

INSPECTION REPORT

HIND LEYS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Shepshed, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120274

Principal: Mr Noel Fowler

Reporting inspector: Marianne Ellender-Gelé
2348

Dates of inspection: 17-21 January 2000

Inspection number: 164283

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of college:	Comprehensive
College category:	Community
Age range of students:	14-18
Gender of students:	Mixed
College address:	Forest Street Shepshed Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bernard Ball
Date of previous inspection:	16 January 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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M T Ellender-Gelé	Registered inspector	English as an additional language. Equal opportunities	What sort of college is it? What should the college do to improve further? How high are standards? How well is the college led and managed?
V A Cain	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the college care for its students? How well does the college work in partnership with parents?
J A Banks	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
L P Blaylock	Team inspector	Religious education Humanities	
D Bray	Team inspector	Music and Performing Arts	How well are students taught?
J C Copas	Team inspector	Art Community education GNVQ	
A B Drane	Team inspector	English and Drama	
J W Follett	Team inspector	Physical education Dance Special education needs	
M D Revell	Team inspector	Science	
M A Jones	Team inspector	History	
J Costello	Team inspector	Information technology	
D Beaumont	Team inspector	Design and technology	
J W Stout	Team inspector	Geography	
D J Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
E Hale	Team inspector	Business studies	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Hind Leys is a smaller than average community college of 692 students, with 235 students in post-16 education. It serves Shepshed, Castle Donington, Kegworth and a few surrounding villages. In recent years, there has been an upward trend in the levels of attainment of students entering the college at 14. Standards on entry are now broadly in line with national expectations. There is a full and balanced range of ability, although the proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and only one student has English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, although not all those eligible do claim. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls in Years 12 and 13. In Years 10 and 11, there are forty-one more boys than girls.

Hind Leys Community College was last inspected in January 1995. Since then, the characteristics of the college have remained broadly the same, although the proportion of students with statements of special educational needs has increased. The number of students staying on post-16 has risen from 189 to 235. Over one thousand users per week take part in the community programme. Many staff changes have taken place, including the appointment of a new principal in January 1997 and a new chair of governors in the Autumn term 1998. Just over half the teaching staff was not in post at the time of the last inspection. Several heads of faculties have only been in post since last September.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

This is a good college, where students are encouraged to develop as young adults. Through good teaching, caring pastoral support and strong leadership, teachers and all staff create a positive climate for learning. Recent GCSE results at 16 were above the national average. Standards are above average when students leave at age 18. The college provides good value for money and post-16 provision is cost-effective. The personal development of students is a particular strength.

What the college does well

- Relationships between all members of the college community are very good. Students show high levels of respect for their peers and for their teachers. Teachers value each student equally.
- Standards in social and personal development are very good. Behaviour is also very good.
- The quality of learning is good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 12 and 13. Students show interest in their work, are well organised and productive.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a high level of knowledge and understanding of their subject. In Years 12 and 13, they know how to inspire students. The good teaching has a positive impact on progress and standards.
- Students who experience learning difficulties make good progress and achieve well. They gain appropriate accreditation.
- The monitoring of students' welfare and well-being is very good. Pastoral support and guidance is a strength.
- The principal and his senior team provide very good leadership. Their determination to improve standards further is supported by staff, with commitment to succeed shared across the college.
- The ethos of the college in providing lifelong learning opportunities for all is very strong. Community education serves the local area well and provides further educational and recreational opportunities for students. Inclusion of community users, staff and students, in recreational and educational activities, is at the heart of provision.

What could be improved

- Although strategies are in place to further improve results at 16, the impact of these has yet to materialise in all subjects and for all students. An area for improvement lies in the low performance of boys overall, and the underachievement of more able students.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of education provided in religious education in all years and in history at Key Stage 4.
- Although senior managers have started to collect data on student achievement, there is insufficient use of this information to raise standards. Assessment information is not shared sufficiently with students, and specific targets for improvement are not set consistently. Reports to parents are too vague, and there is no report on information technology at Key Stage 4.
- Provision for students' spiritual development is weak. Although some subjects contribute to this aspect of students' education, too many opportunities are missed.

Strengths outweigh areas for further development. The college is already working on two of the identified issues. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Progress since the last inspection in January 1995 has been good and the principal, appointed in 1997, has been very instrumental in this. Improvements have been made in three major areas. The focus on improving the quality of teaching has borne fruit: it is now good and has resulted in improved behaviour and attitudes to learning which were key issues at the time of the previous inspection. The climate for learning has improved and is now very good in all years. The climate for learning is now very good in all years. Processes of management and systems for monitoring and evaluation are now effective overall. The college knows the areas in which development is needed, action planning is good and key staff have been appointed to support identified priorities. Students are now given more responsibilities and standards in core skills have been improved. Staff development is managed well and resources for learning are better, although there are still shortages in a few areas. The use of assessment information to improve standards remains a key issue for the college to address, and there is still insufficient provision for a daily act of worship and for religious education. Teachers are aware of the needs of more able students but, in practice, provision is still inconsistent. This is done well in mathematics. The overall effectiveness of the college's response and the commitment of staff provide a very good platform for future developments and improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average points scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools **	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	B	C	B	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	B		

** Schools with a similar percentage of students eligible for free school meals

The cohort of students who took their GCSE examinations in 1999 had below average attainment

levels on entry into Year 10. They performed well to achieve above average results. Over the last three years, GCSE results have been close to the national average and, in 1999, they were above. However, the improvement in the average GCSE points score has been below the national trend. When compared with similar schools; results are not high enough. Strategies are already in place to improve results further and a challenging target has been set for year 2002, requiring 65% of students to achieve A* to C grades in five or more subjects. Good teaching has started to have an impact. However, boys' attainment in several subjects and the underachievement of more able students are areas to be improved. In recent years, standards attained at age 18 have been a strength of the college. In all years, achievement is strong in art, English literature and the performing arts. Students with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well against their prior levels of attainment.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Very good. Particular strengths are the high level of interest shown in lessons, and students' respect for the views of their peers and of their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The college is an orderly place.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships between all members of the college community is high. There is a high level of involvement in activities provided outside lessons.
Attendance	In line with the national average. Students recognise the importance of regular attendance and are punctual to lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very Good

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

In 95% of the lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory and, in 25%, it was in the very good or excellent. In only 5% was it judged to be unsatisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching post-16. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. In science it is nearly always sound and often good. Teaching is also strong in art, dance, drama and geography. It is weak in religious education and in history at Key Stage 4. In almost all curriculum areas, teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of their subject, and use supportive strategies to encourage equal participation. Lesson planning and the positive student-teacher relationships are also strengths. These strengths lead to good acquisition of skills, improved creative thinking, and rapid pace of working. Not all students are yet able to self-evaluate their work or know how to improve. There are inconsistencies in the day-to-day marking of work and in the effective use of homework. These less effective aspects of teaching contribute to the slower rate of progress of more able students and of boys. The needs of students who have average or low levels of prior attainment are met well, as are those of students who have special educational needs. The teaching of literacy skills is effective, leading to improved accuracy. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall. In Year 11, the teaching of information technology skills across subjects of the curriculum is an area for further development. It is good in vocational subjects and in English.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall good. Statutory requirements are not met in religious education and in information technology at Key Stage 4. Extra curricular provision is good. Equality of opportunity is a strength. The programme for personal and social education in Year 11 and post-16 needs to be improved.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Parents are informed of progress and students are supported effectively in class or when withdrawn for extra help.
Provision for students' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social development is very good and for moral development it is good. Provision for spiritual development is weak. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the college cares for its students	Procedures are very good overall. They promote good behaviour, respect and tolerance of others. Support for personal welfare and guidance is good. The use of assessment to set targets, raise standards and inform students of how and what to improve is an area for development.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Very good. Clear educational direction is provided. The principal and vice-principals have a strong and collective determination to improve results, with appropriate priorities to meet challenging targets. At departmental level, there are weaknesses in development planning and the use of data information to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. Governors are now more involved in strategic management. They are aware of strengths and areas for further developments. Some statutory requirements are not met.
The college's evaluation of its performance	The principal and his senior team have an accurate view of where improvements are needed. The impact of some strategies has yet to be realised at Key Stage 4. The college has the capacity to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. The principles of best value are applied well. Accommodation, staffing and resources for learning are used effectively, but there are shortages of textbooks in some subjects. The use of information technology is too limited across subjects. Systems for communication and administration are very effective.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

Very few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, and a very low percentage (6.5%) returned the questionnaire.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students like the college• Students make good progress• The college is approachable• Teachers expect students to work hard• The college is helping students to become mature and responsible• Behaviour is good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework is not consistent and there is sometimes too much or too little• Extra-curricular activities rely on sports• Reports are not sufficiently informative• Behaviour is not always good enough

Inspectors confirm the positive views of parents. Behaviour is very good and inspectors found no evidence of this being unsatisfactory. Homework is usually set, but planning for coursework and help in time management, especially for students in Years 10 and 11, could be improved. More could be done to involve parents, for example the student planner could be used for regular communication. Better reporting to parents of progress made in all subjects is needed. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is reasonably balanced, with a wide range of sporting activities and good access to artistic, recreational and academic activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and other performance data

- 1 Results at GCSE in 1999 were above national averages, an improvement on 1998 results. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more grades at A*-C, at 49.3%, was above the national average of 46.3%. The percentage of students gaining five or more A*-G grades, at 91.9%, broadly matched the national figure of 90.7%. At 95% the proportion of students obtaining at least one GCSE A*-G was below the national figure because a large number of students followed courses not accredited through the GCSE route. The college believes that these courses are more relevant to students' needs and aspirations. Inspectors confirm that these students obtained accreditations in a wide range of subjects and most either continued their education after the age of 16, or found employment.
- 2 Students who took GCSE examinations in 1999 entered Year 10 in 1997 with a low aggregated average points score (32.6) in the Key Stage 3 tests taken at the end of Year 9. Results from the same students show an average points score of 41.5 in the GCSE examination, a figure above the national average points score of 37.8. Against their attainment on entry, these students did well. Parents state that children are encouraged to do their best in examinations. Inspection findings confirm the views of parents, although over the last three years the trend in the improvement of the college's average GCSE/GNVQ point score per student was below the national trend.
- 3 Boys do less well than girls, particularly at grades A*-C. This reflects the national difference, but the gap at Hind Leys is wider. The college is aware of this issue. Strategies to improve results of boys, particularly at the higher grades, have yet to have an impact. The percentage of students obtaining the highest grades, A*-B, is lower than average. This confirms the view of a few parents who stated that able children could have gained higher grades in GCSE examinations.
- 4 Senior managers have analysed all available data and they want to improve results further. Although the quality of teaching is now good, the impact of this good teaching and the strategies to improve GCSE examination results, such as the review and guidance time introduced in Year 10, have yet to have a full impact. Results in 1999 were not high enough when compared with similar schools, but inspectors have found that progress of students now in Years 10 and 11 is at least satisfactory in almost all subjects and the quality of learning is good overall.
- 5 The achievement of students with special educational needs is good and their progress in acquisition of basic skills is rapid. Needs are met well through their individual educational plans and the good support provided by specialist staff. In literacy, specific and well-targeted programmes enable students to progress appropriately. Spelling improves and reading is done with increased accuracy and confidence. Almost all students with low levels of attainment on entry into Year 10 gain success. Many achieve creditable results, at GCSE or Certificate of Achievement, in English, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Other qualifications gained include City and Guilds accreditation, Youth Award Scheme, website award from the BBC and other relevant vocational qualifications.

- 6 There is a difference in the rate of progress of boys and girls and in the progress of students who have different levels of attainment. On balance, students of low and average levels of attainment on entry into Year 10 make good progress. Girls also make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Students with a high level of knowledge and skills are not always sufficiently challenged and their rate of progress is an area for further improvement. Boys do not reach their full potential. The issue of raising standards for all has been identified and is already a key priority in the college management plan.

Progress towards the college's targets

- 7 The initial target set for the GCSE results in Year 2000, for 46% of students to obtain five or more GCSE at grades A*-C, is not sufficiently challenging and does not match the senior managers' and governors' intention to improve results. This target was set before results for 1999 were received and the figure is now being reviewed to increase the level of challenge. Targets for future years are much more appropriate and challenging, with a figure of 65% of students to achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2002. The college is making good progress towards this target. Although targets for results in the A-level examinations have not been published, the college always seeks to improve on its previous best, with internal, quantitative targets discussed and acted upon.
- 8 Results in the A-level examinations show a very positive picture. On the basis of the average for the last three years, the A-level points score of candidates entered for two or more GCE A levels was well above the national average. In 1999, the average point score was better than most colleges nationally, although lower than in 1998 and 1997. This can be explained by the college's policy of equal access to education post-16, with students having obtained a wide range of GCSE grades. Only five students were entered for Advanced GNVQs last year and their average points score was below average. The percentage of students who achieved intermediate level GNVQ, at 96.3%, was well above the national average of 72.9%. Results at age 18 are good, with no significant difference between boys and girls.

Progress since the last report

- 9 The last report stated that standards in basic skills and in English were low. This is no longer the case. The incidence of high grades A*-B was low and this continues to be an issue. The report referred to considerable underachievement at Key Stage 4. This is no longer the case for average and low attainers, but more able students still underachieve, particularly boys. The high level of underachievement in Year 10 has been remedied. Progress in learning and standards of current students reflect a much better picture than in the 1995 report.

Attainment and progress of students in all subjects inspected

- 10 In **English** language, students improve their work in terms of length, quality and accuracy as they progress through Key Stage 4. Boys enter Year 10 with lower than average standards. The rate of their progress is below that of girls and, although the department adds value over the course, this is not yet sufficient to change the pattern of boys' under-achievement. At age 16, girls reach the standards expected, whilst boys under-perform. Strategies are in place to challenge all students, but they have yet to have an impact. Standards at 16 in English literature and GCSE

media studies are above expectation. Attainment of students on the A-Level communications courses is in line with expectation and in English literature it is above. Students show high levels of knowledge and understanding of texts studied.

