seeking Investors in People (IIP) status and in response to a review of its staffing systems it has made a number of beneficial changes so that, inter alia, its arrangements for the development of staff are very good indeed. The concerns for pedestrian safety around the main entrance to the college have been alleviated by the separation of vehicle and pedestrian access.

67 The arrangements for monitoring, review and evaluation effectively embrace all areas of college activity. There is a real commitment to quality which increasingly informs behaviour. The college is making good use of the Teacher Training Agency statements on good teaching, learning and management to inform quality practice. Teacher review and development takes place against agreed quality statements. Time is provided to allow the developmental review of all teaching staff although at this time these arrangements do not extend to all non-teaching staff.

68 The ethos of the college reflects the commitment to caring and inclusiveness. Students are secure and confident of the support of staff. Staff go to great lengths to respond to individual needs. The recent financial grant to enable the development of more

individual learning programmes acknowledges this attitude. There is an enthusiasm for learning among staff and the majority of students but insufficient academic rigour to challenge all high attainers at Key Stage 4. At the same time students grow in confidence as they move through the college and many come to recognise that they are capable of more than they thought possible. The well considered equal opportunities policy relates well to the aims of the college. The college has worked hard to modify stereotypical views of courses and employment. There is no evidence of bias or discrimination. Policies, management and support for students with SEN, including those with statements, are strong. Effort and achievement are celebrated and students feel valued and respected. The great majority of students enjoy being at the college and their parents think highly of it.

55

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

69 Overall there are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers for the teaching of all curriculum subjects, and they are well deployed. The ratio of students to teaching staff, at 15.5:1, is more favourable than the national average for comprehensive schools, reflecting the high proportion of Post 16 students in a 14-19 college. The high turnover of staff referred to in the last report continued until 1998 but has now leveled off with only three new teachers joining in September 1999. The faculty of mathematics is currently understaffed and full time teachers have very little non-teaching time but the college expects to resolve this situation by January 2000. The gender imbalance in senior posts, referred to in 1994, continues to apply. Women are significantly under represented among heads of faculties.

70 Teachers and students are well supported by the college's skilled and hard working non-teaching staff. The reservation in the last report about the need for more technical help is no longer applicable. The departments of French and German would benefit from the employment of foreign language assistants to help with the large number of students needing oral practice for their external examinations.

71 Documentation and procedures for the induction, review and professional development of all staff follow the exacting "Investor in People" guidelines and are clear, effective and much appreciated by staff. Staff new to the college receive very good support at all levels. The annual review of performance, linked to classroom observation and self assessment, is effective in identifying the professional needs of staff, many of whom have received in-service training in such areas as the use of ICT and leadership skills. The high standards in this area mentioned in the last report have therefore been maintained and developed.

72 The college has pleasant, spacious and well appointed accommodation, much of it purpose built for specialist use. The buildings and site are kept in very good order by the site manager and caretaking staff. Well presented collections of students' work are on display in classrooms, corridors and central areas of the college. Since the last inspection there have been a number of significant improvements. The construction of the excellent new Learning Resource Centre (LRC) has at the same time resolved the issue of pedestrian and vehicle traffic sharing the same narrow front approach to the college. New areas for art, business studies and ICT have greatly enhanced the teaching of these subjects. Ramps have been built on the ground floor to provide wheelchair access, but,

apart from the LRC where the stairs have been fitted with a lift, the first floor accommodation is inaccessible to wheelchair users.

73 There are a few remaining areas in the college which do not promote the highest standards. The design and technology rooms are not large enough to allow students to engage properly in design activities. The playing field, although close by and of good quality, does not provide enough area for games in a college of this size. The gymnasium is in need of refurbishment and is still inadequately cleaned. The German teaching rooms are separate from each other. This prevents good communication and central storage of resources. The lobbies and entrance doors to the two mobile units used by French and German are in a poor state of decorative repair. The problems of congestion in C Block, highlighted in the last report, still remain to be addressed, particularly on the first floor. Also, the ramp leading to the C Block entrance is a potential safety hazard as it provides a sheer drop to concrete at its highest point and is not marked or stepped in any way.

74 The provision of learning resources for most areas of the curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. Technology equipment throughout the college is now abundant and up to date; the ratio of one computer to seven students is significantly more favourable than the national average. The RE department, however, has no resources for the teaching of world faiths other than Christianity and has no textbooks for the statutory course in religious education. In both science and modern foreign languages there are insufficient textbooks to allow students in Key Stage 4 to keep them at home for private study.

75 The Learning Resource Centre, with its central library area and rooms for careers, quiet study and ICT, provides an outstanding resource for students, staff and members of the community. The centre is very well managed by far sighted staff who vigorously promote it so that it is well used in and out of lessons and after college. Subject staff make increasing use of the centre. The ratio of books to students is rather below the recommended level of 10:1, but the stock is increasing as interest grows and there is a large amount of material available electronically through CD Rom and the Internet.

76 Good use is made of resources outside the college. There is a wide range of visits made by subject departments to museums, art galleries and the theatre. Field work is well used in geography and students broaden their experience with residential visits in the UK and annual trips to Europe and beyond. The recent art visit to Paris and the German trip to Berlin were well subscribed and highly successful.

55 **The efficiency of the school**

77 The financial procedures are very sound and well documented. Guidance on them is clearly published for all budget holders. Each month, detailed cumulative budget summaries with explanatory notes are presented to the senior management team, the governors and each of the listed budget holders in the college. There are effective systems to encourage value for money purchasing of resources. The college is seeking to streamline the maintenance and servicing of the college buildings and grounds by using approved local contractors. All privately raised funds for short term projects, visits and extra curricular events are processed through the College account, which has charitable status. This account is independently audited. The county audit office has recently evaluated the

college financial procedures and public accounts and a satisfactory report has been received. The few relatively minor issues which were identified, have been promptly addressed.

78 The strategic management of the resources is effective. Expenditure is prudently managed to deliver the aims and objectives of the college and to support the curriculum developments identified through the whole college and departmental planning procedures. College development plans and linked policy decisions are clearly costed. Priorities are now considered in the context of the overall budget by the full Board of Governors so that decisions are taken more speedily. There is long term planning, such as the scheme to improve the college and community arts facilities. During the last two years a substantial sum has been set aside for this, linked to strategies to attract matching external funding. Funds available for the support of students with SEN are appropriately used. Grants from the European Social Fund now help the college to produce a realistic balanced budget.

79 Deployment of the income is generally well managed although this year the Post 16 sector is subsidising the delivery of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. This has an impact upon teaching group size in some Post 16 programmes and this requires further review and attention. Learning resources are used efficiently although shortages of individual textbooks have been noted in science and modern foreign languages and there is a deficiency in learning resources in religious education. Teachers are sensibly deployed and offer specialisms to meet the demands of the developing curriculum. The available accommodation is well used. The new Learning Resource Centre is a welcome asset and a source of pride with staff and students. This facility has helped the college to make more efficient use of other accommodation to meet some of the issues raised in the last report. The procedures in place for the management and control of resources will enable standards of efficiency to be maintained.

80 Taking account of all factors relating to the context of the college, including the levels of progress and attainment at each key stage, the college provides good value for money.

55 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

55 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

55 **English**

81 The results of National Curriculum Tests at the end of Key Stage 3 for the last three years suggest that when students enter the college in Year 10 the proportion attaining Level 5 is broadly in line with the national average although fewer reach Level 6 and above than nationally. Test scores have improved steadily in recent years although the feeder schools report that the test papers have been remarked each year. The college has further information on attainment in the form of standardised reading and spelling tests which indicates that at the beginning of Year 10 students' reading and spelling is at a level below that expected for age.

82 English results at GCSE have improved slightly in recent years and at the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998 attainment in English reached the national average at A* to C although performance in 1999 fell back. Girls do better than boys though the gap in performance between boys and girls is narrower than nationally. Fewer students attain the highest grades than nationally. Attainment at GCSE does not match the exceptional result, for the college, achieved in the year of the last inspection. English Literature is offered only as an optional subject. In 1998 over 90% of the students entered attained A* to C grades, well above the national average although the proportion of students who opted for the subject was significantly below the national average. Very few boys opt to take English Literature.

83 The department offers both English Literature and Language at A Level. The language course attracts a large number of students and many more than opt for the literature course. There is considerable fluctuation in results in both subjects from year to year although language results have been consistently well above the national average. In 1998 students did well in the language examination attaining well above average at grades A/B. In most years there is an individual student whose attainment in this examination is amongst the highest nationally. Literature results are not as good and were below the national average in 1998 and the previous year but improved in 1999 at both A/B and A/E grades. Attainment at A Level is broadly in line with that reported at the previous inspection.

84 Students often make good progress in lessons in acquiring knowledge and understanding but overall their progress in developing and extending their vocabulary and their ability fluently to express more complex ideas both orally and in writing is only satisfactory so that by the end of Key Stage 4 and Year 13 overall attainment is still broadly average.