- 11 In **mathematics**, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards are as expected at 16 and 18 and students demonstrate good achievement overall. They develop good understanding of mathematical concepts and can recall previously taught formulae. They can solve problems and evaluate their results. A particular strength is their ability to explain concepts rather than just apply techniques.
- 12 In **science**, attainment is broadly in line with course expectations at 16 and 18, with standards in A-level physics being above those normally seen. In biology, standards are consistently at the expected level. In chemistry, whilst still sound, achievement is lower than in other sciences. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is typical of students of that age, although the more able students tend not to achieve as highly as they might.
- 13 Students enter the college with **literacy skills**, which are broadly in line with expectation for their age. However, the 1999 results in the English tests taken in the last year of high school (Year 9) indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 6 and above) was below average. At the beginning of Year 10 boys experience more difficulty than girls in accuracy and presentation of work. Literacy skills are reinforced through subjects of the curriculum and, consequently, standards improve as students move through Key Stage 4. **Writing skills** are practised well, for example in geography, mathematics and humanities, where students take notes appropriately, record work with accuracy and recall technical vocabulary. **Speaking and listening skills** are developed effectively in many subjects, for example in drama where students have to listen to others' views and provide suitable responses, or in modern foreign languages where they listen attentively to extract information from heard material. **Reading** standards are generally satisfactory, with students demonstrating increased confidence when reading aloud. This skill is well practised in English, but it is not sufficiently developed across other subjects of the curriculum. Post-16, standards in literacy skills are good. Competence in expression of ideas, both orally and in writing, is high. In **numeracy**, standards are in line with those normally seen. Students make effective use of calculations in design technology, and in geography they produce accurate graphs. In physics, students make appropriate use of number. In some cases, lack of basic understanding of rules and operations can be a barrier to higher level of work, such as when Year 12 students cannot use fractions with confidence. Standards in **information and communication technology (ICT)** are good for students who follow courses accredited by a GCSE or A-level examination, and for students who use ICT frequently for specific assignments, such as those required on GNVQ courses. For the great majority who do not, standards are below expectations at 16 and 18, because of lack of use or access across subjects of the curriculum.
- 14 Students on the **humanities** course make good gains in learning and achieve good standards at 16, with results above average at GCSE. Girls achieve higher standards than boys. Students develop good research skills. Their understanding of topical issues grows, and they are able to analyse and develop an argument with increased knowledge and confidence. In **geography**, students make good progress and attainment at 16 and 18 is in line with course expectation. The progress of

more able students is too slow, leading to a lower than average percentage of higher grades at GCSE, particularly for boys. In **history**, GCSE results improved in 1999. However, attainment of current students is below expectation at 16, particularly for boys. Attainment is in line with course expectation at 18, with most students able to express views on a range of historical and political situations.

- 15 Standards in **religious education** are weak. Students do not develop an understanding of key beliefs and practices of religions because provision is poor. This was a key issue in the last inspection and remains to be addressed. No students are entered for examination.
- 16 In **design and technology**, attainment at 18 is in line with expectation and students develop their design ideas well. They achieve high standards in their finished product and demonstrate good practical skills. Attainment at age 16 is just below expectation. Results at GCSE are just below the national average but have improved year-on-year over the past four years. Girls attain higher standards than boys, a gap which reflects that found nationally. Current students achieve good standards in graphic products and demonstrate good levels of creativity in their work.
- 17 In **modern foreign languages**, attainment in French meets expectation at 16. In German, it is below expectation. Girls achieve better results than boys at GCSE but there are fewer higher grades compared with the national figure. In both languages, listening and reading skills are developed well but accuracy in application of grammar and confidence in speaking are less secure. In French post-16, progress in reading and listening is sound overall, but students still experience difficulties in speaking. Attainment, at age 18, is in line with course expectation. In German, the two students in Year 13 have different strengths. One is confident and fluent in speaking, whilst the other shows an adequate grasp of grammar. Their progress is satisfactory.
- 18 In **information technology**, attainment of students on the A-level computing course is above expectation, leading to good results in the examination. A new course has been introduced for students in Year 10 and their progress in word-processing, spreadsheets and databases is satisfactory. In Year 11, standards are below those expected because students have too few opportunities to use information technology across subjects of the curriculum. Students who have special educational needs have sound information technology skills.
- 19 In **physical education**, GCSE results are above average and attainment of current GCSE students is in line with expectation. Standards of students who do not study the subject at GCSE are below those seen nationally. In 1999, the first group of students entered for the A-level examination achieved results well above the national figure.
- 20 In **art**, attainment is above expectation at 16. Work is finished and presented to high standards. Research skills are developed well across a good range of media. Achievements of students on the GNVQ art and design course are in line with course requirements. Standards of work for students on the A-level course are high, with results at A-level being well above the national average, including at the highest grades A and B.
- 21 In the **performing arts**, students develop good skills and the subjects make a good

contribution to the personal development of students. Standards in drama, dance and music are above expectation. In dance, attainment is particularly high. In drama, oral expression, gains in confidence and understanding of drama conventions are well practised. In music, GCSE results are well above average and students produce well planned and competent compositions.

- 22 In **business studies**, results have improved. At GCSE, they are now in line with the average and attainment at 16 is as expected for that age. Results at A-level are just above average and the number of students on the GNVQ course gaining distinctions and merits has improved, with a better completion rate at intermediate level than the national figure.
- 23 Across all **vocational areas**, boys and girls achieve equally well and standards are in line with course expectations. Students gain relevant specialist knowledge and progress is good. Portfolios are of a high standard and show appropriate development of key skills.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 24 Parents believe that students' attitudes and personal development are considerably improved compared with the standards described in the last inspection report. Inspection findings confirm these views. Community users of the college comment positively on the generally high level of maturity of students. Adult learners who attend day classes say that they gain a great deal from working with students in Years 12 and 13.

Attitudes

- 25 Students are keen to attend college and display very positive attitudes to their work. They settle quickly, are eager to participate in lessons and a good work ethos prevails. Students value the reward system and work hard to gain certificates to be included in their record of achievement. At lunchtimes, many are involved in a range of activities and the level of participation is generally good, with equal participation from boys and girls. They appreciate and respect the open access to all areas of the college. Students who have special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work and this is due, in great part, to the quality of support that they receive. Parents say that the college fosters a good attitude to work.

Behaviour

- 26 The standard of behaviour, both in classes and around the site, is very good and shows a marked improvement from findings of the 1995 inspection. A few students, mostly boys, are still less eager to work and tend to waste time in a few lessons. Exclusion procedures are clear and consistently applied; students are in no doubt about the high standards expected. No student was permanently excluded in the year prior to this inspection and the percentage of fixed period exclusions is average. These exclusions are well documented and used for appropriate reasons. The college is free from oppressive behaviour. Students who present behavioural difficulties are dealt with effectively in a non-confrontational way, which usually brings them back on task. Attitudes of students who have special educational needs are very good. They work very hard and this leads to good progress and creditable achievements. Movement around the college, even in congested corridor areas, is very orderly and safe.

Relationships, values and personal development

- 27 The quality of relationships, between students and all staff and amongst students themselves, is a strength of the college. Parents value the quality of relationships within the college. Students display a mature approach and help each other well, with particular attention and help for those who have special educational needs. Good examples were observed in almost all subjects of students working well together and listening with interest to each other. For example, in discussion groups in English, students show acceptance and tolerance of others' points of view. In mathematics, they display confidence in putting forward possible results to a problem, and in many other subjects, such as personal and social education (PSE), topical issues require the attention and contribution of all equally, with students showing respect for the values and beliefs of others. Enthusiastic and mature discussions were observed in Years 12 and 13 where students involved themselves wholeheartedly in debates. They respect differences, know what is right and wrong, and are willing to take responsibilities, for example during shows in the theatre or when helping in community events. Students on the college council represent effectively the views of their peers and are keen to be involved in a wide range of discussions and activities. They feel that their opinions are valued and are very aware of the impact of decisions and actions on others.

Attendance

- 28 Attendance figures remain in line with the national average, as mentioned in the last report. Unauthorised absence, at 1.8%, is above the average of 1.1%. The college works well with the welfare officer to reduce this figure. Parents confirmed that the college insists on regular attendance and that correct procedures are followed. Punctuality to college and to lessons is generally good and has a positive impact on learning.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 29 Teaching is a strength and has improved greatly since the college was last inspected. During this inspection, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 95% of all lessons observed. In nearly two thirds of these lessons teaching was at least good, leading to a faster than average pace of learning for students. Of these lessons one quarter was very good or excellent. Teaching was effective in all year groups and in most subjects. In 5% of lessons, at Key Stage 4, teaching was unsatisfactory because of one or more shortcomings. In these lessons students did not make sufficient progress. This represented a small number of lessons in Years 10 and 11. No lessons were of a poor standard. Teaching was particularly effective in the sixth form where all lessons were at least sound and nearly one third were very good or excellent.
- 30 Good teaching was observed in most subjects, with little variations between year groups. Teaching was particularly effective in a high proportion of lessons in art, dance, drama, English and geography, in all years. There were shortcomings in a few lessons in religious education and GCSE history. In mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education, business studies and information technology post-16 teaching was good. In science, humanities, information technology at Key Stage 4, GNVQ and music, it was sound with some good features. In lessons where teaching was of good or very good quality

students learned quickly, were challenged effectively and made rapid progress. This happened when teachers:

- showed a good knowledge and understanding of their subject and planned lessons to cover effectively learning objectives and appropriate examination requirements. This was the case in all subjects;
- challenged, inspired and expected the most of students. In A-level physics, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject helped to set high expectations and enabled students to cope well with complexities, such as those of quantum mechanics;
- used methods which enabled students to learn effectively. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, the teacher used questioning effectively in order to establish a definition of trigonometry. In personal and social education, teachers started from what students already knew and understood, for example when discussing personal finance management;
- managed students well and insisted on high standards of behaviour. Teachers created a positive atmosphere which motivated students and encouraged them to behave well;
- used time, support staff and other resources well. For example, in a Year 12 information technology lesson, use of a 'power point' multi-media computer presentation captured students' imagination, and in a Year 13 art lesson, artists' work was used to illustrate a point and enabled students to understand better the skill being developed;
- assessed students' work thoroughly. For example in Year 12 A-level psychology lesson, students were given helpful and very detailed feedback on how to be more effective at essay writing. This information enabled the students to develop their skills and improve the quality of their work.

31 The good and very good teaching ensured that students made good progress in their learning:

- they acquired new knowledge and skills in most lessons and demonstrated consistently high levels of effort. For example in English, students were involved fully during brainstorming sessions, leading to the development of their listening and oral skills.
- they were productive and worked at a good pace. For example, in a Year 11 design and technology lesson, the teacher set out three key tasks that the students would complete. They responded to this positively and a few moved on to a fourth task. In humanities, students did not waste time during group work, and learned from each other on topics such as households, racism, prejudices or euthanasia.
- they showed interest in their work. In a Year 13 art lesson students worked right up to the last minute and were reluctant to leave the lesson. In Year 12 history, students were fascinated by the topic of the Cold War and the teacher's effective coaching satisfied students' curiosity about these historical events. There were also many examples of this high level of

interest in Years 10 and 11.

- they understood what they were doing and knew how they could improve. In a Year 13 geography lesson the teacher used information from an examiner's report to illustrate particular aspects of effective essay writing. In drama, modern languages and physical education good oral feedback enabled students to improve the accuracy of their work.
- 32 In a small number of lessons, teaching was not sufficiently effective because teachers:
- did not have a secure knowledge of all aspects of the subject;
 - did not gain the attention of all students and could not manage bad behaviour sufficiently well. During the inspection, this happened on rare occasions, with poor behaviour almost always restricted to boys;
 - did not motivate or maintain the interest of students because the pace of the lesson was too slow and expectations of what students could achieve was too low.
- 33 The day-to-day assessment of work is an area where good practice was not found consistently across all subjects. Some strategies were good, particularly when teachers provided clear targets for improvement and used assessment to raise the quality of specific aspects of work. The effective use of homework, although not a weakness, was an exception rather than the rule. A few parents commented on this point, as well as on the issue of pressure in some cases when coursework was due. Students are given clear time scale for completion of work. Homework is set, but it is not always used effectively to extend learning. In a business studies lesson, a good example of effective homework was set, because stepped questions were provided to enable more able students to demonstrate higher level skills.
- 34 The low level of literacy skills was a key issue identified in the last inspection. This aspect has been addressed well and, across subjects, teachers reinforce the need for accurate writing and spelling. Note-taking of technical and specialist vocabulary is done well. The teaching of listening and oral skills is effective in many subjects, particularly in drama and modern foreign languages. The teaching of numeracy skills is mostly satisfactory, but there is some inconsistency because numeracy skills are not always emphasised sufficiently by all teachers. In some subjects, these skills are planned well into activities, such as in geography, business studies, computing and vocational courses.
- 35 The teaching of students who have special educational needs is good, with effective and well-targeted support. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of students' specific difficulties and the college's strategy of using subject specialists to provide the support leads to rapid acquisition of knowledge and improved basic skills. However, there are times when collaborative planning between the support staff and the subject teacher prior to the lesson is not sufficiently rigorous. This results in poorly focused support and less effective learning. Teachers make good use of the information on individual educational plans and adapt their teaching accordingly to help students in their progress.
- 36 The college has developed a programme for identifying gifted and talented

students. This involves them in a special programme of events. None of these took place during the inspection. Across many subjects, there are instances of very able students being taught effectively. In A-level physics and A-level psychology, for example, teachers set high expectations and all students respond well. The level of demand stretches even the most able. In general, however, more able students are not catered for sufficiently. This was an area highlighted in the previous inspection, and was a concern raised by a few parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaires. Over the last year, the college has responded positively to this point and the programme for the most able is a direct outcome. Strategies to meet the needs of higher attainers have been considered, but there has been insufficient impact on attainment and results. This is an area for further development across all subject areas.

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

- 37 The quality of the curriculum and the range of learning opportunities, for students aged 14 to 16 are good. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is broad and balanced. Requirements for teaching the National Curriculum are met, except for information technology in Year 11 where not all the programmes of study are covered. Students pursue a wide range of core subjects, which facilitates a flexible choice of A-level courses. There is a broad range of optional subjects, including dance, drama and media studies. Timetable arrangements and the support provided to students for their choice of options are very good, with maximum attempt made to accommodate preferences. The college is still not meeting its legal requirement to cover the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. There has been insufficient progress to improve this provision since the last inspection. Two subjects have a lower than recommended allocation of time: 8% is allocated to modern foreign languages and, although good use is made of the time, there is an adverse effect on developing high level skills; 4% of time is allocated to physical education for non-GCSE students and this is not enough to cover the programme of study.
- 38 The college offers very good curricular provision for students with special educational needs. A good range of subjects lead to a Certificate of Achievement alongside GCSE and enable students to be entered for both where appropriate. There are good opportunities for students to take a range of accredited courses to match their levels of need. The ACCESS programme, which offers alternative work-related opportunities alongside a core curriculum of subjects for a small number of disaffected students, is a good example of collaboration with the Youth Team. Access to the curriculum is very good. When students are withdrawn from lessons they cover the same curriculum. The very high quality support from teachers and assistants leads to many students achieving well against prior knowledge.
- 39 A broad range of 'A' and 'AS' level courses is available for students in Years 12 and 13. This includes subjects, such as psychology and sociology, which are not commonly available, and further mathematics is also offered. There are few vocational courses offered, especially at advanced level where there is only one GNVQ course. This is because of the partnership established with a local college of further education. Students value the high quality and independent advice which makes the availability of courses in other educational establishments clear, but would prefer courses in leisure and tourism and advanced health and social care to be available at Hind Leys. There is no provision for religious education.

- 40 Provision for teaching literacy skills is effectively reinforced through all relevant subjects of the curriculum. For example, key words are made explicit in many subjects and students are encouraged to use technical vocabulary. The college has made good progress in the use of writing frames, especially in English. Strategies for numeracy are mostly satisfactory. There has been sound development of mental tests in mathematics, and in design and technology, geography and vocational courses, provision to develop the use of number is appropriate. There is, however, a lack of whole college co-ordination and not all subject areas make sufficient contribution. The use of information and communication technology across all subjects of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 is patchy, resulting in lower than average standards at age 16.
- 41 A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, making an effective contribution to the college's ethos of partnership with its community. Many students are enthusiastic about the wide range of lunch-time activities which include easy access to computers, mixed sport, for instance basketball, and more unusual pursuits such as climbing which is very popular. Students value extra-curricular support for academic areas very highly. There is good provision at lunchtime and after college sessions to support many subject areas and teachers are readily available to help students outside lesson time. A further strength of the college is the involvement of large numbers of students in preparing for and performing in concerts covering dance, drama and music. There is an extensive range of excursions, including language exchanges, field trips, theatre visits, revision conferences, and other opportunities through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- 42 A comprehensive programme of personal and social education is available in Year 10. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. The strategy of giving teachers responsibility for teaching specific areas of the syllabus is proving very effective. This has resulted in a well balanced Year 10 programme, with appropriate coverage of health, drugs and sex education. This is supplemented well with courses such as personal financial management, relationships and policing and justice which are matched well to students' needs. The strategy has not yet extended to Year 11, where provision is only just satisfactory. In Years 12 and 13 provision is ineffective. The planned programme includes good guidance and opportunities for implementing National Records of Achievement, but a lack of structure for tutors results in many students making poor use of their time and others choosing not to attend these sessions.
- 43 Careers education and guidance is a strength. There is a very productive partnership between the college and the careers service. The collaboration between the careers co-ordinator, careers adviser and tutors results in high quality, independent advice for students. There is very good access to a comprehensive careers library and a recent review has identified areas for further improvement. Preparation for and follow-up of work experience is very thorough. A range of talks by guest speakers is matched well to student need. The community makes an effective contribution to students' learning. The college's community status enables a wider range of evening activities to be provided, such as the offer of a course to improve information technology skills (Computer literacy and information technology - CLAIT). However few students take part in these evening sessions. There is a small number of adults who participate in the college's day-time sessions. They state that studying beside students has a positive effect on the learning of both

adults and students.

- 44 Relationships with partnership high schools are very productive. Transfer of information is effective and is used well to determine students' courses. Visits of staff and students between the college and schools help to smooth the transition process and promote continuity of experience. The production of a curriculum 'bridging' project by staff, from the college and high schools working together, is very successful.
- 45 Provision for students' **moral development** is good. Expectations of good behaviour are understood by students and the system of sanctions for transgressions is accepted. Students show a good sense of right and wrong. Teaching in lessons such as English, humanities and personal and social education (PSE) provides good opportunities for students to engage in discussion about moral issues and they respond well to these. Teachers provide good role models. Many aspects of college life embody its aspiration to promote students' **social development** and the college is successful in providing a very good framework for this aspect. This is evident in both the formal curriculum and the daily life of the college. Lessons in many subjects promote the collaborative working of groups and the development of positive and tolerant attitudes towards others. The development of these attitudes is enhanced by the PSE programme in Year 10. Students with special educational needs have many opportunities to develop their social skills. The GCSE humanities course makes a good contribution to students' social and moral development. Outside lessons, the work of the student council, and the willingness of students to help others, both in college and in the community, typify the social ethos of the college. At the last inspection, provision for the **spiritual development** of students was a weakness and only limited progress has been made since then. It remains unsatisfactory. Most students attend only one assembly per fortnight and in these, opportunities for considering issues of belief and values, and for quiet reflection, are not taken. The humanities curriculum provides some understanding of different religions but does not sufficiently help students to reflect on their own beliefs, feelings and values and, therefore, this important opportunity for spiritual development is also largely missed. Most progress has been made during this academic year by the staff engaging in debate about the college's shared interpretation of spirituality and arriving at a current position statement. This includes the identification of possible ways of contributing to spiritual development in each subject of the curriculum. There is no system yet for ensuring that these possibilities turn into real contributions, rather than remaining aspirations. However, some subject areas do take good advantage of the opportunities that arise in the curriculum, particularly in English and the performing arts. Provision for **cultural development** is satisfactory. Across the curriculum this provision is unevenly spread, but is extended by extra-curricular activities and a variety of visits, trips and occasional visits by artists and performers. Wider cultural understanding is extended through a study of black poets in English, learning in humanities about a variety of world religions and considerations of prejudice and anti-racism. However, students have relatively few direct experiences of a range of cultural backgrounds, even those represented in nearby Loughborough or more widely in Leicestershire.
- 46 Governors and senior managers have responded reasonably well to issues raised in the last inspection report, except for the provision for religious education and for students' spiritual development.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

- 47 The college effectively ensures students' welfare, health and safety. The site is well maintained, regular risk assessments take place and no health and safety hazards were identified during the inspection. Good procedures are in place for handling child protection issues should they arise. The principal is the designated member of staff. Medical needs are met well.
- 48 The pastoral system, operating through tutors, heads of year and vice-principals, is well established. Pastoral care is praised by parents. Students have confidence in the arrangements. They know that they can seek help and that what they have to say will be listened to and valued. Tutors promote good attendance and behaviour, although the level of unauthorised absence is above average. The education welfare officer is involved appropriately if there are concerns. The college works hard to improve the standard of behaviour, eliminate oppressive behaviour and improve students' work ethos. There is a clear code of conduct, exclusions are made only in serious cases and implementation of the behaviour policy is consistent. Students know what is expected, feel safe and support the policy. Inappropriate behaviour is quickly and efficiently dealt with and parents are consulted if the need arises. Tutors provide effective support and advice in response to students' pastoral needs. However, registration time is not always used to maximum effect and this is a relative weakness.
- 49 The monitoring of academic performance is good in Year 10 because the review and guidance time, introduced for all students, is used well and aids confidence and self-esteem. However, this programme is not yet in place for the present Year 11. As a consequence, there is limited time for review of individual progress. Post-16, tutorial time provides good opportunities to discuss and review academic progress with students. Those who have special educational needs receive appropriate support of good quality. Special needs teachers and other staff are aware of each student's progress made against specific targets. The college uses a team of key workers, which consists of the special education needs co-ordinator and three principal learning support teachers. Each has responsibility for the monitoring of the academic progress of an identified group. This is very effective because a skilled teacher has oversight of them, knows their needs and is able to ensure that the targeted support is relevant and of good quality.
- 50 Assessment of students' work was identified as a key issue in 1995. Since then, some progress has been made with several strategies implemented, for example the introduction of review and guidance time in Year 10. A group of more able students has been identified and they access a range of specific activities. Teachers are aware of public examination requirements and use the relevant criteria to monitor academic performance. However, in Years 10 and 11, assessment information is not used sufficiently well in two major aspects: it does not always inform and influence curricular planning to ensure that the needs of all students are met, and students are not involved enough in the analysis of their attainment. This is particularly the case for boys and for students who have a higher than average attainment in particular subjects. Students are not sufficiently aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and specific action to promote improvement is not always made clear. The assessment of students who have special educational needs is thorough and is used well to encourage and challenge them. This has a positive impact on their progress, it improves basic skills, and parents are informed as required. Procedures for assessment in Years 12 and 13 are good. Assessment

is used effectively to inform future work and the monitoring of academic progress is thorough. This is particularly the case for students on GNVQ courses and in English, humanities and business studies.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 51 The college has satisfactory links with parents. Attendance at the pre-inspection meeting and the number of responses to the questionnaire were very low but the views expressed were generally supportive. Parents confirmed that their children liked the college and were making good progress. A few parents were concerned about behaviour and homework. However, behaviour is very good and is much improved since the last inspection. There is some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which homework is used to supplement work undertaken in class.
- 52 Parents are pleased with pastoral and curriculum information and with the college's response to suggestions. Some parents expressed concerns regarding the lack of information on progress in all subjects. This is a valid concern: reports to parents are too vague. Comments refer mainly to attitude, effort and presentation issues. Reports frequently omit information on progress or gains made in understanding and skills. Methods or targets for improvement are lacking. The student planner is not intended as a vehicle for home-college dialogue. This is a missed opportunity to involve parents more in the education of their child. Parents of students who have special educational needs are involved fully in decisions made about provision for their children, and have the opportunity to attend annual reviews and make their views known. They are kept very well informed by the college about all aspects of their children's progress in relation to their specific learning difficulties. The learning support faculty also provides good strategies to support parents of students with special education needs through the 'Toe by Toe' initiative.
- 53 The majority of parents have signed the recently introduced home-college agreement. Student performances are well supported by parents and there is satisfactory attendance at parents' evenings. The response of parents to staff requests for discussion and support are generally good. Parents of students engaged in work experience are always encouraged to be involved in the placement opportunities. Governors actively seek parental views through annual surveys in order to consider suggested improvements. Additionally, some parents are part of a focus group, and contacted by governors to seek opinions. The college has a real wish to involve parents fully, particularly as teachers and staff support strongly the ethos of community provision.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

- 54 Over the last three years the college's main priorities have been to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement for all students. The college aims to fulfil students' individual potential, to value each student equally, to develop learning as a collective endeavour and encourage all to participate in the policy making process. Partnership with the whole community is central to the college's work. The priorities of the whole college management plan are to:
- review and develop the curriculum, particularly in personal and social education, learning support, post-16 and information and communication Technology;
 - enhance policies to the support progress, welfare and well-being of students;

- provide appropriate professional development opportunities for all staff;
 - refine monitoring and evaluation processes;
 - improve further the physical environment
 - and continue to foster links with external agencies and partners.
- 55 These aims are promoted well and priorities are appropriate. The few parents who expressed views believe that the college is led well and that the climate for all students to achieve has improved. Inspection findings confirm these views.
- 56 The clear educational direction provided by the principal is a strength. Improvements since the last inspection have been particularly outstanding in three major areas. The quality of teaching is now much improved, with only 5% of teaching unsatisfactory compared with 33 % in 1995. The working ethos of the college was a key issue in 1995, with a particular concern over attitudes and behaviour of students in Year 10. These are now very good in all years. Processes for management and systems for monitoring and evaluation are now in place, although impact on standards, at age 16, has yet to materialise.
- 57 The principal, who was appointed in January 1997, has successfully instigated and managed many changes. He is supported effectively by a committed and experienced senior team and good year leaders. The priorities for improvement, chosen by the senior team over the last few years, have been appropriate and focused on promoting high quality teaching and positive behaviour in all years. Senior managers and teachers are committed to ensuring that each student has an equal chance to achieve. The positive impact of leadership is best evidenced in the very good level of personal development of students.
- 58 The principal and his team express clearly their intention to raise standards at GCSE. Teaching and behaviour are monitored thoroughly and teachers and all staff share a common purpose. However, the analysis and use of examination data, by gender and for different groups of students, particularly the more able, is still at an early stage of development. Whole college priorities, goals and outcomes are not reflected sufficiently in departmental development plans. The upward trend in the high standards achieved by students in the sixth form is a strength. The college has the capacity to improve results at the end of Key Stage 4. The diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses is done well at senior management level, but action to secure rapid improvement has not yet been translated into effective application across all faculties and departments. The leadership and management of special education needs provision is good.
- 59 Governors work closely with the college management team and are very aware of strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body's relationship with staff, particularly through the community dimension of the college, is very good. Governors are increasingly involved in decisions, and their contribution to the strategic direction of the college is growing, guided by a useful governors' action plan. They responded well to most key issues of the last inspection, with reasonable progress in two and good progress in seven of the eleven issues identified. Response to two key issues - daily worship and religious education - has been unsatisfactory and statutory requirements are not met. A further issue is the absence of a statutorily required information technology report to parents of 14 – 16 year old students. Performance targets for the principal have been set, as required by law.