85 Many students are very reserved speakers when they enter the college. The department has placed emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills so that by the end of the key stage many are considerably more confident and keen to participate in discussion with groups of their peers or with visitors. Students listen with care and respond appropriately. Good progress is made in some classes in group working skills and in building confidence to answer questions and volunteer ideas. Most students read reasonably fluently and encounter little difficulty with the reading demands of the curriculum though there are some students whose reading is not fluent. Writing skills are broadly in

line with reading. High attaining students in Year 11 preparing an autobiographical assignment used metaphor and simile well in speech and in writing. Students in a low attaining Year 11 class had difficulty in sustaining the range of ideas expressed in class discussion when asked to write. Understanding of a range of writing styles develops and students learn to select evidence from novels, poems or scripts to support their ideas as for example in Year 10 where they were considering the effect of the opening paragraphs of a selection of novels. High attaining students write fluently and at length and are able to sustain and develop ideas. Most have a satisfactory grasp of technical terminology to describe features of writing. Standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory and students are able to make notes, plan, draft and organise their work using a range of techniques. Standards of presentation are satisfactory and some students word process their work. Students with SEN make good progress in English especially where there is in-class support.

86 Most students in Years 12 and 13 are quite confident in discussion and make good progress through opportunities to share points of view. Year 12 students beginning the language course were considering dialect, sharing their own knowledge of regional terms and starting to define and build up a bank of technical terminology. In Year 13 literature students demonstrate knowledge of text and understanding and appreciation of literature and styles of writing. They are able to comment perceptively on the texts they have studied and have developed appropriate skills in the critical analysis of text. In Year 13, for example, students made perceptive observations on narrative structure and showed understanding of the way in which Graham Greene develops the reader's understanding of the central character's dilemma.

87 Many students have a positive attitude to their work. They are interested, attentive and maintain concentration well. Students take their work seriously and are keen to do well. When given opportunities and encouragement they are able to reflect and plan their work and to organise themselves appropriately though they are not very proactive. They listen carefully, respond thoughtfully in discussion and are willing to volunteer opinions and debate their effectiveness. Students are able to work well independently and where there are opportunities for group or pair work collaborate and support each other well. Relationships between students are very positive. At Post 16 students are serious and thoughtful in discussion. They work steadily in lessons.

88 The profile of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and a significant proportion which is good. There is some very good teaching in the department. Knowledge of the subject is generally good and staff are confident with their material. In the best lessons the material is presented with enthusiasm, academic rigour and sensitivity. Lessons are well planned, begin promptly and objectives are presented clearly. Some teaching is very lively, energetic and with brisk pace and students respond well. In these lessons there are varied tasks, clear parameters and a logical sequence to ideas enabling students, in particular lower attaining students, to make good progress. In Year 10 low attaining students made good progress as a result of a brisk start, carefully selected materials and short tasks designed to progress understanding. In some lessons, however, the pace is slow and the classroom atmosphere too relaxed. Expectations are always satisfactory and in some lessons students are challenged very well, as for example in Year 13 where students in Language and in Literature lessons were made to think hard through the use of very skilful questioning but sometimes expectations are modest, tasks lack rigour, there is little structure in the lesson and the pace is too casual. In these lessons students make less progress than they might. Classroom methods and organisation are generally satisfactory. Some teachers employ a good range of strategies but too many lessons follow a similar pattern of exposition and questioning in

which not all students are able to participate fully to develop their own ideas. Most teaching is pitched at an appropriate level for students. Teachers of lower attaining students in particular, make good efforts to provide tasks at the right level. Teachers are well informed about the special needs of students and set targets for English on IEPs. Teachers and SEN support staff co-operate well together. There are very good relationships in the classroom. Teachers are sensitive to students as individuals and know them well. There is a strong rapport between teachers and students. Work is regularly marked and teachers provide useful written feedback to students although sometimes comments are rather terse in tone. Students value the feedback they are given.

89 The department has well established curriculum planning at both stages and materials which are constantly reviewed and adapted. Some excellent work has been done together with the feeder schools to bridge the curriculum gap between Years 9 and 10. Units of work especially at Key Stage 4 could now be enhanced in a number of ways: further development of materials for low attaining students, increasing the number of planned ICT activities, the development of strategies which demand greater rigour and participation from students and the production of good quality resources. The use of ICT in the department has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was identified as a development priority. There is, however, less evidence of the use of ICT by students than in many other schools and not all teachers are confident users of ICT. Assessment practice in the department is excellent. Very good record sheets are attached to students' assignments. These provide opportunities for students as well as teachers to comment on their work and assessment criteria are made explicit. The department uses the range of assessment data now available very well and maintains good central records. Arrangements for students' target setting are very good. Extra-curricular activities are good and include theatre trips, visiting speakers, the college newspaper as well as annual participation in the TES 'Newspaper Day'.

90 This is a well managed and led department. The head of department has a clear sense of direction and provides supportive and effective leadership which is recognised by members of the department. There are very good arrangements in place for monitoring and reviewing the performance of teachers, development planning is very good and there are some clear strategies in place to raise standards at GCSE. Departmental documentation is based on sound principles but in need of further amplification. This is a stable department of specialists with a unusually high number of people able to teach Language at A Level. Extra teaching support is provided to promote oral work in classrooms and although careful planning is needed to ensure this resource is well used, on the whole the system works well.

91 Issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed particularly with regard to ICT. Further attention should be given to the development of teaching and learning styles. The department has systems in place to enable further improvement to be made.

Drama and Performing Arts

92 Drama is offered as a GCSE option in Key Stage 4. There are currently two teaching groups in both years. At Post 16 the drama department in conjunction with music offers Performing Arts at A Level. There is a small group at present in Year 13 and a larger group in Year 12.

93 Attainment in drama at Key Stage 4 in 1998 was below the national average at A* to C although the proportion of students attaining A*/A was at the national average. Results at A* to C declined in 1999 though all students attained passes. More girls than boys opt to take drama at Key Stage 4. A Level results were disappointing at the highest grades in 1998 but all students passed. Results were much better this year.

94 Students respond well in drama lessons although attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is barely average. Students make good progress in lessons with practical work. Levels of concentration are high and many students are enthusiastic particularly at Post 16. Attainment by the end of Year 13 is broadly average. Students in Year 12 made excellent progress with an animal study but in Year 13 progress in pairs creating a character's song for performance was slower in both drama and music lessons. Students make careful observation of body language and are able to empathise with character and situation as in Year 11 where students were exploring attitudes to a murder using role play and hot seating. Most are able to express feelings sensitively and with conviction. They are able to evaluate their work in groups. The technical aspects of performance develop well. Some students at Key Stage 4 have quite limited oral skills which limits the range and sophistication of their ideas.

95 The teaching of drama is strong. At Post 16 all teaching is good or better. Lessons are well planned and structured. Learning points are carefully considered and presented progressively. Lessons have a high level of challenge and students are stretched. There are high expectations of the commitment students must make to the subject. Lessons generally move at a good pace and students are encouraged and supported. Teaching rests on very positive and productive relationships so that a very trusting environment encourages students to explore issues in depth. At Post 16 teaching of both drama and music components is well planned, students are well supported and expectations are high.

96 Both drama and performing arts make an important contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students study issues which reflect their own concerns, for example racism and employment. The learning styles employed place emphasis on reflection, co-operation with others and provide opportunities for expressing a personal view. Extra-curricular activities are good. There are visits to theatres and visiting companies such as Yorkshire Coast College put on performances for students. Students involved in examinations perform their work for parents and other students involved with drama as well as to younger students in the feeder schools who also visit the college to watch performances. The department is beginning some work in the community through a project on children and alcoholism with the Cambridge Centre.

55 **Mathematics**

97 Overall standards of attainment in mathematics are average.

98 The standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have shown a gradually improving trend in GCSE since the last inspection and now are broadly in line with the national average. In 1998 the performance of girls was better than that of boys in the percentage of students gaining Grades A*-C, with the results of girls above the national average. In 1999 the performance of boys was better than that of girls, with the results gained by girls below the

national average while those of boys remained in line with it. Overall there is no significant trend of difference between the performances of girls and boys. In the full range of grades A*-G the performance of students was better than the national average in 1998 and 1999.

99 At A Level students follow a modular course leading to a single qualification in mathematics, or a continuous course leading to a double qualification in mathematics and further mathematics. The number of students entered for mathematics and their success rates has varied significantly over recent years. In 1998 almost eight out of every ten students passed, which was a little below the national average. The number entered for further mathematics has also varied from year to year. Results have shown a generally improving trend since the last inspection and in 1998 almost nine out of every ten students passed the examination. In 1999 results in both mathematics and further mathematics were not as good as in 1998.

100 Overall standards of work in class at Key Stage 4 are average. Attainment in lessons for Post 16 groups is well above the national average for students following the continuous course and close to it for those following the modular course. The range of attainment among students is very wide because of the policy of allowing students to attempt the course on the basis of GCSE Grade C. Overall progress is satisfactory on A Level courses, though it is hampered for some individual students by their lack of facility with algebra. Progress is often good in individual lessons due to generally good teaching and mature attitudes on the part of students. An unusually large number of students are re-taking GCSE in Year 12 which places a heavy administrative burden on the department. These large numbers are due in part to disappointing GCSE results and in part to the policy whereby all Post 16 students who have not gained in GCSE grade A* - C must re-take the examination. Whilst this arrangement is appropriate for those who obtained D or possibly E grades it is unrealistic for those with lower grades. It would be appropriate to develop further GCSE graduated assessment.

101 Standards of attainment in lessons at Key Stage 4 show a wide range from well above the national average to well below it. This reflects the composition of teaching groups which are made up generally in accordance with the prior attainment of students. Students enter the college with standards of attainment well up to the national average. By the end of the key stage standards of attainment overall are barely in line with the national average. At present the progress made by students over the key stage as a whole is barely satisfactory. The time available for mathematics is well below the national average. If the allocation was brought up to the national average the equivalent of 35 additional lessons in mathematics would be available to students over the period of the course which would allow the way in which the subject is taught at present to be transformed. Also the composition of teaching sets is determined by consideration of attainment in English and mathematics. Consequently not all students in a set are prepared for the same level of entry for GCSE which results in a loss of teaching efficiency.

102 Partly as a consequence of the short time allocated to mathematics at Key Stage 4 teachers limit their teaching styles to exposition followed by practice. This is well done and teachers are very skilled at explanation. The department has a good supply of resource material for examples and there is no excessive dependence on textbooks. However this style dominates and alternative teaching approaches are not used. Work on the use and application of mathematics is generally limited to coursework for the GCSE examinations. No investigative approaches precede the introduction of new theory, and students are often not significantly involved in thinking it through. Paired and group work is not used to facilitate the development of students' own thinking and limited use is made of ICT for this purpose. There is no time available for additional consolidation and practice. As a

consequence many students lack the ability to think through unfamiliar situations and also lack facility in working, particularly with algebra. The effects are carried through to the Post 16 stage where students find the algebra hard, although its use is essential in many parts of the course. The standard of teaching is good overall at both key stages. No lessons were seen in which teaching was unsatisfactory. In rather more than a third of all lessons teaching was good and in slightly less than a third it was very good. The pattern was similar at both key stages. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject at all levels, and particularly for the very demanding A Level course in further mathematics. Their exposition is good and their work on the whiteboard clear and accurate. They make good provision for homework and are conscientious in relation to marking. Their procedures in relation to the assessment of students' work and monitoring their progress are careful and are meticulously followed. Appropriate provision is made for students with SEN who make good progress as a result.

103 Relationships between teachers and students are very good in most lessons. Teachers know their students well and do their best to meet their needs. The attitudes of students to their learning are good. Their response was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen, and good or very good in the great majority. In almost all lessons the behaviour of students was very good, and in many notable for its maturity. Only one instance of poor behaviour was seen. This was totally due to the immaturity of the student involved; the incident was dealt with fairly and sensitively by the teacher. Most students pay attention, apply themselves well and take care with the presentation of their work.

104 Skills of numeracy are very important in the study of a number of other subjects, both at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. In science, skills of measurement and of working with graphs are good. The same is true in technology, where skills were observed to be particularly well developed for the GNVQ course in manufacturing. In geography not much work involving the use of mathematics was seen during the inspection but where it was needed skills were adequate.

105 The quality of the accommodation is much better than at the last inspection. Each full-time teacher has a base which is very helpful in promoting efficient teaching. The department is well led and teachers work well together as a team; good ongoing communication is also facilitated by the new accommodation. Since the last inspection there has been good development in the liaison with contributory schools, the use of graphical calculators has been introduced, and a range of curricular matters addressed.

106 The department is short of one full-time teacher, though the temporary arrangements are satisfactory and a replacement will arrive in January. However, the department also lost a part-time teacher this summer who has not been replaced. This means that some teachers are teaching very heavy loads. The problems referred to above, particularly the time available at Key Stage 4, need to be addressed in order to raise standards and allow further development.

55 Science

107 Students make good progress and attain standards which are in line with national standards by the end of Key Stage 4 and above average at Post 16. Compared with national figures the proportion of students gaining A*- G grades in the 1998 GCSE

examinations was above average; that for those gaining the highest grade was in line and the proportion gaining A*- C grades was a little below. The results were a little above the national figures for all 15 year olds and well below those of schools having similar proportions of students eligible for free school meals. The results improved slightly in 1999 with boys performing a little better than girls. The 1998 results in electronics were above average and they improved significantly in 1999. The A level results in 1998 were well above average in chemistry, physics and electronics and in line in biology. In 1999 the results were similar in chemistry and electronics and not as good in biology and physics. A level results have improved significantly since the last inspection. Until recently Year 10 students entering the college were disadvantaged compared to students in schools with a different age of transfer, many of whom cover some Key Stage 4 work after completion of the national tests towards the end of Year 9. As a result of effective liaison with the two feeder schools the present Year 10 students did some Key Stage 4 work before entering the college.

108 Students enter the college with attainment levels which are close to average and by the end of Year 11 they have acquired a sound knowledge and secure understanding of the subject matter in each of the attainment targets. Students in Year 10 very quickly learn the essentials of good laboratory practice. In the first lesson of the second week of term a group of Year 10 students carefully carried out an experiment to measure the rate of a chemical reaction. Skills required in investigative work develop well to expected levels by the end of Key Stage 4 and lower attaining Year 11 students identify variables in experiments, carry out a fair test and make accurate predictions based on previous experience and knowledge. Most Year 11 students are able to plot and interpret distance-time graphs and differentiate between scalar and vector quantities. They have a secure understanding of homeostasis, electromagnetism and electronic structures and bonding by the end of the stage. In one lesson they quickly gained new knowledge on development of the foetus. Post 16 students rapidly acquire study skills needed at this level and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. In one lesson biology students soon learned about propagation of the heart beat and those in Year 13 have a secure knowledge and understanding of processes occurring in the kidney. Those studying chemistry competently measure initial rates of reactions, understand activation energy and can interpret energy diagrams for enthalpy changes. A large group of Year 12 physics students quickly understood the nature of errors and vector resolution in the lessons observed. The department is well aware of the difficulties which are likely to arise in delivering the course effectively with such a large group. Year 13 electronic students write simple code computer programs which they test using the management software system on the computer network. Students throughout have the numeracy skills enabling them to process their experimental results and display them in various graphical forms. They are careful to use correct nomenclature and units and their ICT skills are above average. The quality of presentation is above average. Students with special needs make the same good progress as others. They are taught well, given suitable tasks and occasionally receive additional effective support. The grouping arrangements meet the needs of students with differing levels of attainments.

109 The good progress of students is facilitated by their very positive attitudes and high quality teaching. Students arrive promptly and well prepared for lessons and quickly settle. They are very well behaved, courteous and respectful. They listen carefully with much interest and concentrate very well. They cooperate extremely well with each other, working safely and productively in both small and large groups. Their attitudes to homework are good.

110 Teaching is always at least satisfactory. It is very good or excellent in two thirds of

lessons and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible to students of all levels of attainment by frequently using contexts to which students relate. They have a very good knowledge of course and examination board requirements. They know students very well and have high expectations of them. Questioning is usually skilful making students think and apply knowledge or to check understanding but in a few lessons there was not enough of it. Teachers plan lessons very well often with a variation of activity making full use of resources, time and any additional support. Practical activities are purposeful and class management is very good. Students are kept busy throughout. Most adopt a lively and enthusiastic approach and use praise, encouragement and humour to best effect. Homework is purposeful, often reinforcing and extending work done in lessons or providing opportunities for students to develop their research skills. It is marked promptly with many informative comments. In an excellent lesson the teacher first returned and discussed a challenging homework giving much constructive criticism, praise and encouragement. The group of students of mixed attainment levels then worked productively and sensibly undertaking a challenging practical exercise. The teacher moved around guiding, explaining and questioning individuals. The students were fully engaged throughout and by the end of the lesson all had assembled and tested circuits which they had set up to perform a designated function.

111 The curriculum is planned well with the electronics and Certificate of Achievement courses providing additional breadth. The latter course is successfully motivating the lower attaining students. Assessment procedures are very good and much use is made of the information obtained. There is much target setting and the very close individual monitoring using a computer program presently operating at Post 16 is to be extended to all students. Teachers are well qualified and have a good balance of experience. Without exception those most recently appointed have much expertise, talent and enthusiasm. They are deployed effectively making good use of specialisms. Technical support is of high quality. All staff work hard as a team and there is much mutual day-to-day support. Leadership is extremely strong, consultative and supportive with the head of department well supported by subject heads providing clear direction and commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. Much monitoring of teaching is taking place including mutual lesson observations. There is sufficient accommodation and most of it is in good condition. In hot weather some laboratories are still uncomfortable. Some students do not have books for permanent use at home but otherwise the resourcing is adequate. The department has responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection and is in a strong position to sustain improvement.

55 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

55 Art

112 On entry to the college students' attainment is below average. They lack a full understanding of the major elements of art and have a patchy knowledge of artists and art history. At the start of Year 10 students making drawn studies of natural forms have only a limited knowledge of tone and some experience difficulties in describing it.

113 At the end of Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are satisfactory but fall below students' capabilities. GCSE results for the higher A*-C grades are below the national average and there has been no improvement since the last inspection. At grades A*-G results are good and above average, and at this level attainment has been maintained since

the previous inspection. Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys, in-line with national trends. In the classes observed there are positive upward trends in attainment and some of Year 11 responses to the 'Jungle' project demonstrate good individual outcomes. Students have a sound understanding of colour, pattern, shape and texture. They use paint with confidence and experiment with collage and mixed media work. They are knowledgeable about the work of artists who have used nature as a stimulus, such as Henri Rousseau and Claude Monet.

114 At Post 16 the standard of attainment is good and above the national average. An above average number of students achieve the higher grades A-B. The present cohort research their studies in depth, regularly use sketchbooks for gathering information and refer to a wide range of artists in the development of their work. There is a high level of maturity in the intellectual content of students' work. This was observed in the work of one student who based her study on the work of Georgia O'Keefe. There has been an overall improvement in A Level attainment since the last inspection. The good standards reported by the last inspection team have improved. The introduction of GNVQ foundation/intermediate and advanced courses has provided an extra breadth to Post 16 art. It caters for students who have more design related aspirations. Standards of attainment in the foundation/intermediate group are good and projects are well advanced after just one week of study. At advanced level attainment is very good. Students are mature and are capable of working on community projects such as the Airy Hill Playground Project. Pass levels are very good.