- 60 The senior management team and governors provide effective control and administration of the college's budget. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the development planning cycle; however, individual targets are insufficiently costed. The finance sub-committee monitors and ratifies expenditure well with good assurance of best value through rigorous tendering. The governors, in partnership with the college, have adopted a range of appropriate policies which guide the overall financial governance well. A point of strength is the links made by governors with industry and the wider community, which have provided a secure foundation for co-operative ventures and sponsorship. Governors are rigorous in requiring justification when significant spending is necessary. There is less rigour in the evaluation of value for money and the impact upon standards. The latest audit gave general praise to the college's secure financial systems. All minor procedural issues having been dealt with. Daily financial administration and budget management is carried out effectively by the bursar, who provides regular statements of expenditure to all cost centres, finance governors and the senior management team. There is appropriate separation of college and community budgets, the latter being managed very well. The successful removal of the deficit within the budget by the current college administration, with the support of the LEA and coupled with the projected rise in entry numbers, is allowing growth to be built into the budget forecasts. The sixth form is substantially cost effective with only marginal subsidy from Key Stage 4.
- 61 Over the last few years, the strategic review of the whole accommodation, fabric, display and furniture has enhanced the learning environment. Improvements particularly worthy of mention are: the general quality of the accommodation, the very good use of students' work to enhance the learning environment, the better provision in the library and in several curriculum areas, such as learning support, design and technology, English, modern foreign languages, humanities and science. The available resources and accommodation are used well. Provision for access to information and communication technology (ICT) is only just satisfactory. Further development and use of ICT are needed across subjects and in the special needs area. There are still shortages of books and materials in mathematics, science and religious education.
- 62 Staffing is matched well to the needs of the curriculum, except in religious education. The access to and impact of continuing professional development is good. The induction and support provided for newly qualified teachers are very good. All teachers are monitored annually and discuss effective strategies with senior managers, heads of faculties and with colleagues. Performance targets are not set in terms of examination results, but a schedule of professional reviews is in place. The additional teaching hours for students who have special educational needs are used appropriately to provide support in subjects. Ancillary and other support staff make an effective contribution to the quality of provision and to students' learning.
- 63 Considering the good quality of teaching, the very good progress in the personal and social development of students, the improved average points score from 14 to 16, and the above average results at 18, the college gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 64 In order to improve further the quality of education and raise standards, the principal, governors, senior managers and staff should:

- (1) **Improve results in GCSE examinations, at age 16, by**
- improving the rate of progress and attainment of boys,
 - planning for ambitious but realistic challenge in all lessons,
 - meeting the needs of more able students. [3, 4, 6 and 36]
- (2) **Improve the quality of education provided**
- in history in Years 10 and 11, [113 and 121]
 - in religious education in all years, [122 and 128]
 - in use of information technology across all subjects. [13]
- (3) **Improve the use of assessment information to raise achievement by**
- using data more effectively, at whole college and departmental levels,
 - involving students in the assessment of their work, and setting individual targets for improvement,
 - reporting to parents, more precisely, information on their child's attainment and progress. [30, 50 and 52]
 -
- (4) **Improve provision for the spiritual development of students. [45]**

65 Important note: Issues number 1 and 3 are already identified in the College Management Plan

66 The following statutory requirements should also be addressed:

- To report to parents on information technology in Year 11
- To cover the IT programmes of study fully at Key Stage 4.
- To meet the statutory requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in religious education.
- To meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

67 To aid improvement, governors and managers should also consider the following subsidiary issue:

Make better use of morning registration time (8.35-8.50am) in all years. Improve personal, social and health education, building on the good practice in Year 10 [42]

Note: The numbers in brackets refer to the paragraphs in which the weaknesses are discussed.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- 68 The college makes a strong commitment to providing high quality education for the local and wider community. A wide-ranging programme aims to meet the needs of all ages and the college promotes access by offering courses in the daytime and evenings, with some also at weekends and in the holidays. There are social, recreational and vocational activities available, and qualifications include academic studies and the development of capability in key skills. The principle of lifelong learning is at the centre of policies and practice, an example of which is the good quality individual support and guidance made available to encourage participants to re-enter the education system and to achieve their personal goals. The crèche serves the local community well.
- 69 Enrolments have increased, completion rates are high and, where applicable, performance in examinations is in line with national averages. Facilities are looked after and valued by community users and many user-groups have had a long-standing involvement in the community programme. A variety of projects give opportunities for volunteers to invest in their community and are supported well. Opportunities for college students are significantly extended through access to the community education programme, and approximately fifty students take advantage of community class provision. Others join in with older and younger members of the community on various activities, such as work placements with pre-school groups and involvement with affiliated groups, for example regular productions take place in the community theatre. The participation of adults on college courses is small and has not increased since the previous inspection. Sports activities are the main area that students opt for in the community programme.
- 70 The management and organisation of community education is clearly identified and the manager is a member of the college's senior management team. The governing body fulfils a formal link between college and community, ensuring that a common ethos is shared. The aims of community education reinforce the aims and values of the college, although they have not been reviewed for some time. A number of improvements have been secured: facilities and administrative arrangements have been upgraded, increased flexibility has been introduced into the enrolment process and communication structures, such as the link established between youth work and the college council, have been strengthened. The Youth Team offers relevant and helpful activities, such as the information shop available at break time and the support for young adults on Fridays (Breakfast Club). The team contributes to the Access programme, participates in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, as well as running youth clubs in the town.
- 71 Development plans for each programme area are comprehensive, although planning lacks precision at present. Timescales and strategies often lack definition for particular developments and a strategic overview, including priorities and direction, is not clearly articulated. There are some shared development projects and resources are used collaboratively to benefit all learners.
- 72 Community education is provided within the commissioning agreement with the Local Education Authority. A framework for quality assurance includes an annual reporting process, observation of teaching and direct feedback from users. Teachers' schemes of work are reviewed and there are good opportunities for professional development. Clear guidance sets out criteria for effective teaching and suggested methods of organisation. Evaluation documents record many positive features, although comments are usually more descriptive than evaluative.

- 73 Community provision gives additional opportunities to college students and the presence of adults in the college establishes a tangible and positive view of continuing education. The pattern of take-up does not in effect broaden students' choice of post-16 subjects and community service placements are limited. Targets should be established to widen participation so that a greater proportion of students can gain an enriched curriculum and a direct, personal experience of the provision offered by the community.

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	180
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.5	20.0	37.2	33.3	5.0	0.0	0.0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the college's students

Students on the college's roll	Y10 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the college's roll	457	235
Number of full-time students eligible for free college meals	34	0

Special educational needs	Y10 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	38	2
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	72	0

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	1

Student mobility in the last college year	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
College data	6.9	College data	1.8
National comparative data	7.9	National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	116	105	221

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	50	108	111
	Girls	58	95	99
	Total	108	203	210
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	College	49.3 (42.8)	91.9 (88.7)	95 (92.8)
	National	46.3 (46)	90.8 (87)	95.9 (93)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score Per student	College	41.5
	National	37.8

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	30	47	77

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
College	17.4	17.3	17.4	N/a	1.5	1.5
National	17.1	17.6	17.1 (17.8)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (3.)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	College	96
	National	72

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	662
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last college year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	30	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y10 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.8
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y10 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	277

Deployment of teachers: Y10 – Y13]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.4
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Average teaching group size: Y10 – Y13

Key Stage 4	25
6 th Form	16

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	1687438
Total expenditure	1695660
Expenditure per student	2550
Balance brought forward from previous year	35675
Balance carried forward to next year	27453

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	692
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	29	63	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in college.	32	66	0	0	2
Behaviour in the college is good.	22	49	15	7	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	54	22	0	10
The teaching is good.	17	61	10	0	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	59	10	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	41	49	10	0	0
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	54	2	2	2
The college works closely with parents.	17	49	24	0	10
The college is well led and managed.	12	68	0	5	15
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	66	7	0	2
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	34	24	2	24

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH (including Media Studies and Communications)

- 74 Students enter Year 10 with attainment generally at the national expectation, with the exception of a significant number of boys whose results in the national curriculum tests, taken at the end of Key Stage 3, are well below average. In 1999, the gap between boys' and girls' results was 26% at level 5 and above, and 22% at level 6 and above. These percentages are much higher than the national figure. This compares with differences of only 16%, at level 5 and above, and 6% at level 6 and above, in 1997. While attainment on entry has improved over the last three years, with girls performing particularly well, the gap between girls' and boys' attainment has widened markedly. Review of students' work in Year 10 indicates that students enter with a broad range of competence, particularly in writing at length and with accuracy. However, as they progress through Key Stage 4, students improve the length, quality of content and accuracy of their work. The department, therefore, adds value over the course, though not sufficiently to change significantly the pattern of boys under-achievement, which manifests itself in lower GCSE English results.
- 75 In 1999, in GCSE English, for which the department enters the majority of students, girls achieved results close to the national average at grades A*-C, while boys under-performed when compared with boys nationally. This led to the overall results being below the national average. However, in line with previous years, results, at grades A*-G, were at the national average. The department had very good success in the re-sits for this cohort of students, when twenty-one achieved a grade C or above in the following November. In the 1999 English Literature examinations, with 87% of the cohort entered, students attained above the national average at grades A*-C, with both boys and girls attaining above the respective national figures. Students not entered for GCSE are having success in the Certificate of Achievement examination. A key issue is to challenge the most able in order to achieve A* grades. The department recognises the challenge of raising boys' attainment. Plans are in place with appropriate strategies in operation to motive them towards success and challenge negative attitudes amongst a significant minority. The department also offers GCSE Media Studies which, in 1999, resulted in all students entered achieving A*-G, with 64% A*-C. This popular course provides a useful foundation for those going on to take A-level Communications.
- 76 In 1999, in A-level GCE English Literature, all students achieved grades A-E, with 74% achieving grades A-C. This 100% pass rate at grades A-E has been maintained for the last five years. Students show commitment and interest with good levels of knowledge and understanding of the texts studied. The trend in results for this course is upward with a gradually increasing intake. A-level GCE Communications is also provided by the department for those who want an alternative to the literary emphasis of the English Literature course. It provides a good course for those students finding success at Key Stage 4 with Media Studies. The results over the last five years show an upward trend with a good pass rate at grades A-E. Girls generally do better than boys, though the gap closed significantly in 1999.
- 77 Standards of literacy on entry are sound overall, with a minority having weak literacy skills. The college has an average entry profile, though there is a significant

minority of boys with low results in the Key Stage 3 tests. Standards of written work vary considerably on entry into Year 10, with some students finding it difficult to sustain ideas when writing at length. Technical accuracy and the quality of presentation is often weak. However, with the aid of effective learning support staff, these students' skills are developed well, with marked improvement over Key Stage 4. For a further significant group standards are high, with work showing considerable maturity and accuracy. Current classes in Key Stage 4 English have produced some work of a very high standard, particularly in giving personal responses to texts. On balance, standards of writing across the curriculum are sound with some areas of strength in English and geography. Reading standards are generally good and students have confidence when reading aloud. The English department has an appropriate reading commitment, which is aimed at encouraging boys to develop good reading habits. In English, many students develop good skills for accessing texts and they are able to use quotation appropriately. However, across the curriculum, reading comprehension is not sufficiently practised. Speaking and listening skills are generally developed well. The emphasis in English and drama on collaborative group work, and the sharing of work in progress, encourages students to develop their ideas and to listen to those of others. Across the curriculum, good progress in these areas is often dependent upon planned opportunities and teaching the requisite skills. Standards are generally sound in most subjects and good in English, drama, geography, mathematics and physical education. Students who have special educational needs make good progress in the development of basic skills, appropriately documented in their individual education plans. The good quality support provided by staff contributes to this rapid progress. Standards in all four areas of literacy improve as students move into the sixth form. Good writing skills are evidenced as well as good comprehension competency with the texts studied. The level of discussion is often high.

- 78 Teaching is very good. The head of department provides committed, informed and enthusiastic leadership to the English team. A particular strength of the department is the team spirit and the way in which the whole team is determined to improve student performance through interesting learning programmes. The specialist team provides a very effective knowledge base, which is supplemented by the extensive examination experience of senior members. Teaching post-16 is a particular strength. At Key Stage 4, basic skills are taught well within effective schemes of work, with useful literacy strategies to support learning. The good attention to basics allows students to progress well throughout the key stage. Planning is good with very secure coverage of the national curriculum and relevant syllabus requirements. Teachers want students to achieve well and communicate their aspirations effectively, with particular focus on raising boys' motivation and application. The quality of relationships and teachers' expectations mean that many students put extra effort into their work using their own time. Only a minority, mainly boys, finds it hard to maintain focus and as a consequence do not achieve their potential. The management of students is very good, with lessons having a range of learning activities within them which results in students developing good collaborative skills. This was exemplified well in the skilled stepping of activities which develop student confidence, methodology and personal responses to poetry during a Year 10 introductory lesson to the GCSE Poetry Anthology. Time is also used well to give pace and interest. A further strength of the department is the consistent application of a detailed marking and assessment approach, which involves making assessment objectives explicit, involving students in the assessment of their work and using teachers' comments to aid progress and set targets. The use of cover sheets for course work is effective. As a consequence,

students are clear about their progress and what they need to do to improve. Effective standardisation meetings ensure consistency of assessment judgements. The liaison programme with the high schools is particularly effective, with a range of initiatives to ease the transition from school to college. In Years 12 and 13, teaching is very good. Methods are particularly effective as they are selected for a specific purpose and are varied, with appropriate use of group work, time given for individual reflection, collaborative discussions and skilful questioning.