115 Progress throughout both key stages and for students of all abilities, including those with SEN, is very good. Schemes of work require students to develop ideas through investigation and research; they have good content and are progressive and challenging. The majority of students are reflective and articulate when discussing their ideas. The quality of debate in class is exceptional in its intellectual content. At Post 16, students' sketchbooks are excellent and provide evidence of the progress made during their Post 16 studies. Very good progress has been maintained and extended since the last inspection. GNVQ students make exceptional progress. The concentration on basic technical skills at foundation/intermediate level establishes very good techniques and interpretations. The bag project in Year 12 introduces students to artists and design processes.

116 Students are well behaved and responsive to teacher direction. Attitudes of students at both key stages, and on all courses, are very good. They share ideas and offer constructive criticism to one another. Students use their time efficiently. The department allows open access to students at all times. Students respect each other's work. There is a sense of pride within the groups as observed in the variety and excellent quality of display, both within the department and around the college. Visits to art galleries and museums are made regularly by the department. Trips, such as the Paris visit, support students in their intellectual growth and understanding of art.

117 The quality of teaching is consistently good and very good Post 16. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Recent appointments and an extension of art courses to include GNVQ have increased the quality and breadth of teaching expertise. Students are provided with opportunities to explore and express themselves in a broad range of tasks and disciplines although the department does not provide a foundation course of study on entry to the college. However, the pace of work, criticised at the last inspection, has been improved and students are kept to a rigorous programme of work. Homework assignments are used to develop ideas and gain information. There is a strong critical studies programme that introduces students to art and artists from various cultures and historical periods. A wide range of teaching strategies are

used, including well-planned discussion sessions. Schemes of work are continuously reviewed and the art staff regularly monitor work. Assessment procedures are well constructed and students are aware of their level of attainment. Good use is made of day-to-day assessment. The quality and breadth of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

118 Accommodation is very good and each year group has a separate base from which to work. A Level and GNVQ students have their own study areas. There is a departmental library and a wide range of visual resources that are constantly in use. Students make full use of research opportunities available through CD-ROM and Internet facilities. They use the scanner in their work but, as yet, they have not incorporated digital photography, or used computers to manipulate images in their work. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and has demonstrated its potential to continue to improve the quality of students' art work.

55 Design and Technology

119 On entry, standards of attainment are below average mainly because in design students are not able to work through a design process. Practical skills are satisfactory in graphics and food but weak in resistant materials.

120 At the end of Key Stage 4 overall standards of attainment are mainly satisfactory and sometimes good. Attainment is good in graphic products where GCSE results in the higher grades A*-C is above the national average - an improvement since the last inspection. Good outcomes were seen in a Year 10 class where students demonstrated a good understanding of perspective drawing. Their freehand drawing skills were well developed and they made accurate line representations of products. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In food technology the 1998 GCSE results for A*-C grades are above average and have improved since the last inspection. However, the most recent results are below average. Students achieve high standards, for example, in Year 11 where students research, design and prepare food for airline and rail travellers and consider the special dietary requirements of individual passengers. In resistant materials, GCSE results for the higher grades A*-C have remained below average since the last inspection, although girls achieved above average results in 1998. The main weakness lies in a lack of breadth and creativity in the design element of project work. Students' making skills are good and they are capable of producing well-constructed products. GCSE results for A*-G grades are very good and above average in all DT subjects, an improvement since the last inspection. Students opting for Part one GNVQ manufacturing achieve good standards of attainment. They are confident in the application of basic construction skills.

121 At Post 16, A Level design results are below average for A B grades and have not improved since the last inspection. However, a high percentage of students gain CD grades. Projects undertaken by the present cohort are of a higher quality than previous year groups. For example, one student designed a mountain board for rough terrain and another a dry land surfboard. Another student combined creative designing and material exploration in the design of a lava-lamp chair based on the art of Andrew Goldsworthy. Portfolios are well presented and most students have a good sense of design. GNVQ intermediate manufacturing students achieve good standards of attainment. They have developed a sound understanding of basic manufacturing processes and show themselves to be capable in practical making and assembly skills. This course has been introduced

since the last inspection and is a successful addition to the DT curriculum.

122 At Key Stage 4 progress overall is good. It is very good in graphic products where students are set challenging and demanding projects. The pace is appropriate and students develop a comprehensive range of graphic techniques. Progress is also good in food technology. In resistant materials progress is satisfactory. Teachers' expectations of high attaining students are less challenging in large classes. Single lessons are too short and provide too little time for students to reflect on their ideas before making design decisions. This factor has an effect on the standards of work. The most capable A Level students make very good progress. They show individuality in their choice of projects and have well developed research skills. Others in the group are more limited in their design capability and rely on more traditional design solutions. Overall, the progress of the whole group is satisfactory. The GNVQ foundation course syllabus provides opportunities for students to learn specific skills through a full range of focused practical tasks and they make good progress. SEN students make good progress in all DT subjects.

123 Students' attitudes are positive at both key stages. They show an interest in their work, they begin tasks promptly in lessons and show a desire to learn. Their level of concentration is good and they work well individually and co-operatively. Students ask questions in order to clarify their own understanding and there is a pleasant working atmosphere in all DT lessons. Behaviour is excellent at all times.

124 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. Recent appointments to the department have improved the quality of the DT curriculum. Most lessons have clear objectives and are planned to meet the needs of students at all levels of attainment. Work is regularly marked and students are aware of their level of attainment. All projects are assessed by staff and include an element of self-assessment. This aspect of assessment is under review and is planned to include greater student involvement and a more collaborative approach to target setting. Teachers' comments on students' work are thorough and guide students towards necessary developments in their work. There is competent technician support.

125 Leadership of the department is effective. It is efficiently managed and well led. Relationships throughout the faculty are excellent and departmental staff work well as a team. Accommodation is in good condition although there remains a serious lack of space and display facilities. All workshops are small and provide limited working space. In food technology there are too few cookers and preparation space and only one third of the group can prepare food and cook during each lesson. The introduction of GNVQ courses has provided increased breadth of provision since the last inspection and the department has the potential to make further progress.

55 **Geography**

126 Students enter the College with a diversity of prior experience in Geography. A significant number lack confidence in using geographical terminology, have only a hazy understanding of place and location and somewhat simplistic geographic knowledge. From this not always secure start, they make very good progress through Key Stage 4. In 1998, 62% of the 138 students entered for GCSE geography gained grades A*-C, significantly better than the College average (49%) and the national average (51%). There was no

distinctive bias in favour of girls' performance as in the national picture. In 1999, with deliberate and successful targeting at the C/D boundary, a poorer year group sustained the trend of GCSE results improving over time. Geographical knowledge is acquired around National Curriculum themes and the requirements of the GCSE Syllabus. Fairly rigid schemes of work foster continuity and progression but do not always reinforce and allow consolidation of skills and knowledge acquired earlier and, to some extent, this is true also in aspects of the progress of Post 16 students. Year 11 students speak positively about their experiences in the subject and have a broad and often detailed geographical knowledge especially of human aspects, use terminology with reasonable proficiency and are competent in interpretational and representational skills. The relatively small number of A Level students make good progress. In 1998, all 15 candidates for A Level passed, a third gaining the highest grades (A and B), the best A Level results in recent years. In 1999, the pass rate was 90% with 39% gaining the highest grades.

127 In their first few days at the college, Year 10 students, whilst quiet, orderly and well behaved, seem somewhat diffident, reluctant to participate and hesitant in answering questions. Bonding is in its infancy, but this also appears to reflect a lack of student confidence, not always misplaced, in their ability to draw on geographical concepts which should have been acquired earlier. By Year 11, students have a much more typical response, often enthusiastic, occasionally muted, but evidence of positive inter-student and student-teacher relationships is clearly apparent. In Post 16 classes, these relationships reach their zenith and form a basis for sustained interest in the subject by students whose written work is always comprehensively tackled, diligently undertaken and completed to a high standard. Work in A Level individual studies, in particular, demonstrates an unusually high level of commitment and is diverse and interesting, revealing wide use of cartographical and statistical skills, good data collection, care with presentation and sound application of geographical knowledge.

128 At all stages, written work is taken seriously, rarely unfinished and students take pride in the presentation of their work, look after their exercise books and files and arrive reasonably promptly to lessons. They work collaboratively in the numerous opportunities for group work, interacting positively with each other and respecting the ideas and suggestions of others in the group.

129 Outcomes like these owe much to the high quality of teaching which is never less than satisfactory and often good or very good. Many of the lessons observed made extensive use of duplicated resource material and worksheets with set tasks which, although increasingly differentiated in Key Stage 4, were allowed, at times, to compromise teacher expectation occasionally to the detriment of the most able students who were not sufficiently challenged. In a Year 10 lesson on stages of economic development, for example, detailed and precise information was transcribed into mere descriptors (high/low). Conversely, a Year 11 lesson addressing a similar theme and with similar material, also married to group work, was far more successful because it took the opposite approach and drew out precision from generality. This style of methodology was most successful in Key Stage 4 when teachers departed from the script and Post 16 where the script was less prescriptive but least successful when the script was strictly adhered to and opportunities for reinforcement and consolidation of geographical skills and knowledge acquired earlier were missed.