- 79 The majority of students show very positive attitudes towards their work, with sixth form students exhibiting mature attitudes and application. Girls sustain focus and respond well. However, a minority of boys lack motivation to achieve well, which results in their under-achievement at GCSE. Attitudes in lessons, however, provide evidence that many boys want to do well and that the department's work in this area is beginning to succeed. The development of the media courses and the increasing use of information technology are important elements in the overall strategy to engage boys more. Very little poor behaviour was observed and this was generally dealt with effectively by staff. There is a distinct growth in maturity throughout Key Stage 4 with students working more independently in groups, as evidenced in a Year 11 lesson analysing genre and identifying authors through openings and endings of novels. The subject makes a positive contribution to the development of social skills through the emphasis on group work, presenting in front of the class and performing in classroom drama. Students listen well to each other and are sensitive to the other person's ideas.
- 80 Curriculum provision is broad and balanced, with statutory requirements met fully. The range of routes to certification at Key Stage 4 and post-16 is an appropriate match to students' abilities and interests. The courses offer considerable opportunity for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students, for example through the texts studied, the social groupings within which learning takes place and the many extra-curricular experiences provided, such as theatre trips, Loughborough University courses and workshops involving writers. The department contributes significantly to the furtherance of the college's aims and values. The key whole college target of improving literacy skills is reflected appropriately in the department's development plan and a range of strategies is already in place.
- 81 The department has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Teaching, which was criticised in the last report, is now a strength and examination outcomes have improved, particularly for literature, though boys under-achievement persists and the gap between boys and girls has grown. Writing standards have improved, as has the quality of presentation. Information technology is still not embedded securely in the schemes of work but there is an appropriate emphasis on word-processed and desk-top published course work. This was very effective in a Year 13 Communications lesson, where students produced a brochure using information technology with considerable facility. A-level remains a strength. However, groups still consist predominantly of girls.
- 82 In order to improve standards further, the faculty should:
- address boys under-achievement, particularly in GCSE English;
 - develop target setting further;
 - continue to challenge and extend more able students;
 - develop more detailed and informative data analysis.

MATHEMATICS

- 83 Students benefit from a broad mathematics curriculum. They work hard and make sound progress to achieve satisfactory standards at 16 and 18.
- 84 After a decline in GCSE results in 1998, there was a very substantial improvement in 1999 with students reaching standards which are now in line with the national average for A* to C grades. Results at A* to G grades were significantly better than national averages, reflecting the very good progress made by low attaining students and those with special educational needs. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. A-level results were in line with those nationally in 1997 but dipped substantially in 1998 and, despite an improvement in 1999, remained below national averages. Standards observed during the inspection were higher than indicated in previous examination results.
- 85 Many students demonstrate good achievement at all levels of attainment. Low attainers in Year 10 show understanding of trigonometric ratios and in Year 11 they use algebra to describe the link between consecutive numbers. More able students are challenged well and show very high attainment, for example Year 10 students identify the effect of changes to quadratic equations on graphs. Year 13 A-level students achieve satisfactory standards. They are able to devise formulae for circular motion and Year 12 students can derive differential equations for tangents of curves.
- 86 Standards of numeracy are in line with those normally seen. Students make effective use of detailed calculations, such as on light values in design technology and produce accurate graphs in geography, when studying population structures. A-level students make satisfactory use of mathematics; for instance, in physics they cope with differentiation, and in physical education they manipulate data on reaction times. There are a few examples of lack of knowledge in basic numeracy being a barrier to higher level skills, such as in mathematics where Year 12 students are insufficiently confident with basic fractions to develop algebraic fractions. The mathematics department contributes well to developing literacy skills through extensive use of key words and strong encouragement given to students to provide results, in an articulate manner, with no fear of technical language.
- 87 Teaching is of good quality in all year groups. Teachers use competent subject knowledge to make well-structured presentations with a beneficial effect on students' appreciation of the importance of step-by-step approaches and attention to detail. Very clear learning objectives are made explicit to students and often used very well to provide timed targets with a strong, positive effect on pace of working. Teachers make very effective use of questioning to involve large numbers of students in recapping prior learning and extending their ideas into new areas. A particular strength is the use of investigations to encourage the exploration of mathematics, resulting in students who can explain their understanding, rather than just apply techniques. This was observed several times during the inspection, with students showing high levels of understanding and making good progress, for instance Year 10 students studying trigonometry and Year 12 students exploring the relationships between polynomials and their gradient function. Almost all teachers have established a partnership ethos, with a well-disciplined working atmosphere, but on a small number of occasions the teacher does not ensure that all students are listening and does not challenge inappropriate behaviour sufficiently. Teachers occasionally make very good use of resources, for instance when linking a graphical

calculator to an overhead projector to make a presentation, but too many opportunities to use resources are missed, with teachers relying too heavily on verbal or whiteboard presentations. Marking is mostly thorough, but there are some examples of unmarked work where errors have not been corrected. Students with special educational needs benefit from very high quality teaching, both within lessons and when withdrawn in small groups. This often enables them to understand their mathematics, and to work as well as their more able peers. Teaching of the more able is effective. Teachers of higher attaining groups use the opportunity well to progress quickly through basic learning objectives and move on to more advanced concepts. For example, high attainers in Year 11 move on rapidly from using directed numbers for expanding brackets, to using factorisation and formulae to solve quadratic equations.

- 88 Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Almost all have a very clear understanding of the college's ethos of students and teachers working in partnership. They are sufficiently confident to put forward their own ideas or to ask for help if they need it. Lessons are often characterised by a strong atmosphere of quiet, purposeful collaboration and enjoyment, fostering perseverance, when faced with difficulties, and avoiding over-reliance on the teacher. This is most effective in Years 12 and 13 when students are discussing open-ended problem solving such as variations in a scout's pace or team swimming. Exceptions were observed in a small number of lessons in Key Stage 4, where up to a quarter of students were reluctant to begin a task, demonstrated lack of interest and intermittently indulged in day dreaming, playing with equipment or shouting out unnecessarily. Almost all students respond very positively to opportunities for independent learning, but a few low attainers are slow to get going when unsure about how to approach an investigation.
- 89 The department is led well. The head of mathematics has established a dedicated commitment to raise standards, and is supported by almost all teachers of mathematics. There is a good balance of maintenance and development items in the departmental plan but this is insufficiently linked to measurable success criteria for higher achievement. The scheme of work identifies objectives well, but makes too little mention of ranges of resources, teaching styles or monitoring arrangements. There is a good system of end of topic assessment but no appropriate record to track student progress over a key stage. The department is beginning to analyse data to quantify progress and inform curriculum planning but this requires more development. Reports to parents are insufficiently clear when communicating specific progress in mathematics. The suite of spacious rooms represents very good accommodation but there is too little use of posters and display to foster the historical and cultural development of mathematics.
- 90 Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in teaching, in the level of challenge for students and in their attitudes and behaviour. Results at GCSE have remained in line with national averages and results at 'A' level have declined, although current Year 13 students are performing in line with course expectation.
- 91 In order to raise standards further, teachers should:
- promote interest and commitment in all lessons;
 - improve departmental development planning;
 - develop systems to track students' progress and use assessment to inform curriculum planning;

- improve reports to parents.

SCIENCE

- 92 Students receive a satisfactory science education and achieve exam results in line with those nationally. Many lessons are good and are enjoyed by students, but this is not sufficiently consistent for all groups to be making appropriate progress.
- 93 Recently students have entered the college with average science results. Over the past five years, results in GCSE exams have been similar to the national average, but have not shown the national trend upwards. In 1999, a high proportion of 16 year old students were successful in the GCSE double science examination. 49% of students gained the higher grades, A* to C, compared with 48% nationally, with boys' results above the national average and those of girls below average. In most recent years, students achieved better results in science than in their other subjects. A-level results have fluctuated. On the whole they have been similar to the national results, but have declined over the past two years. Physics results have been the most consistent in their improvement.
- 94 For current students, standards are largely in line with this national picture at Key Stage 4. For example, students have sufficient knowledge of how rocks are formed to be able to identify evidence of formation when examining samples. They can interpret this sufficiently well to sort them into the major rock types and suggest an important stage in their formation. Students make the progress typical for their age, although the more able tend not to reach their full potential. Post-16, attainment is in line with course expectations. Work in A-level physics is often better than that usually found, biology standards of work are consistently satisfactory, whilst chemistry is weaker, with less well structured written notes and more hesitant knowledge and understanding of the expected information.
- 95 Teaching is nearly always at least satisfactory and is often good. It is slightly stronger in A-level lessons than in the GCSE years. A-level teaching is good. Teachers have a high professional commitment which shows itself in thoroughly planned lessons and well-prepared resource materials. They are very thorough in identifying precisely the purpose of a lesson and in many lessons students are clearly told what they need to learn. At the end of the lesson, they check their progress against those expectations. Many of the better lessons are marked by a warm rapport and lively presentation which engages students and interests them in the content. This is combined with a variety of activities pitched at a challenging level and conducted at a lively pace to ensure that all students in the class make good progress in their learning. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on rocks, the teacher's enthusiasm and encouragement kept students working through a variety of activities, with the more able set the more challenging task of devising a key to identify the rocks they had studied. The majority of lessons of mixed ability classes have less effective methods for catering for more able students, who are often not challenged sufficiently. In the relatively few unsatisfactory lessons observed, students worked stolidly through tasks from worksheets or textbooks for too long and developed little interest in the subject. For example, in a lesson on gravitation and the motion of the Earth, too long was spent dutifully revising earlier learning, particularly for those able students who had already mastered these ideas. The large majority of students, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and developing their understanding of scientific ideas. Their ability to investigate scientifically is less consistently

developed, the accent in lessons being on assessing their skills rather than on systematically teaching and developing these skills. Students can satisfactorily plan and conduct fair tests, handle equipment, measure and analyse their results. Too many seldom progress past this basic competence. There are too few opportunities for students to develop and apply their information technology skills in science.

- 96 Most students have positive attitudes to lessons. Behaviour is rarely unsatisfactory and students work safely during practical activities. They show mature attitudes in lessons, work well in groups and relate well to their teachers. The subject contributes well to students' social development. In a relatively small number of lessons scientific curiosity is developed well and, occasionally, students are inspired by the intellectual challenge and stimulation presented by the teacher, such as in A-level physics. The increasing popularity of A-level biology reflects these positive attitudes.
- 97 The management of the science faculty is satisfactory with the day-to-day administration being stronger than the longer term strategic leadership. There are clear aims, which support those of the college, strong teamwork and shared commitment to the work of the faculty. The faculty runs smoothly and resources are well managed through the effective work of the two technicians. Many procedures rely on informal guidance and departmental expectations rather than on clear policies. This results in too much variability, for example in marking and in the use of targets with students. Marks are now assembled onto a computer database, but too little use and analysis of routine data is carried out to inform future development. Despite the good equality of access to the curriculum for all students, there was weaker performance by girls in 1999. There was too little analysis of basic test results to pinpoint this difference, or to investigate whether the department is adding sufficient value to students' learning. The faculty's development plan provides an outline of main actions but its goals are implicit rather than explicit and are not sharply focused on improving student's learning and attainment. Staffing of the faculty is good and the quality of accommodation has recently been improved to provide an inviting learning environment, although some laboratories are often crowded during practical work, particularly given the larger than average size of science classes. Resources are generally adequate, although there are too few textbooks.
- 98 Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory progress in improving the quality of teaching in science lessons, with more active involvement of students. Behaviour is now good, motivation of students has improved and science laboratories have been refurbished. Only in A-level physics has there been satisfactory progress in improving examination results.
- 99 The priorities for development of the faculty should include:
- improving provision for the more able students;
 - planning for the development of students' investigative abilities;
 - increasing the use of information technology;
 - refining management procedures to secure longer term improvement, such as monitoring the effectiveness of the faculty, analysis of assessment information, setting targets and development planning.

HUMANITIES

- 100 The college includes the study of GCSE humanities in the core curriculum as an entitlement for all students. The course makes a good contribution to the overall aims of the college, providing good opportunities for students to learn about contemporary social and moral issues, and develop their own ideas
- 101 Results, at the age of 16, are above average with 55% of students achieving grades at A* to C in 1999. Almost all students finished the course with a grade A to G. Girls achieve higher grades than boys, and this disparity has not been sufficiently analysed for action to be taken to improve boys' achievement. Current students develop good research skills through independent study for examination coursework. Standards of work in the subject are generally in line with course expectation and there are many examples of good quality work in Key Stage 4 projects. Students can explain ideas clearly and, during discussions, demonstrate good understanding of a range of sensitive issues, such as prejudice and persecutions. Speaking skills are developed well.
- 102 Attitudes to learning are good. The GCSE course engages students well in discussions on tolerance, equality, co-operation and open-mindedness. Students respond positively to this and display good levels of personal development. When students display negative attitudes, teachers cajole, persuade and encourage them to better efforts. Some students take the initiative and organise coursework and assignments well. Other students, including some able students, need more guidance to structure their work clearly, and to show what they can do for themselves in terms of research, data handling or evaluation.
- 103 The quality of teaching is mostly sound, with some examples of good teaching. In a few cases, teaching is less effective. The balance of positive features in the quality of teaching means there is much for the faculty to learn from its own best practice. Where teaching is good, a variety of teaching and learning activities are used purposefully to build up students' conceptual grasp of humanities. Teaching draws on a wide range of carefully chosen examples and case-studies to stimulate interest, discussion and skills such as application, analysis and evaluation. Examples include work that engages students on challenging topics like race, the environment, or the social and psychological aspects of prejudice. Teaching usually sets a warm and positive atmosphere. Students feel they are treated like adults. The very best teaching enables them to apply their learning to situations of social or moral concern in their own lives and communities; this is part of the college's intention in running GCSE humanities for all students. Where teaching is less effective, students are passive because they are required only to listen, or to do copy writing and not to respond for themselves. Some teaching is weakened by poor subject knowledge. In lessons where teachers talk for a high proportion of the time and ask only a few closed questions, there is too little challenge for more able students. Teaching makes careful provision for less able students to make progress, and teachers are concerned to clarify and exemplify concepts.
- 104 Procedures for assessing students' work are developing, and recent initiatives, to bring greater consistency and clarity to the way students' work is marked, are still in need of further refinement. Insufficient use is made of information technology, particularly in developing student's skills in data handling. The use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning is satisfactory. Good practice was seen in personal studies, where staff work hard to provide constructive feedback and improvement targets to students at a 'draft/redraft' stage. This is appreciated by students, and makes a good contribution to standards achieved.