130 A Year 13 group beginning a module on natural hazards was treated to an alternative strategy. A well planned lesson began with carefully selected and powerful video material which was allowed to speak for itself and immediately captured student interest so that their participation in subsequent probing question and answer sessions was marked by sustained enthusiasm, the pace of the lesson was well judged and excellent progress was made.

131 The department received a complimentary report after the previous inspection. In that key respect, nothing has changed. IT tasks increasingly appear in schemes of work and IT applications are actively encouraged in the production of coursework. A change of GCSE syllabus was seen as the opportunity to develop differentiated task material. Further development of both aspects of the department's work is on-going.

132 The geography department has clear aims and objectives and is self critical. The head of department is young and enthusiastic, a happy figure who gives a strong lead especially in a curricular sense and is a hard working and committed professional whose personal aims are well placed and whose enjoyment of teaching passes to those with whom he comes into contact. The college is well served by its geography department, which is in a strong position to continue to develop and improve standards.

55

History

133 Standards since the last inspection have been maintained in history. In most years examination results are above or close to national standards although the most recent GCSE results have fallen back a little. Girls reach good standards. Boys do not do as well as girls in recent years. Their attainment is well below national levels in terms of A* to C this year and this has skewed the overall picture. The difference between boys and girls broadly follows the pattern in the college as a whole. At A Level standards are good. For three out of four years all students passed and results are strong in terms of A/B grades too.

134 There are many good features to students' attainment in all years and most make strong progress, including those with SEN. Progress in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills against the requirements of both GCSE and A Level and progression from the work done in the contributing schools are good. Most students meet or exceed their projected grades. Oral skills are well developed - they are able to discuss well and to make perceptive comments. GCSE coursework shows good skills in sustained writing and in making comparisons, and it also shows real enjoyment and satisfaction from undertaking fieldwork. Writing skills are encouraged by opportunities to re-draft work with guidance from the teacher's comments. Historical skills develop well providing a good basis for A Level. Students understand about bias, the need to make conclusions based on evidence, to explain rather than describe, and that there can be different explanations for events any of which may be correct. At A Level students know the historians who are the current experts in the various areas of study and they know a little of the different interpretations. This is helped by taking them out to conferences with expert speakers. Their written skills develop well and they are confident orally.

135 Numbers are high on the A Level course, 25 this year and 20 in Year 13. This is an indication of student confidence in the department and positive attitudes towards history. Students respond well in all lessons. They persevere with a task and they work well together. There was often real enjoyment; students were engaged and interested in the topic. The new Year 10 students were keen to do well and had tried hard with their first

written assignments. Teaching styles generally allow students to be actively involved in their own learning. In Year 11 work from last year showed that students enjoy the fieldwork in particular. At A Level students develop their independence and take responsibility for their own learning. Their files were well organised with evidence of much hard work.

136 All teaching is satisfactory or better, nearly ninety per cent is good and better and it is especially strong at Key Stage 4. This is a very strong profile of teaching. Management is always good. Aims are shared, subject knowledge is good, as is the expertise in the requirements of history examinations. In the best lessons there is a good variety of methods and tasks, some very creative and imaginative. Year 12 students who were in their second week of A Level were introduced to Tudor history by two games that took them through the issues of the reign of Henry VII and asked them to make decisions and to prioritise policies. Most of them found out that they were not ruthless enough to have been a successful monarch then and that they were applying twentieth century values. Levels of enjoyment were high and understanding leapt forward. In a Year 11 lesson students were coming towards the close of their depth study on conflict in Ireland and were studying 'Bloody Sunday'. They had drawn provisional conclusions when film material was shown which introduced new evidence and brought them to revise their conclusions on the episode. There was a lively class discussion, and better understanding of how historical explanations must be based on evidence resulted.

137 The tasks set in lessons are accessible to all students and differentiated largely by outcome. Occasionally two levels of material are used. This is appropriate in a subject where there is a single tier examination, where oral participation is encouraged and students and their needs well known. They are given appropriate individual support. In all lessons the challenge is appropriate and generally there is sufficient drive and pace. Occasionally a lesson, although sound in terms of appropriate aims and content, is a little dull and requires an approach that is rather more confident and relaxed.

138 Teaching is supported by good quality marking with a quick turnaround which students appreciate. In Year 10 lessons their first assignments had already been marked in a structured way that helped understanding well: how to write good history that gave an overview of development and tried to evaluate rather than describe. Assessment schemes are developing well, using all the available data to monitor progress and in particular to identify and support under-achievers. ICT is being used well and integrated into teaching, this is an improvement since the last inspection. There was a very well devised computer exercise in compiling a table with Year 10. The Learning Resource Centre Manager worked effectively with the teacher in a team approach. History is supported well by the Learning Resource Centre with books that are well focused to examination needs as first priority.

139 The curriculum is well considered. The choice of GCSE is a good one and the content appeals to both the boys and the girls and provides opportunity for fieldwork through use of the local heritage. This has improved since the last inspection when two GCSE courses polarised the interests of boys and girls. The A Level course is working well too and is well supported by conferences and visits out. Management is lively, energetic and skilled. The priorities identified by the development plan are some of the key issues for the department. These include continuing to develop GCSE schemes of work and developing appropriate strategies for raising attainment. Links with the feeder schools and local primary schools are productive. Last year science and history through their common interest in the history of medicine combined to organise a joint presentation for primary schools on Edward Jenner and inoculation for smallpox. Several students played a memorable role as Blossom the Cow, highlighting one of the strengths of this department, that students should enjoy their history. The policies and systems of the department are

sufficiently secure to enable further development.

Information Communication Technology

140 Liaison and continuity with feeder secondary schools is good. On entry to the college students have a good and broad range of ICT skills and are confident when using computers.

141 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is at least average, and sometimes better. Students have well-established technical skills and use appropriate mouse and keyboard techniques. Most students gain experience in a range of applications and are able to communicate information through word-processing, desktop publishing techniques, databases, graphs and charts and spreadsheets. Cross-curricular delivery is very good with subjects taking responsibility for the introduction of appropriate applications. For example, measurement and data logging is taught through the science department and the use of spreadsheets is promoted by mathematics. In history, ICT applications were observed in Year 10 where students used desktop publishing software. Tasks included cut and paste techniques and the construction of tables in a project related to medicine through time. Some control is taught through DT, although this is an application that needs to be used more regularly by students. GCSE examination results at the higher grades A*-C are broadly in line with national standards. At grades A*-G standards are very good and above average. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are fully met. At Post 16, standards of attainment are mainly good. Students opting for the newly introduced A/AS Level information technology course are knowledgeable and confident in computer skills, as in a project related to the booking and ticketing for West Coast Ferries. Students used data handling with Word 97; they constructed data sources, composed invoices and designed tickets. GNVQ intermediate and advanced students are provided with a 'key skills' course. Post 16 courses are well planned and provide students with the skills necessary for application across the whole curriculum. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of provision since the last inspection, standards of attainment are now good, and in some cases very good. A majority of boys opt for Post 16 ICT courses, although there is little difference in the performance of boys' and girls' attainment in cross-curricular applications.

142 The progress of all students at Key Stage 4 is good. Their progress in specific ICT courses and in cross-curricular work is monitored by staff and is well documented. Students are aware of their own capabilities. Reporting procedures within the department are very good. They are clear and provide an accurate record of students' attainment and progress. Students with SEN are provided with support and, where necessary, alternative learning programmes, as in a Year 11 class where alternative tasks were negotiated with students. Progress at Post 16 is good; the excellent facilities and good quality computers are an incentive to work. There is an encouragement to use ICT applications and staff are supportive and provide excellent resources for all students. There has been a significant improvement in progress at all levels since the last inspection.

143 Students at all stages have a positive attitude towards the use of computers. Information technology is popular and the greater majority of students employ its use to improve the quality and presentation of their project work. Good relationships exist at all levels and there is good co-operation between students. This was observed in a Year 10

class where a student demonstrated to the class how to set up a template for a business card. They are articulate and willingly discuss their work. There was no evidence of bad behaviour at any time throughout the inspection.

144 The quality of teaching within the information technology department is mainly good, and sometimes very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is high and strategies for learning are well considered. There are two ICT co-ordinators, one with curriculum responsibilities whilst the other is responsible for administrative applications. This combination provides strong leadership for staff throughout the college. There is a pleasant and co-operative working atmosphere within the department. Most college staff have received extensive inservice support and are capable of teaching the necessary subject skills of information technology. Teachers are positive towards ICT use across the college curriculum. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are thorough and help promote good standards across the college. The network manager and ICT technician provides sound expertise and are key members of the ICT team. There have been additions to the core ICT team since the last inspection and knowledge and expertise of all teachers has improved since that time.

1 Computer provision throughout the college is very good and above the national average. The majority of computers are suitably powerful and have been purchased recently. The computers based in departments are mainly of a good quality and the network provides good coverage. The Learning Resource Centre is well resourced and students have access to Internet and there is a broad range of CD ROM provision. This provision is well used and provides good research opportunities for all subjects. A college based Intranet system is being developed by the ICT staff. Computer provision has improved since the last inspection. Poor ventilation in the main computer base on the upper floor of the Learning Resource Centre is a serious problem and is a cause of discomfort during warm weather and when the room is fully occupied. ICT is now very well organised, fully integrated in the college work and will continue to develop.