- 105 The management of the subject is good. Changes are based on agreed evidence. The head of faculty sets appropriate and purposeful direction, and takes into account the importance of team work.
- 106 There was no specific report on this subject in 1995. To continue to build on the standards of attainment already achieved, the faculty should:
- analyse performance data and results rigorously and set more ambitious targets for GCSE performance;
 - examine the causes of relative underachievement among boys, plan to tackle the issue and monitor performance;
 - plan for more pace and rigour in teaching;
 - introduce structured use of information technology, particularly in research and data processing tasks.

GEOGRAPHY

- 107 In geography, students benefit from very good teaching, and work with interest and commitment.
- 108 Students make good progress in Years 10 and 11 and achieve results in the GCSE examinations which are in line with national subject standards. They have a sound grasp of basic map and graph skills, and can combine these, for example, when drawing maps to show population distribution in Year 11. They also have a sound knowledge of terminology, and can explain the patterns which they see in both the physical and human landscape, for example, when learning about coastal features in Year 10, and settlement structures in Year 11. Students can describe the effect that people have on the landscape, but some are less confident in explaining how this may interact with natural processes. Students with special educational needs make good progress in their course, leading to a Certificate of Achievement. The progress of some of the more able students, however, is slow, and there are fewer students than normal, particularly boys, who gain the higher grades. The students who choose to take geography in Years 12 and 13, continue to make rapid progress, and they achieve good results in the A-level examination. They gain a good understanding of a range of physical and human issues, for example in their studies of environmental management in Year 12, and of contrasting global ecosystems in Year 13.
- 109 Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, and of the specific requirements of the examinations syllabuses, and teach with confidence and authority. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on coastal management the teacher used both large and small-scale maps to give a clear and informative introduction. This enabled the students to grasp quickly the underlying context and location of the case study, and gain a good understanding of some of the more complex processes, which are shaping the cliffs and beaches of the Holderness region of eastern England. Lessons are planned carefully to include a variety of challenging activities which make good use of a range of resources. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on agriculture the teacher provided a sequence of resource sheets which enabled the students to develop both their skills in data analysis and their understanding of the causes and effects of changes in the rural landscape. A particular strength of the teaching is the excellent relationships teachers establish with their students. This creates a very positive atmosphere in the classroom, and encourages students to

work with determination and confidence. Teachers make good use of assessment, and the students value the feedback they are given. This is working particularly well in Year 13 where the teacher marks the students' work, using the criteria published in the examination syllabus. The students can then identify their strengths and weaknesses, and set targets for future improvement. A further strength of the teaching is in the use of a range of classroom activities targeted at different students. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on population structures in India, all students, including those with special educational needs, learned to draw a population pyramid and to describe the patterns it showed. The more able students were also able to gain an understanding of related concepts such as migration and dependency. In some lessons students do not have sufficient up to date text books. Very little use is made of information technology.

- 110 The attitude of the students to their lessons is very good. They show interest and try hard in class. Their concentration and determination is evident in the quality of the work in their exercise books and folders. Students make the most of opportunities to work independently, including fieldwork investigations, and tackle coursework for both GCSE and A-level with enthusiasm.
- 111 The subject is very well managed. The teachers work very well together and this has enabled the college to make very good progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and standards of achievement in both GCSE and GCE A- level are now higher.
- 112 In order to continue to raise standards the department should:
- extend the use of assessment to set targets for all students, particularly the more able, and for the boys who could achieve higher GCSE grades;
 - improve provision of text books for all students, particularly those in Years 12 and 13;
 - make more use of information technology to support learning for all students.

HISTORY

- 113 The numbers studying history have declined in recent years both at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In 1999, GCSE results were very much improved. Although only sixteen students were entered, three quarters of them achieved a grade A* to C. This is well above the national average. Of the three students who took A-level history, all passed with grade D. Few higher grades were achieved in any of the examinations taken.
- 114 At age 16, attainment in history, is below that normally seen. For example, in a Year 11 revision lesson students could answer questions on the life of the Plains Indians, but answers were often brief with little analysis or evaluation. Written work is insufficient in quantity, poorly presented and does not match the level of understanding shown by oral response. Higher attaining students can select historical information in a coherent way to produce descriptive accounts. Girls do better than boys especially in coursework. Coursework lacks extended writing, and students do not make sufficient use of their background knowledge to produce detailed answers. Students with special educational needs acquire superficial factual knowledge of the periods studied but lack deeper understanding. Teachers have good information about the needs of these students but targets on their individual education plans are not made subject specific.

- 115 For students studying A-level history, attainment is in line with expectations for the course. Students in Year 13 have good understanding of the historical and political situation of the state of Israel. In Year 12, they are able to express confidently their views on liberal democracy, fascism, and communism, and the more able can support their answers with historical evidence. Weaker students make generalisations and do not quote specific facts to support them. In both years, note-taking skills are under-developed and the written expression of the weaker students is poor.
- 116 Behaviour is sound at Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. There is a small amount of rudeness in Year 11, mostly by boys, and the teacher tolerates this. Students doing A-level show a great amount of enjoyment in the subject and respect for the expertise of their teachers. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and work together well. At both key stages there is insufficient opportunity for independent research or investigation, although some tasks require students to investigate topics for themselves and some use the internet for their own research work.
- 117 There are shortcomings in teaching at Key Stage 4. The teacher has good subject knowledge and this leads to satisfactory acquisition of historical facts by students. However, lessons are not always properly planned and introductions are often too lengthy. A narrow range of teaching methods is used and no group work, historical artefacts or information technology were observed. There are low expectations, with poor and unfinished written work being accepted and time wasted. This results in a slow pace in lessons and unsatisfactory progress. More able students are often marking time. Insufficient structured guidance is given to students to help them complete coursework. Assessment procedures are not systematic enough and marking does not tell students what they have to do to improve their work. Homework is not set with sufficient frequency.
- 118 Teaching for A-level students is much better than that at Key Stage 4. Classroom management is better, with students being treated as adults and responding accordingly. Students are encouraged to express their opinions and support them with precise historical evidence. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, students were pressed to give specific reasons to expand the argument that Britain was more hostile to the USSR than was the USA after the Second World War. Regular homework essays are set and these are marked with exemplary thoroughness and care. Students are given detailed advice and guidance on how to improve. As a consequence, students make good progress and grasp difficult, abstract concepts quickly.
- 119 Over the last few years the leadership of the history department has not been dynamic. Schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed and do not contain references to the contribution that history can make to citizenship, moral, social and cultural education. The use of new technology both for research and for the drafting and editing of written work is very poor. Display in the history room is unexciting and few historical artefacts are used. The history items within the humanities development plan are not sufficiently rigorous or focused on raising standards.
- 120 Since the last inspection, some progress has been made. GCSE results have improved, although the numbers taking history have gone down and attainment in lessons is still below that expected. Standards post-16 have improved and students

are now confident to debate historical issues.

- 121 In order to raise standards further and to make history a more popular subject, the department should:
- extend the range of teaching methods, to include more independent research and investigation;
 - improve the use of information technology;
 - provide structured guidance for coursework, and give students access to mark schemes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 122 Standards of work and attainment in religious education, with reference to the Agreed Syllabus, are weak. Students do not develop an understanding of the key beliefs and practices of religions. They tend, instead, to encounter isolated examples of viewpoints on social or moral issues from religions, without any chance to set these viewpoints in context or to relate them to wider understandings of religion.
- 123 Some students arrive in Year 10 having done some good quality religious education work, but the college does not review, audit or build upon this. Within the ten per cent allocation of curriculum time to humanities GCSE in Key Stage 4, only a small amount of time, less than 2 per cent, is given to religious education. Since the last inspection, no students have taken any qualifications in the subject.
- 124 Provision for religious education was identified as a key issue in the last inspection report. The college management has sought to develop the subject, but strategies up to 1999 were not very successful. The current location of all religious education teaching at Key Stage 4 as part of the humanities GCSE course has enabled the development of some beliefs and values work, but coverage of the syllabus, both in quantity and quality, is unsatisfactory.
- 125 Teaching overall is unsatisfactory. The planning of the religious education elements is weak, with six religions being referred to, but none of them explored in any depth. The syllabus only requires the study of three religions in the key stage. Teaching is hesitant and uncertain, revealing inadequate subject knowledge. College prepared resources are sometimes misleading, sometimes inaccurate. Tasks offer little opportunity for students to appreciate religious diversity, understand the key features of religions or develop awareness of reflective and spiritual life in religions. Because of this, students' work more often matches the syllabus's attainment statements for Key Stage 3 or even Key Stage 2 than for 14 to 16 year olds. Teachers recognise the need for relevance in religious education, but simplistic work tends to make for a dismissive attitude to religion and religious education among students. Teachers' expectations are uncertain and often low.
- 126 The college has not had any specialist religious education teachers for some years and there is a poor match of teachers' qualifications to the needs of the subject. For example, historical and social studies of racism and genocide in Nazi Germany are not enabling students to learn about Jewish communities, belief and practices, or responses to anti-semitism if they leave young people thinking of Jews only as victims. Similarly, when religions are presented as 'all the same', students learn nothing about the distinctiveness of particular views, communities or beliefs.

- 127 There is an entitlement in law, for all 16 to 18 students to study religious education. After the last inspection, it was planned to meet this through the tutorial programme. No progress has been made with this development, and so the college is still in breach of the requirement to provide religious education post-16. There are many factors which have a bearing on the poor quality of provision at the college. There is a very poor match of subject expertise to the requirements of the syllabus since the last inspection. Curriculum time is insufficient, humanities teachers have attended hardly any training, resources for learning are unsatisfactory, planning for continuity and progression is weak, assessment in religious education is poor. The quality of education in the subject, for all students, remains a key issue for the college to address.
- 128 In order to improve standards and increase students' understanding, the college management should:
- meet the statutory requirements in all years;
 - improve the quality of teaching;
 - improve leadership and management of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 129 The department of design and technology demonstrates a positive image of the work of students through the quality of two and three dimensional displays which greet visitors to the college, and which figure prominently in the working environment.
- 130 Results at GCSE are just below the national average but have improved year-on-year over the past four years. Girls attain higher standards than boys, a gap which reflects that found nationally. Results at A-level are broadly in line with the national average. Current students in Years 12 and 13 are on course to maintain this standard, and there is evidence of work which is above average, with very good standards in graphics and in the development of original design ideas. Students achieve high standards in the finished product, demonstrating good practical skills. Attainment of current students aged 14 to 16 is just below the national expectation, but in some groups, for example in graphic products, achievement is above that expected. Students who excel in the subject grasp opportunities provided through good teaching to demonstrate their talents and creativity in project work. Students with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Graphic skills within all GCSE courses need to be improved in order to reach higher standards for all. Standards achieved by some lower attaining students are adversely affected by limitations in literacy skills. Numeracy skills are adequate with examples of very good use of calculation, particularly in some post-16 work.
- 131 The quality of teaching and learning is good. The A-level teaching benefits from teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, for example when explaining the way in which professional designers use and explore design ideas. Staff encourage students to think creatively and this approach enables them to generate imaginative and/or technically complex solutions to projects. In Key Stage 4, although the quality of teaching is good the systematic teaching of graphic skills in Year 10 needs more emphasis because limitations in these skills adversely affects achievement by lower attaining students, especially boys. The use of information technology is insufficient. Staff teach the stages of the design process

well and teach basic practical skills to a high standard. This enables most students to learn effectively and to succeed in completing the set projects. Teachers give very good oral feedback to students and support the development of project work effectively. However, interim assessments for students during the development of projects need to be strengthened by written comments about how to raise the quality of their work. This will also aid teachers in clarifying learning objectives for practical lessons, which is a weak feature of some lessons.

- 132 Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are generally good. However, a few lower attaining boys find difficulty in sustaining interest in long term project work at GCSE level. These students need to be involved more consistently in practical activities with shorter term goals.
- 133 The department is led and managed well, with considerable attention to detail. The monitoring and evaluation of subject performance is satisfactory and has some good features, such as the systematic way in which assessments are collated and reviewed with staff on a regular basis. There is currently no structured requirement for monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms. There are good systems for students to evaluate and review their own progress and these are used well by staff. They do not, however, include information for students about how to improve. This is also a weakness in reports to parents. The departmental development plan identifies the right priorities, but does not make provision to monitor the impact developments have on the quality of learning and on standards. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, but the gap in performance between boys and girls remains, and further development of information technology continues to be a priority.
- 134 In order to improve standards further, the department should:
- teach graphic skills more systematically;
 - use information technology more as part of the teaching;
 - address the issue of boys' performance.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- 135 The 1999 GCSE results were above average in French and well below average in German. Only a small proportion of students take German, and there was a slight improvement in results, particularly for boys who gained 36% A*-C, compared with 22% for girls. There is a clear improving trend in French GCSE results, although few achieve the highest grades. Numbers entered for the A-level German examinations are low. The only student entered in 1999 gained a pass. Eight students were entered for French A-level in 1999. The pass rate was high, but few students gained high grades.
- 136 The standards of present French students in Key Stage 4 are in line with what is normally seen. Most can understand a reasonable range of listening and reading passages. Confidence in speaking varies considerably. Most speak adequately with set phrases, but few speak routinely in French or are able to sustain an extended dialogue without support. Most can write successfully to convey a message, but only the high attainers apply their knowledge of grammatical structures accurately. Although understanding is adequate in German, fluency and accuracy are less well developed. In Year 12 French, progress in reading and listening is sound overall, but basic mistakes in writing remain and students still experience difficulties in speaking. In Year 13 French, students understand

demanding texts and listening skills improve rapidly. Not all students are sufficiently confident and accurate in speaking, however attainment is in line with expectation. In German, there are no student in Year 12. The two students in Year 13 have different strengths. One is confident and fluent in speaking whilst the other shows an adequate grasp of grammar. Their progress overall is satisfactory.

- 137 Students enter the college at below the average level in French and a significant number lack motivation. It is a tribute to the skills of the teachers that, by GCSE, most taking French, including those with special educational needs, have made at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress to reach levels near or above average. Students taking German have a limited grounding in this language, starting from a base considerably below average, often no higher than level 2 of the national curriculum. There is insufficient time and motivation for most of them to achieve creditable grades. However, in the time available, most make at least reasonable progress. A small number of students who find GCSE in French or German too demanding take the Certificate of Achievement instead and their success rates are high.
- 138 Teaching is good in all years. It is almost always at least satisfactory and there is some very good teaching. Thorough planning, clear setting of objectives and good classroom management are strong features. They lead to students knowing what is expected of them, both in language learning and behaviour. Teachers establish a purposeful learning environment in which students remain on task, complete their work and respond sensibly to the activities set. Except in a few cases, students behave in a disciplined and co-operative way in whole-class activities as well as in individual and pair work. The combination of carefully sequenced activities and good concentration leads to students working productively and making positive gains in language learning. In the best lessons, there is scarcely a whisper out of place and series of well planned tasks lead students to steadily improve their language skills. Overhead transparencies, cue cards and computers are carefully organised so that students practise their language skills effectively. For example, in a Year 11 French lesson, the students made good use of the timelines given, listened intently and behaved responsibly throughout. The teacher provided graded worksheets to cater for different levels of ability and cards to prompt speaking, which allowed all students to practise intensively with the help they needed. Teachers put a great deal of effort into catering for the wide range of needs, for example with different levels of reading and listening stimuli or by making good use of the foreign language assistants who also help to promote cultural development. These strategies are largely successful and lead to students in most lessons being sufficiently supported or challenged. In a few cases there is insufficient challenge for the more able, and in a few lessons the teacher needs to use appropriate strategies to keep students who have low motivation and low basic language learning skills on task. Good relationships are maintained, based on mutual respect. However, language learning activities do not often enough create a sense of enjoyment or real purpose. While marking is rigorous in most cases, assessment does not systematically lead to ensuring that students know what to aim for next.
- 139 Behaviour is good. In most lessons, it is of a very high standard. Relationships based on mutual respect are a strong feature which helps to ensure a positive learning environment. Students apply themselves purposefully and diligently, but there is rarely a sense of enjoyment. They have too few opportunities to take the initiative. In a few cases, students show considerable reluctance and occasionally distract others. Most, however, are responsible in their approach to work and

develop their social and personal skills well through listening and speaking activities.

- 140 The department is led well. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to driving up standards. This is seen not only in lessons, but also in the extra support sessions, the intensive language days, the visits and exchanges. Extra staffing has been used imaginatively, particularly to support low attaining students.
- 141 Since the last inspection, French results have been maintained at above average and have improved. In order to improve further, the department should:
- improve curriculum planning;
 - explain more clearly to students the purpose of tasks set;
 - tell students what is expected of them in terms of the standards of language used;
 - make use of assessment to indicate to students what to aim for next.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

- 142 The college provides for information technology both as a core skill and also, at A-level, as an examination subject. The co-ordinator for this subject has only been in post for two terms.
- 143 In the last five years results in A-level computing have been consistently above average. These are good results. The subject is not popular with girls and only once, during this time, has there been anything like equality in the numbers of boys and girls taking the course. In the past, there have been no candidates for examination at GCSE. The college has now introduced appropriate accreditation.
- 144 The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is at least good and some is very good. Students are challenged consistently with questions of an appropriate level of difficulty. Material is presented in lively ways. For example, in a lesson on sorting techniques the computer was used to produce a simple model of a sorting process, which ended with the students gasping at the speed of the process. Lessons are well organised, stimulating, and have a lively pace. Attainment at age 18 is above average.
- 145 In Year 11 students have no formal course in information technology, and have to rely upon its use in other subjects to progress their skills. Few subjects take opportunities to enrich teaching and learning through the use of information technology. Only in English are students consistently given opportunities to develop their skills through word processing. For example, students writing about different types of science fiction movies used word-processing to draft their initial ideas. They were seen writing with enthusiasm and enjoyment, using appropriate skills and a good range of facilities within the word-processing package. Students with special educational needs have appropriate access to IT, and make satisfactory progress against prior attainment. Standards attained in Year 10 are about average at this stage of the course. However, in Year 11 students do not follow a structured schemes of work and some parts of the National Curriculum Programme of Study are not taught. Consequently, attainment at age 16 is below expectation.
- 146 In Key Stage 4, a new one year course has been introduced in Year 10. The teaching of the course is satisfactory, with students given much opportunity to work independently and practise individually. Resources are well written and the work

booklets, produced by the teachers, are appropriate. Teachers are sensitive to students' needs, are confident in their subject knowledge and have good relationships with students. Appropriate records of work are kept and marking is up-to-date. Work in word-processing, spreadsheets and databases is sound. The course is designed for Year 10 only, and gives students a satisfactory basis for the further development of their information technology capability. The course covers many aspects of the Programme of Study, although students have yet to work at controlling devices or using computers with sensors to measure such things as temperature or the brightness of light. Over the key stage, some strands are not covered and therefore statutory requirements are not met. In Year 11 there are no records of what has been taught and learned in the subject. There is inadequate reporting to parents about progress made in the subject, particularly in Year 11.

- 147 Many students have proficient skills in IT, in part developed outside the college. Students' attitudes to the subject are good and they generally enjoy every opportunity they get to use computers. In all lessons they treat the hardware and software sensibly, knowing when they have hit a snag, and asking either a better informed friend or the teacher for help. There are good relationships amongst the students and with the teachers, and information is readily shared to help the work progress. Behaviour is very good.
- 148 Since the previous inspection the college has upgraded its resources for computing and, although the ratio of students per computer is still above average, it is much improved. The hardware has a sound usage rate. The last report criticised the lack of overall strategy. With the exception of the Year 11, the college now has a set of appropriate opportunities in the subject which offer GCSE, a nationally accredited computer literacy course (CLAIT) and a Certificate of Achievement for lower attainers. The subject is also integrated well in GNVQ courses which demand high levels of skill, and there is a successful A-level course. The college has plans for the introduction of the internet but, at present, technical difficulties have delayed these plans temporarily. Staff training has also been identified as a priority and this will be implemented when the system is finally introduced. Many subjects are still not using information technology, and too many opportunities are missed, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This is a key issue for the college to address.
- 149 The new head of information technology has made a good start by clarifying an appropriate set of priorities and putting in place a number of important structures and strategies to move the subject forward.
- 150 In order to raise standards in IT and improve IT capability for all students, the college should:
- ensure that all Year 11 students receive their IT entitlement;
 - develop a recording system for students in Year 11 so that reports to parents are written in accordance with requirements;
 - increase the use of IT across subjects of the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 151 The college offers GCSE and A level courses and, in addition to these, all students in Years 10 and 11 study the subject for one period a week. Physical education contributes well to the social, moral and personal development of students.

- 152 Standards achieved in examinations have fluctuated over recent years, although they were always above the national figure. In 1999, the percentage of students gaining a GCSE at grades A* to C, at 52%, was again above the national average of 49.4%. Fewer girls take up the option and, although they outperformed boys in 1997 and 1998, boys performed marginally better than girls in 1999. A-level was examined for first time in 1999 with a small cohort of 7 students. Results were very good, with 57% attaining grades A to B, against a national figure of 23.9%. Standards being achieved by current GCSE students are in line with levels expected for their age. For students who do not follow the GCSE course, attainment is below expectation. This is because the time allocation of one lesson per week is too low.
- 153 Teaching is good and it is particularly strong in GCSE and A-level work where teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the theoretical element of the syllabus. They use very good questioning skills to draw out and reinforce students' knowledge, and relate theoretical elements of the syllabus to practical examples. Lessons are well planned and always start with a recapitulation of previous work, the setting of clear objectives for this lesson and an opportunity, at the end, to reflect on what has been learned. This means that students are fully involved in the learning process, are clear about teachers' expectations, what it is that they have learned in that lesson and where it fits into the examination syllabus. Sometimes, however, in larger GCSE theory classes, there is too much teacher input which does not provide sufficient opportunity for student involvement. Group discussion and activities are used well. For example, in a Year 13 lesson a simple group experiment was used very effectively to illustrate the concept of reaction time. This enabled students to make good progress in their understanding of this concept and to apply it to their performance. Students with special educational needs are well integrated, participate fully in the GCSE course and are well supported by teachers. Students not participating in practical lessons, because of injury or illness, are not sufficiently involved in the learning process.
- 154 Students on the whole display positive attitudes to their work. In examination classes they respond with confidence to teacher questioning and are able to offer examples which relate theoretical elements of the course to practical activities and specific games. A-level students work well and are keen to question the teacher when unsure. They are able to enlarge on the theoretical concept of, for instance, skill acquisition and to relate these examples to particular sports. In some core lessons there are isolated examples of poor behaviour. Where this occurs the incident is dealt with effectively by the teacher in a firm but non-confrontational way which is usually effective in bringing the student back on task.
- 155 The head of department provides very effective leadership of the subject and is well supported by her colleague. They have worked hard to introduce the subject at A-level and have produced some high quality resources and teaching materials for the theory elements of the examination courses. The department, assisted by one other member of staff, has continued to offer a good range of extra curricular clubs at lunchtime, and the college has been successful in a range of sporting activities at district and county level. Whilst accommodation and facilities for the subject are good overall the provision of examination theory lessons in spare classrooms, sometimes at the far end of the college, results in a loss of teaching time necessitated by the need to transport resources to these areas. There are good opportunities for students to engage in self-evaluation of their performances at the end of units of work and discuss them with teachers. Reports to parents do not give

a clear indication of attainment level and progress made.

156 The department has made good progress since the last report. The under-achievement and lack of progress of some Year 11 students, identified in the last report, is no longer evident. However, the length of time provided for Years 10 and 11 students, who only experience core physical education, has been reduced since the last inspection and is now barely adequate to meet the requirements of the subject. The good features identified in the last report are still in evidence. There is now a settled staffing situation and opportunities have been created for students to be entered for an appropriate examination at ages 16 and 18.

157 In order to improve further the department should:

- raise standards at 16 for those students who are not following the GCSE course;
- improve reports to parents.

ART

158 Standards in art are good. Students gain confidence and develop strengths in drawing and painting. The condition, appearance and organisation of both accommodation and resources are impressive. The high quality of the environment has a direct impact on learning and a positive influence upon behaviour.

159 GCSE results are in line with the national average and show improvement in recent years. A-level results are well above the national average and high standards have been maintained for successive years, despite a significant increase in group size. The proportion of A and B grades was double the national figure in 1999, and a pass rate of 100% has been achieved for the last four years.

160 The work of current students is finished and presented to a high standard. They work with accuracy and make a conscious effort to search for ways of being effective. Their attainment is above expectation. Students in Year 11 use careful observation and precise application of tone to achieve subtlety and close representation of surface textures. Research activities are well developed and include competent studies in different media: chalk, oil, pastel, crayon, charcoal, inks and paints, and exhibit good knowledge of the styles and methods used by various artists. Achievements in GNVQ art and design are sound. Students work hard to extend the skills they have, and tackle new demands successfully. In a graphics project, appropriate critical appreciation of good examples of promotional materials helped students to plan their own designs more effectively. The work of students on the A-level course is technically well crafted and they acquire a strong grasp of theoretical aspects of the subject. This enables them to assess and refine their own work skilfully. For example, a group of Year 13 students showed improved spatial awareness and demonstrated an ability to simplify composition through an exercise requiring them to experiment on four small sketches.

161 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and schemes of work are very well constructed so that activities are clearly connected. Each lesson is varied and the purpose of each task is explained fully, thus ensuring that learning is built up through and across units of work. High expectations are the norm and students take pride in the quality of their work. Teaching methods are challenging and stretch all students. Creative tasks are supported by requiring that

students comment on their 'feeling' responses to the task, and why they made particular decisions. This was illustrated well in a Year 10 lesson when three contrasting portrait studies were analysed thoroughly, as they were completed, sharpening students' understanding of the use of tone and colour and different styles. Lessons have a lively start, an ambitious pace is set and students' progress is evaluated accurately. Guidance is clear and tailored to support individual students. Subject target sheets help students to organise themselves and reinforce learning objectives. Teachers provide good role models for learners and set high professional standards by practical involvement in enquiring, preparing, developing, sharing and evaluating.

- 162 Good progress is made by students in all age groups, including students with special educational needs. Students with low prior attainment need clear guidance, but respond exceptionally well to advice and support. Students enjoy art and bear responsibility willingly for maintaining an atmosphere of calm and quiet concentration. Tasks are interpreted thoughtfully, students learn well from each other and want to know how to do better.
- 163 Management of the subject is strong. Close teamwork ensures consistency and a very clear focus is kept on what enables effective learning to take place. Effective action has secured improvement in all of the areas identified for development in the previous inspection report. Students now develop the ability to plan a composition. They can discuss how to improve their work, using technical terms correctly, and can recall the context and work of a number of artists.
- 164 In order to raise standards further the department should:
- improve the development plan to indicate more precise targets;
 - make better use of information technology for artistic purposes;
 - explore further ways of contributing to and benefiting from the community.