Modern Foreign Languages

146 By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in French and German overall is below national expectations. Since 1997 when nearly all students have been entered for a foreign language at GCSE, the A*-G results have been rather better than national averages. The figures for A*-C, however, have been below averages in German and more substantially so in French. At the beginning of Year 10 it is clear that many students have had a very uneven experience of foreign language learning and much valuable time has to be spent in remedying the substantial gaps in their knowledge and attempting to rekindle the motivation of those who have turned against languages. The result is that teachers have to undertake very elementary work early in Year 10 to allow such students to catch up. Higher attaining students often have to cover familiar ground, sharing sets with others who struggle to fill the gaps in their knowledge. In one Year 10 top set, for example, higher attainers could introduce themselves intelligibly in acceptable French, while others had difficulty in uttering a full sentence.

147 At the top end students capable of the highest grades at GCSE are not always achieving these because the initial loss of time in Year 10 and the broad range of attainment within sets obliges teachers to concentrate more on Foundation than on Higher Tier work, especially in the skills of reading and listening. Students have under-performed

at GCSE in these two key skills and both departments now have good plans to lay greater emphasis on them. Many students are capable of producing accurate writing in French and German using a good variety of vocabulary and idiom.

148 A Level results in recent years have fluctuated and numbers have generally not been large enough for trends to be discernible. Year 12 students are currently undertaking elementary work to improve their understanding of grammar and their lack of confidence in speaking. Students in Year 13 have greater oral confidence, especially those who joined the recent college trip to Berlin. Their written coursework shows signs of maturity and a sound grasp of ideas and the complexities of grammar.

149 At Key Stage 4 the progress most students make over the two year period is satisfactory, taking into account the relatively low point at which they start in Year 10. In many lessons progress is strong, promoted by demanding teaching and a gradual improvement in motivation as students begin to experience some success. Low attainers and those with SEN also make sound progress, especially in speaking where many are able to talk about themselves and their family in elementary German or French. They are also capable of well presented written work using the college computers. Progress is largely responsive to the quality of teaching. Where this is brisk and challenging and allows students every opportunity to participate actively, they make strong headway in their acquisition of new language and the skills to express it. In a Year 10 German set of higher attainers, for example, strong gains were made in the understanding of simple verbs through sensitive teaching that made very good use of visual images to stimulate response. In a small minority of cases where teaching does not give students the best chances to practise new language, progress is not as strong. At Post 16 students also make sound progress, at times better than this, with most students successfully adapting to the intellectual demands of A Level by the beginning of Year 13.

150 At Key Stage 4 attitudes and behaviour of students are mostly good, and rarely less than satisfactory. They sustain concentration well and settle readily to work, especially when this is well matched to their level of attainment. In all lessons students respond eagerly and behave well when they are making progress, but become restless if their interest is no longer engaged. Some students in Year 10 - notably those who joined the college already set against language learning - display poor attitudes and occasionally fractious behaviour in class. With careful and patient management such students are generally brought to task without undue confrontation. Students are fully accustomed to working in pairs and small groups. They collaborate sensibly and can be trusted to settle quickly to unsupervised activities. Many students are reticent when called upon to speak in the foreign language. At Post 16 students of both languages have a studious and committed approach to their work, developing very good independent study habits through the demands of coursework and by some appropriate use of the Internet.

151 The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. In two thirds of lessons teaching is good or very good. Teachers have a secure grasp of their language and, in most cases, use it in the classroom consistently and with sensitivity to what students will understand. In the few cases where French or German is not used appropriately students have too little exposure to the language and their comprehension is accordingly less secure. Teachers do not always insist on students using the foreign language in the classroom for everyday requests. Most teaching is challenging and rigorous: the pace of work is brisk but thorough; students are kept busy and involved; new points of language are systematically drilled and repeated. Occasionally teachers rely too much on explanation, giving students insufficient chance to practise a language point.

152 Teachers employ an excellent range of methods and resources, often home produced, to present new points of language. Lessons are carefully planned to give students the greatest chance to be actively involved. Management of students is very good. Teachers enjoy a cordial and professional rapport with their students, treating them with patience, humour and respect. Teachers start their lessons very well, stating their objectives clearly. Ends of lessons, however, are not as effective and are often rushed so that there is insufficient time to set homework carefully, insisting that it is copied into planners and suitably modified to challenge students of all attainment. There is also greater scope for setting more demanding work for higher attaining students in sets that contain a wide band of attainment. Promising linguists need more opportunity to extend and enrich their language experience through reading for pleasure in the foreign language and visits and exchanges abroad. Marking is regular and encouraging, though students would benefit from more advice on improvement and insistence on correction where appropriate.

153 The departments of German and French are managed separately and effectively by two experienced teachers who report to the head of the faculty of communications and meet regularly with him. In view of the small size of both foreign language departments, there would be considerable benefits from regular joint meetings of all languages staff to decide a coordinated approach to such issues as: the use of ICT; the pooling of resources and ideas common to both languages; improving the motivation and performance of boys; extending high attaining linguists; a common handbook.

154 Both departments have suffered over the past four years from a complete change of staff. However, staffing appears now to be stable and the heads of department are getting to grips with all that needs to be done, including new schemes of work. Staff are well supported and receive very good induction and continuing professional development. There would be considerable benefits from the employment of foreign language assistants to help with essential oral work.

155 In spite of the good liaison that exists between the heads of foreign languages and their counterparts in the college's two feeder schools, more work needs to be done on finding a unified approach to the teaching of certain key language skills and the interpretation of national curriculum levels. This will ensure that students' experience of languages is more even and that teachers have a realistic estimate of students' capabilities. High attaining students should be given an opportunity to study a second foreign language. Current arrangements for setting students by attainment in Key Stage 4 do not allow teachers to extend strong linguists in the top sets because of the wide range of attainment they contain. Equally, teachers cannot devote enough individual time to those who struggle in the relatively large lower sets.

156 The departments have very good resources and spacious well appointed classrooms with excellent displays. However, the two German rooms are some distance from each other, discouraging frequent communication and the central storage of resources. The two French and one of the German rooms suffer from extremes of temperature; their entrance lobbies are in a poor state of decorative repair and look unwelcoming. Both departments would benefit from the creation of a central bank of teaching materials to which all staff can contribute.

157 Since the last inspection all students are taught a foreign language and most are entered for GCSE. Overall attainment has therefore appeared to decline in terms of GCSE results, but at the same time the quality of teaching has remained strong and is continuing

to improve. Most of the reservations in the last report have been addressed, notably the use of ICT to which students now have regular access. Given the strength of the new team of language teachers, and their determination to tackle the issues referred to above, the departments are now well placed to make further improvements.

145 **Music**

158 Standards of attainment in music at Key Stage 4 are above average, with a substantial minority well above average. In Year 10 students can play complex rhythms and are capable of changing the time signature quickly and accurately. Compositions show that students in Year 11 have a good grasp of musical structure and how to achieve effects that create mood. A number of their individual compositions are very imaginative and confident. In musical dictation exercises, many can write down the music they hear accurately, while a few find this task very difficult.

159 At Post 16, levels of attainment are generally above average. Students possess advanced performing skills on a range of instruments. Many compositions are well developed pieces of music in a range of styles. A few of these are extended compositions and show sophistication beyond the years of the students. In Year 12 at present there are holes in their knowledge of music theory and history, as they grapple with the gap between GCSE and A Level. However in Year 13 this has been substantially bridged and students are developing a good grasp of music theory, and a deeper understanding of much of the music required in the syllabus.

160 GCSE results in 1998 were better than national averages. Results for 1999 were better, 83% of students gained A* - C grades and 100% achieved A* - G. The GCSE results have risen steadily in the last five years, since the last inspection. A Level results fluctuate from year to year, and at present do not support the positive observations of this inspection. Until recently the small numbers taking the exam made comparisons with national figures of doubtful value. In 1999 four of the five students were successful in passing the examination even though there were no high grades. Three of the five students took the music technology option offered for the first time in 1999 and were all successful in gaining a pass.

161 Students of all levels of attainment make good progress during Key Stage 4. This is because of good class teaching, supportive and lively instrumental teaching, and opportunities to perform in and out of the curriculum. It is also due to opportunities to consolidate work by constantly re-visiting and building on what has already been achieved. Post 16 students make sound to good progress initially because they work hard at basic musical knowledge. Progress at this level is at its best when students focus on the aims of their modules, know the syllabus thoroughly, and have a good grasp of the way in which they will be assessed.

162 Students' attitudes are good and often very good. The number of students taking GCSE, now around 40 in each year, indicates how interest in the subject has increased during the last five years. This is having a positive influence on those wishing to take A Level, and undoubtedly music technology as an option is appealing to many students of this age range. Concentration is quite intense when students are performing, and listening to others perform, and individual study is good when they are clearly focused on what they

have to achieve. Students behave very well and are always courteous. They work in a trusting atmosphere where they are able to use all the equipment freely. Students get on well together and this is particularly obvious in group work when they are composing and performing. Respect for the tutors is unbounded.

163 Teachers have responded very positively to the last inspection report. Since then they have increased the range of teaching methods. Their differing but complementary expertise in a wide range of musical styles enables the music curriculum to receive good coverage. They rightly concentrate now on the acquisition of appropriate musical skills rather than just on musical knowledge. Good lesson planning is substantially achieved in reality but there is still room for providing more opportunities for the students to reflect on their work. Greater demands are now being made on students particularly at GCSE. Students at this stage are clearly challenged by the given tasks and by the standards of musical performance demanded. This is gradually filtering through to A Level teaching, where a planned revision of the schemes of work and assessment strategies will have a beneficial effect on progress and standards of achievement at this level. Teaching is at its best when the aims of the lesson are clear, the pace demanding, and students are encouraged to reflect and assess themselves as part of the learning process.