PERFORMING ARTS

- 165 The performing arts faculty consists of drama, dance and music. These subjects are taught separately as examination choices and combined within courses such as A-level performing arts. The faculty is staffed by specialist teachers, some of whom share teaching responsibilities at a local high school. The faculty also organises a range of extra-curricular activities, such as a community band and various productions. The subjects make a very good contribution to students' moral, social and personal development.

DANCE

- 166 Dance is taught as part of the performing arts faculty and it is offered at Key Stage 4 as a GCSE option, and post-16, at AS level and as a component within the performing arts A-level course. There has been some variation in GCSE results over the years. In 1998, 53% of candidates attained grades A*-C. In 1999, the percentage was 48, in line with the national average. The subject was offered as a one year AS level course examined for the first time in 1998. The two, very small groups examined to date have obtained good results. The standards of current students, at Key Stage 4 and post-16, are above expectation. They can evaluate their own work, have high levels of critical skills and can use appropriate dance terminology when discussing their performances.

- 167 Teaching is of a high standard. Teacher-student relationships are very good and the teacher has good knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm for the subject. The pace of lessons is very good. There are high expectations made of students, with an appropriate emphasis placed on self-motivation and the presentation of performances. Because of the teacher's high expectations and encouragement, students make very good progress in the development, interpretation and performance of dance routines and in their understanding and application of the theoretical elements of dance. For example, in a Year 12 lesson students choreographed their own work, using excellent sharing of ideas which showed high levels of critical thinking and improved their performance.
- 168 The level of collaborative working, and the appreciation of others' performance, is very good. Students are provided with good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their own dance routines for examination assessment. Students respond well to the teaching and show good levels of interest and concentration.
- 169 Accommodation is restricted because the subject has to share with drama and performing arts lessons, as well as the many college productions for performing arts. This often means that work has to be undertaken in areas which are unsuitable for the teaching of dance. Standards have improved compared with those reported in the last inspection and students' attitudes continue to be very positive.
- 170 In order to improve the subject further, the college should:
- analyse examination strategies to maintain results more consistently at above average levels;
 - improve specialist facilities for teaching.

DRAMA

- 171 The drama provision within the college is provided through the performing arts faculty, with a two-year GCSE Drama course and a performing arts A-level in the sixth form.
- 172 Results in GCSE Drama have risen steadily over the last three years, with the percentage of A*-C grades achieved by students in 1999 just below the national average. A*-G grades also approached the national average in 1999. Boys and girls generally attain well, with girls' attainment above that of boys at A*-C. In 1999, however, the results for boys improved significantly at grades A*-C and exceeded those of girls. Class work reveals considerable commitment on the part of the students. They demonstrate at least sound knowledge and understanding of drama techniques and can generally operate effectively in role. Drama at Key Stage 4 plays a significant part in developing oral skills and confidence in performing in front of others.
- 173 A-level performing arts is a relatively new course and the results to date have been very positive. For the last two years, students have achieved a 100% pass rate at A-E, with all entries attaining A-C in 1998 and 67% A-C in 1999. While the course tends to attract more girls than boys, the boys who enter perform very well. The work in Years 12 and 13 shows considerable maturity and high levels of skill for

both boys and girls. The quality of dance within the drama is a significant strength in the work of the Year 13 students.

- 174 The teaching of the GCSE drama and A-level performing arts course is of a very high quality. The current teacher brings a wealth of experience from education and theatre, which is used effectively when preparing students for performance. Excellent working relationships are in place in all the years, and particularly so in the sixth form. The quality of discussion and use of questions to develop ideas is shrewd and critically focused, as seen in a Year 12 lesson when performances were reviewed critically by the teacher and the students. High expectations are explicit, both at Key Stage 4 in terms of attitude and commitment, and in the A-level groups in terms of maturity of insight and pursuit of high quality performance. Curriculum planning is appropriate for the syllabus requirements and, at A-level, a creative fusion is achieved between the three disciplines of drama, dance and music.
- 175 At Key Stage 4, students display positive attitudes towards the subject and show considerable commitment to the work. Inappropriate responses are rare and there is a general acceptance of the drama codes of behaviour. This is seen in the way students respect the work of their peers during performance and take the work seriously. Drama provides excellent opportunities for developing collaborative skills and independent organisation through the emphasis on group work. Post-16 students are very focused and respond to the challenges very well. Some exceptionally talented students practised their performance pieces to a high standard in Year 13, displaying considerable control with dance and dramatic monologue.
- 176 At present, the facilities for class work and performance are only adequate. Competing demands for the hall inhibit some aspects of work and the floor surface is poor. The music room is a useful space but it is difficult to create an appropriate atmosphere for drama as it lacks blackout and lighting. The stage is an excellent resource for productions and is used well by the college and the community, as is shown by the wide range of drama performances put on over the years. The lighting and associated controls are of good quality.
- 177 There was no specific report on drama in the last inspection. In order to improve further, the faculty should:
- continue to improve results at GCSE, particularly at A*-C grades;
 - improve the facilities for the teaching of drama.

MUSIC

- 178 The music department is part of the performing arts faculty and is currently staffed in conjunction with the local high school. The department has developed well over the period that this arrangement has been in place.
- 179 There have been relatively few recent A-level students (one student in both 1998 and 1999). Both achieved results in line with the national average. There are currently more students taking the course and numbers are very healthy (seven students in Year 12 for example). This increase reflects the growing status of music within the college. Two Year 13 students were observed as part of an A-level music technology course. Their attainment matches their prior experience and capabilities. Students are familiar with appropriate equipment such as keyboards, computers and associated software. They have a good understanding of examination board requirements and use technology effectively to achieve required tasks. They are less secure at applying their skills in new contexts and have relatively few strategies for solving technical problems.
- 180 There has been a steady increase in the number of students taking GCSE music. This has been matched by a corresponding rising trend in examination results. 90% of the 1999 cohort achieved a grade A*-C. This was well above the national average. This picture was mostly confirmed in lesson observations and examination of students' coursework on cassette tapes. Students have a clear understanding of coursework requirements. They are able to produce secure, well planned performances and competent compositions. These ensure that they achieve a good GCSE grade. Their knowledge and understanding of music is sound, but does not consistently match what they are capable of. In particular, they do not make links between the music they perform, compose and listen to. This is reflected in their scores in the listening examination which are consistently lower than in other parts of the course.
- 181 Teaching is always sound. it often has good features. A particular strength is the positive and supportive relationship created by the teacher. This ensures that all students make steady progress and that sufficient challenge is maintained, especially when students momentarily lack concentration. They are quickly and firmly brought back to the task set. Lessons often have a clear start and end with information summarised helpfully. The teacher has good musical skills and is able to handle technology with confidence. In a Year 11 lesson a good choice of musical examples - illustrating time signatures - ensured that students maintained their interest and listened attentively. This was at a moment when their concentration was beginning to wane. There is a clear understanding shown by the teacher of examination board requirements. This information is communicated well to students and enables them to know what tasks they need to tackle and the point they have reached in meeting coursework demands. All students are involved in lessons. The teacher creates a positive atmosphere which is inclusive and ensures that all feel a sense of purpose and progress in their learning. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Relatively few links are made between activities in all year groups. This sometimes means that students do not, for example, explore aspects of musical structure, experiment with musical material or make the sort of links which would promote a deeper understanding of how music works. It also means that the most able students do not extend sufficiently their musical ideas when they are composing. This represents a relatively small but important weakness. An exception was a Year 11 lesson when an examination listening task

was illustrated effectively by asking students to construct their own, short pieces requiring two pitches and simple rhythmic ideas. This is an area which could be developed still further.

- 182 Students have good attitudes to their work in all lessons. They listen well to instructions, maintain their concentration when working individually, or in small groups. They negotiate well with each other and listen with respect to each other's views.
- 183 The music department has made very good progress since the last inspection. More students now take examination courses and results have improved steadily. The teaching of music is shared with the local high school. This leads to good curriculum continuity between the two sites and contributes to the increase in numbers taking music examination courses. It also results in shared extra-curricular activities and provision of groups such as the community band. Teaching issues raised in the last inspection report have all been addressed well.
- 184 The performing arts faculty is led and managed well. There have been clear improvements over time. There are relatively few high quality instruments and accommodation is limited. Provision for technology is just adequate, although relatively limited for students taking music technology. Whilst these problems have been overcome, through careful management and organisation, they mean that the department is not well placed to continue to improve at the same rate it has managed recently.
- 185 In order to improve still further the faculty should:
- ensure that schemes of work in all year groups are planned effectively and integrate musical activities in a coherent way;
 - plan to improve students' performance in the GCSE listening paper.

BUSINESS STUDIES

- 186 The majority of students are interested in and enjoy this subject. After a period of falling examination results, GCSE, A level and GNVQ results improved significantly in 1999.
- 187 The percentage of students gaining A* - C grades fell between 1997 and 1998 but improved in 1999 so that results are now in line with the national average. Students following GCSE courses do well in business studies in comparison with other subjects. At A-level, results at the higher grades of A-B were below national average in 1997 and 1998 but improved again to just above the national average in 1999. There has been a continuous improvement over time of those gaining A to E grades, with 100% gaining a grade in 1999. At GNVQ, the number gaining distinctions and merits has improved, with a higher than national average completion rate at intermediate level. The numbers of advanced level students are too small for national comparison.
- 188 Teaching in business studies is good at Key Stage 4. In the sixth form, teaching is always at least satisfactory and most is good. Teachers have a good command of the subject with objectives set for all lessons and teachers giving clear explanations with relevant examples so that students gain a good understanding of the concepts involved. For example, in Year 10, students can explain the difference between

different types of economic organisation and the factors of production involved. In a lesson on human resources, Year 12 students were able to apply the theoretical concepts of demand and supply to the work of the personnel department. Lessons are well planned within an agreed scheme of work which allows students to make good progress in knowledge and understanding. They develop the skills needed for the examination. At Key Stage 4, time is spent on developing skills for making effective notes and, in an intermediate GNVQ lesson, the process for using a database effectively was being addressed well. Questioning is usually good and is used well to develop students' understanding, although it is not always used to engage all students to participate actively in the lesson.

- 189 In all examination groups, a good range of activities keeps the attention and interest of the students, as in a Year 11 lesson when a range of communication exercises were set to develop a real understanding of the issues. However, in some lessons the pace slows when appropriate timing is not given for the tasks to be completed. In the sixth form, good use is made of individual, whole class and small group work so that students apply their knowledge and understanding within a prescribed framework. GNVQ students, in particular, make good progress in developing their independent learning skills.
- 190 Teachers understand the special needs of individual students and help them to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject by providing additional, individual help and tasks which are appropriate, as in the intermediate GNVQ lesson developing the use of a new database. Some tasks are structured well to accommodate different levels of attainment, as in Year 10 where the homework task included stepped questions to allow more able students to demonstrate higher level skills. Work is assessed accurately against examination criteria and assessment is used to help individuals know how they can improve in the future. Although key skills are dealt with effectively through separate lessons, some opportunities are missed in assessing these skills as part of GNVQ courses.
- 191 Teaching is supported by good relationships between students and teachers and among students. At Key Stage 4, students are well behaved for most of the time and respond positively to teachers when brought back to their work. They maintain a high level of concentration and focus on their tasks. A small proportion volunteer answers and ideas. They work well, in groups or independently, but do not always listen attentively to each other in a whole class situation. Post-16, these positive attitudes continue. There is a good working ethos in lessons with students showing a keen interest in their work. Students in advanced GNVQ show initiative in their work with good planning and research being undertaken.
- 192 The business studies department is organised and managed well. The head of department has a clear view of the developments needed and has begun work in several areas. Teachers in the department work well as a team. However, a detailed development plan is needed to ensure that plans are identified and implemented effectively.
- 193 In order to develop further, the department should:
- make better use of assessment data;
 - monitor more systematically teaching and learning to share and develop good practice;
 - increase the use of information technology;

- involve the wider commercial community to enhance the curriculum.

General and Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ)

- 194 The overall standard achieved on GNVQ courses is in line with expectation. The completion rate is high and the proportion of graded awards has improved in the last two years. Boys and girls achieve equally well across vocational areas and at both levels intermediate and advanced. Students gain relevant specialist knowledge, and progression on GNVQ courses is good. The organisation and presentation of portfolio evidence is of a high standard, including evidence of the development of an appropriate standard in each Key Skills unit.
- 195 Students' motivation and commitment are high. The development of personal and study skills clearly increases over the length of the programme and is especially marked for individuals who previously had low self-esteem. A large proportion of students work independently and enjoy this way of learning. Activities demand wide-ranging and extended work and students demonstrate depth in investigative work. For example, in an assignment for health and social care, students' records of acting as a carer revealed high degrees of sensitivity and empathy combined with practical and organisational skills. A good pace of learning is achieved, concentration is sustained and progress against unit requirements is strong in all vocational areas.
- 196 The quality of teaching GNVQ is at least sound, and has some good features. Planning is appropriate and opportunities are provided for grading criteria to be met. Varied forms of assignments are set and the teaching of Key Skills is supported well by work developed in vocational units. Teachers have acquired relevant experience in assessing GNVQ and judgements are accurate and reliable, with good quality feedback recorded. Teachers have the confidence of students who manage workloads and deadlines well. Students feel secure, know where they are and what is required of them. Students with special educational needs are supported effectively.
- 197 The management of GNVQ is strong. The philosophy and aims of GNVQ are not only well understood, but lived out; its successful practices are shared and applied widely, in vocational and other contexts. Programme leaders co-ordinate each course competently, students' attainment and progress are carefully monitored and procedures for recording and verifying assessment are carried out thoroughly. Administrative systems are organised well and very good quality advice and guidance is available to support the GNVQ team.
- 198 In order to safeguard standards and develop provision further, teachers should:
- improve long-term planning for the growth of GNVQ provision;
 - keep under review the proportion of graded awards;
 - enhance links with relevant industrial and professional contacts.