164 The curriculum, although light on multicultural aspects of the subject, provides good access to the music of their own culture. Group work and a good range of extra curricular activities, including a Singing group, a new Jazz Band, and a Wind Serenade Band, provide opportunities for students' social development as well as spiritual enrichment. A Musical, and the regular Words and Music concerts are also strong features of the extra curricular provision. The accommodation, with a range of small practice rooms, supports group work and is ideal for instrumental lessons. However, the leakage of sound at inappropriate times between the main music room and adjoining practice room can disturb the occupants of both. This could easily and inexpensively be alleviated by the provision of well-sealed double doors.

165 The department is very well led by the Head of Music, who, by his energy and enthusiasm is providing an exciting ethos for the subject. He is ably supported by a part-time class and woodwind teacher. Most other instruments are taught in the college except for singing. Specialist support is not available to students who choose singing as an examination option which places them at a disadvantage with those who receive instrumental lessons. The department is well placed to continue to develop.

145

Physical Education

166 Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 4 exceed national expectations. In netball most girls play the game to a good standard and have a good understanding of the rules. The majority of boys demonstrate good levels of personal fitness in circuit training and possess sound knowledge and understanding of the benefits of regular exercise. On the trampoline, some girls are able to perform a good range of 'drops' showing good control and body management in flight. All have a clear understanding of the principles of working safely. Within the key stage, in Year 10 there are good standards in boys' games, both in soccer and in rugby. Most students perform well in orienteering showing both knowledge and understanding of the theoretical basis of the activity and the fitness to complete appropriately demanding courses. Older students who have only just begun their Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) have already developed improved skills in

communicating effectively.

167 Most students make good progress over time at Key Stage 4 including those with SEN. All students improve their skills in games playing though the pace of progress is not consistent across all activities and this is directly related to the emphasis given to progress within lessons by some teachers. Some boys have little previous experience of rugby but all are making good progress in their passing and handling skills which enables them to play the game to an enjoyable standard. The pace at which most CSLA students have improved their communication skills is a direct result of targeting this particular skill in lesson planning and delivery.

168 Attitudes and behaviour are mostly good and the programme makes a valuable contribution to the students' personal development. Students develop the skills of working together through planning, deciding, encouraging and reporting back in structured small group work. The great majority of students work in a committed and mature manner in their lessons. Most show great enthusiasm and derive considerable enjoyment from most activities.

169 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory, often good, occasionally very good. Teachers give clear explanations and demonstrations and have high expectations of performance, participation and behaviour. Mostly the tasks set are challenging, appropriate to the needs of students and planned to promote progress and raise standards. The objectives of most lessons, but not all, are clearly stated at the outset and the best lessons finish with a review of the work done. Lessons are well planned and sequenced with plenty of variety. Teaching is enthusiastic and much encouragement is provided for effort and achievement.

170 The curriculum is designed to meet National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 4. It provides equality of access for all students and meets the needs of those with SEN particularly well through its emphasis on leisure and recreation. Currently the programmes of study do not fully build on those delivered in the feeder schools. The task of combining two distinctive programmes is not easy and the department should look to extend the work already begun on assessment as a focus for curriculum development. This should, in time, provide clearer and stronger links between programmes of study, learning objectives and assessable outcomes across the key stages. As detailed assessment data becomes available it can be analysed and used to support curriculum development. The extra-curricular activities in sports and games make a valuable contribution to the college programme.

171 The department is well organised and its activities run smoothly. The specialist facilities for the subject are however only adequate. Much of the indoor accommodation is dull and uninspiring. It is poorly decorated and cleaned. The sports hall floor markings are badly faded, the surface almost worn out.

172 Since the last inspection the college has raised the standards of attainment in physical education. More students now respond more positively to the work of the department. This is a consequence of efforts that have been made to ensure that the curriculum is more responsive to student needs with less emphasis on games and a considerable degree of choice. This strategy has also begun to tackle the problems of non-participation mentioned in the last report. The department is now well-placed to further develop its curriculum contribution and there are plans to extend the opportunities for students to gain accreditation in PE both at the end of Key Stage 4 and Post 16.

145 Religious Education

173 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, the provision of RE has improved as statutory requirements are being met for most students, and teaching styles have improved. A few Post 16 students who do not follow the General Studies course which includes modules of religious education appropriate for this age group do not receive any religious education. The College follows the North Yorkshire County Council Agreed Syllabus for RE as the legal basis for the curriculum. However, the provision is insufficient in some fundamental aspects which affect both attainment and progress. Time allowed at both stages is too short. Time allocated in Key Stage 4 has decreased since the last report and in this respect provision has not improved. The intermittent nature of the delivery within other courses, within PSE in Key Stage 4 and within General Studies for Post 16 students, makes it more difficult for students to build on prior learning. There is a lack of suitable textbooks for the Key Stage 4 students following the statutory RE course.

174 There are two courses in Key Stage 4. There is the statutory RE course which all students follow except those taking Religious Studies GCSE. In both courses attainment is a little below national levels and the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Progress is also rather limited overall but satisfactory for some students including those with SEN. Some higher attaining students and some of the boys could make more progress. On the whole this does not reflect the quality of teaching which is a strength in RE throughout the college. In each lesson seen there was some new knowledge, and an increase in understanding.

175 Attainment at the end of the GCSE course, which included some very good individual results such as the two boys who achieved A* and A in 1999, has overall been a little below the national average for the past two years. Yet in 1997 GCSE results were well above the national average with 75% of candidates gaining A* to C grades. There have been significantly fewer higher attaining girls among the candidates recently and a significant number of boys who are not well motivated. The department is active in giving individual student support to try to counter under-achievement at GCSE. There are good features to the students' learning, such as their understanding of how Christian faith affects the way believers live their lives today. Some good quality coursework is done on aspects of discipleship.

176 In the 'statutory course' a worthwhile scheme of work has been developed following some of the key issues of the local syllabus. There are good features to the students' learning and due progression from Key Stage 3, but not enough time to develop learning in sufficient depth. The students investigate, learn and reflect on the 'ultimate questions' of life such as whether there is a God or life after death. They consider issues to do with wealth and poverty, justice and fair trade versus materialism. They also learn about some of the key concepts of another world faith as well as Christianity, as the local syllabus requires. Teachers are exploiting the limited time well, encouraging oral skills and using an approach that is lively but allows reflection and encourages good spiritual and moral development. There are some thoughtful and reflective answers in student files. Teachers are constrained not only by time which is well short of the DfEE recommendation of 40 hours per year for this key stage, but also by inadequate resources. For the most part they only have the worksheets which they design themselves. Some books would provide a good stimulus to learning, and a ready source of material for challenging and extending

higher attaining students more effectively.

177 There are, however, a small number of motivated and hard working students, and a dedicated teacher who all put in extra efforts to supplement the lessons, twelve candidates from the statutory course entered for 'short' GCSE Religious Studies in 1999 and all were graded A*-E, eight at A*-C. This is a considerable achievement. For a significant minority, attainment did meet national expectations as well as the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and good progress was made.

178 For A Level students both attainment and progress is good. The department has a good record of success here with a 100% pass rate for the past two years. There is a steep increase in numbers opting for this course in Christian Theology which reflects student confidence in the department. Some of this year's nineteen students in Year 12 come from the statutory rather than the GCSE course. Year 13 students are able to handle abstract philosophical concepts well. They were looking at the Christian understanding of God, considering omniscience and omnipotence, and finding their way around Biblical texts effectively. One student volunteered 'anthropomorphism' as an unprompted answer. Their level of technical vocabulary was high.

179 There are some concerns about the General Studies course - whether it is a religious education one or no more than the philosophical module on Applied Ethics specified for General Studies. Very little explicit RE was included in the lessons seen and the college will have to give careful consideration to its meeting of statutory requirements for this age group.

180 The response to RE is generally good throughout the college. It is a strength of the college and a positive benefit to students' learning. There was no poor behaviour in any of the lessons seen. Year 10 students are becoming accustomed to the expectations of the department for work, behaviour, and keeping records. They listened and answered, and showed interest in the lessons. Year 11 students were confident orally and had well maintained files. The college's scheme for internal certification of achievement in the statutory course succeeds in maintaining motivation well. The numbers that opt for the examination courses are also a very strong indicator of positive attitudes towards RE. GCSE students were ready to discuss and most clearly enjoyed the course. They respond well to the privilege of library time during 'statutory lessons'. A Level students are suitably independent in their work.

181 All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory, and most of it was very good. Teaching is characterised by good planning and preparation. Aims are explained to students and work reviewed at the beginning of lessons to ensure continuity. Management is effective and subject expertise is very good. In most lessons there is a positive, reflective atmosphere which allows students to be open, voice opinions, be listened to and not laughed at. Good quality teacher directed sessions were seen in all years with expert exposition with a real sense of pace and drive - this was particularly true of A Level lessons. In many lessons teaching is done in a lively way which communicates interest as well as the importance of the topic. Students are involved in question and answer sessions well. The board is used effectively to set out what is salient. Good quality worksheets and resource sheets are used. This only becomes a problem in the statutory course where the students do not receive enough additional stimulation from books. At A Level the teaching is very challenging and there are high expectations. The level of challenge is not as apparent at Key Stage 4 although the department is actively working on this. Marking is well done with formative comment, and this, combined with a swift return of work is

appreciated by the students. Homework tasks extend learning effectively and give practice in the appropriate study skills except that more needs to be done to incorporate ICT skills into lessons and homework.

182 Schemes of work follow the Agreed Syllabus and generally provide a broad and balanced curriculum although little is done in the college on world faiths other than Christianity, and the curriculum needs to be enriched with fieldwork and visitors coming in. RE makes a very strong contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, apart from the content of what is taught which gives many good opportunities for spiritual and moral growth and learning about the Christian heritage of this country. Teachers are good role models. It is clear to the students that they work hard on their behalf, and their relationships with students are exemplary, encouraging, praising, listening carefully to contributions, and being available for extra help. Also they assist personal development with their insistence that certain things will be done, record sheets will be filled in, files will be kept well. The contribution to these aspects of personal development is not confined to the RE classroom but includes the thought provoking '*wall of wisdom*' and '*door of faith*'.

183 Leadership and subject management are good. There are appropriate targets for development and good vision for the future. Improvements to the challenge of GCSE work have been made since the last inspection and more creative strategies have been devised. Students have been involved in their own learning effectively by a more discursive approach at A Level, and by using the new strategies for GCSE which require active involvement in lessons. Much hard work has been done to design the new statutory course including mitigating the lack of books by devising worksheets which the students complete which is costly both in preparation time and in the cost of reproduction. There is good support for the subject from the Learning Resource Centre. Provided more time can be found for statutory RE and arrangements made for all Post 16 students to be involved in it, the department is in a strong position to develop further.

145

Work Related Education

184 Work related provision has been consolidated and refined, building on the good features noted in the last inspection report. In Key Stage 4 work related options include GCSE business studies, Part One health and social care, and manufacturing. Post 16, full GNVQ awards are available at all levels in business, health and social care, art and design and at foundation and intermediate levels in manufacturing. There is also the option of advanced GCE in business & economics. Co-operation with other FE institutions provides the college with other work related options in BTEC programmes in horse studies and childhood studies. The full time open college network accredited pre-vocational course provides an entry level programme for students who need to gain experience of different vocational areas through class work, practical activities and work experience. It is taught well, motivating students to make good progress, develop self-confidence and acquire work related and life skills, with possible access to GNVQ Foundation level, NVQ occupational training or employment opportunities.

185 All of these programmes are popular and recruit well, indicating that parents and students recognise that work related options have parity of esteem with other well-established qualifications. These courses have a significant impact on Post 16 recruitment

and provide students with alternative routes to further and higher education. Many students combine a vocational course with an advanced academic study.

GCSE and GCE Business Studies & Economics

186 Teaching of the GCSE and A Level business programmes is always satisfactory or better, benefiting from a co-operative approach by a team of well-qualified and experienced teachers. Staff have responded to the issues raised in the last report and introduced more variety into the lessons, using a wider range of teaching technique. All of the lessons are well planned and have clear objectives. The best lessons feature clear teacher explanations with effective reference to local examples, good questioning of the students and appropriate classroom exercises, consolidating information and developing appreciation of the technical language of the subjects. All teachers are courteous and sensitive in their dealing with students and the lessons are often enlivened by humour and anecdote. Even so, more could be done, particularly in the Post 16 lessons, to make the students contribute much more through group work and student prepared presentations. In Key Stage 4, the pace of some well-prepared lessons is disrupted by the failure of a minority of the students to observe normal classroom etiquette. Although behaviour is not unruly, ill-timed conversation and silly comment divert the teacher, slow the lesson and limit the learning process. This in turn deters teachers from using more interactive teaching methods. Overall, more demands could be made on the students. They could be challenged more vigorously through targeted questioning so that fewer are able to opt for a passive role in the classroom.

187 Progress in both key stages is generally sound and steady. The command of the technical language of business develops. Students understand concepts of hierarchical management and the flow of information in business. Some of the course work in Key Stage 4 indicates a growing appreciation of the methods and problems of market research. Students develop effective ICT skills which they use to good effect in their examination course work. Post 16 work indicates an evolving grasp of the interaction between supply and demand and the theories relating to the national control of the economy.

188 Key Stage 4 examination attainment has fluctuated widely over the past six years, particularly with reference to the attainment of grades A*-C. It has twice been above the national average but the most recent results are well below. A significant number of the students are on the threshold of attaining the higher A*-C grades. Attainment in lessons is generally sound but the students should be challenged rigorously to produce more detailed responses and to use the vocabulary of business more fluently in their written work. Post 16 attainment is stronger, more consistent, well above the national figures and showing significant improvement since the last inspection report. The last three years have produced a 100% success rate at advanced level with about one third of the students securing A/B grades.

Pre-Vocational and Vocational Education

189 Key Stage 4 students quickly adapt to the different approaches to learning required by GNVQ. In health and social care particularly, students in Year 10 have made a most effective start and already begun to gather information for their portfolios. Year 11 students are at ease with independent study based upon structured assignment briefs and effective

introductory lessons, which provide foundation information and set the scene. Post 16 students have established research skills, especially by the second year of A Level courses. In art & design particularly, new students are showing an impressive confidence and facility to find information, experiment with ideas and evaluate what they have done.

190 Attainment of both Part One and full awards in the range of GNVQ courses is above the national average. A significant proportion secured merit and distinction awards in the most recent set of results. This has been achieved despite the fact that art & design and business are participating in the demanding new model pilot scheme to trial the new specifications, which will be the national basis for GNVQ from September 2000. The drop out rate is less than that seen nationally, largely because the college has taken care with initial recruitment, ensuring that students are registered on the most appropriate course to suit their previous attainment and potential. The provision of an entry style course of pre-vocational education linked to the open college network reduces the risk of inappropriate enrollment on foundation level GNVQ programmes.

191 Students usually make good progress across the range of GNVQ courses. Oral confidence improves as do teamwork and problem solving capabilities. Skills of public presentation are evident and in all observed lessons the work set provided an appropriate work related context. Work experience placements are usually linked to the vocational area of study and these are increasingly being exploited to provide evidence for the student portfolios. This particularly applies to aspects of human resource management in business. ICT skills are developed and exploited, aiding the production of well-presented portfolios of evidence.

192 The quality of teaching on all of these programmes is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and planning is careful and long term. There is an adequate mix of teaching and learning styles to provide variety and interest with an effort to emphasise learning by experience. There is much independent working by the students with teachers acting as mentors and facilitators. This is generally done well although the size of some classes in Post 16 business and health and social care places considerable pressure on teachers. Independent working requires carefully structured assignment briefs to guide the student towards the expected outcomes. These vary in quality and in some cases students are working directly from the unit specifications without the benefit of a written interpretation to guide them. In all of the observed lessons, students received effective developmental feedback about their work. Even so, some leniency has been noted in the assessment of grading, particularly with reference to the timing of action planning and in the use of normal conventions when recording sources of information. This is noticeable within the less prescriptive structure of the new model pilot programme in business but there are instances in other programmes.

193 The overall GNVQ provision is ably managed by the GNVQ co-ordinator and his deputy who also has responsibility for key skills development. Both are enthusiastic and well informed. The GNVQ co-ordinator is making a significant contribution to national developments, keeping the college up to date and able to anticipate and plan for the transition to the new model. There is very good scheduling of assessment with good systems for reporting and recording assessment. External verifiers' reports confirm the quality of the organisation and that the standards set by the college are in line with national expectations. The co-ordination role is crucial to such a complex and expanding GNVQ programme. As guardian of the standards in the centre, care must be taken to ensure that the co-ordinator's cross-curricular role is not obscured when determining the responsibilities of subject leaders and faculty heads. This area of work is very well placed to develop further.

145 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

145 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

194 The inspection was carried out by a team of twelve inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week almost 250 lessons, registrations and assemblies were inspected. A number of lunchtime and after college extra-curricular activities were seen. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, members of the senior management team, heads of faculties and departments and years and other holders of positions of particular responsibility in the college. Curriculum, pastoral and administrative matters were discussed with many members of the teaching and support staff. Inspectors attended departmental and staff meetings and met members of the college council. Inspectors looked at the practical and written work of many students. All the available written work and reports of a representative sample of students from each year group were scrutinised. Planned discussions were held with these students and informal conversations with many more. Before the inspection the Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 22 parents. The team considered the responses of 100 parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the college.

145 195
INDICATORS

DATA AND

145 Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals in Years 10 and 11
Year 10 – Year 13	953	13	88	57

145 Teachers and classes

145 Qualified teachers (Year 10 – Year 13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	62.30
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	15.52

145 Education support staff (Year 10 – Year 13)

Total number of education support staff:	20	
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	425	
Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	79	
Average teaching group size:	Key Stage 4	19

Financial year:	1998
	£
Total Income	2,598,358
Total Expenditure	2,586,307
Expenditure per pupil	2,699.69
Balance brought forward from previous year	177,318
Balance carried forward to next year	189,369

Number of questionnaires sent out: 667

Number of questionnaires returned: 100

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	14	60	12	12	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	30	60	6	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	48	26	4	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	21	60	10	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	38	53	6	3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	62	5	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	19	54	17	7	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	20	68	4	6	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	18	55	17	6	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	15	50	22	7	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	27	62	9	1	1

Note: Nil responses are not included, therefore sum of percentages may not = 100%.