

INSPECTION REPORT

HUGH CHRISTIE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Norwich Avenue
Tonbridge
Kent
TN10 4QL

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118903

Headteacher: Dr Christopher Gerry

Reporting inspector: Valerie Lynch
1475

Dates of inspection: 18/01/2000 – 20/01/2000

Inspection number: 184341

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Norwich Avenue
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Kellum

Date of previous inspection: 23/01/1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hugh Christie Technology College is one of 14 secondary schools that provide education for pupils from Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and surrounding areas. It is non-selective in an area where over 50 per cent of pupils attend grammar schools. The school is bigger than most secondary schools with 1117 pupils on roll including 187 students in the sixth form.

The school has seven pupils from ethnic minorities and a small number of international students in the sixth form following their studies in this country for a short time. There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language but they do not need additional support. There are substantially more boys than girls in all years but particularly in Years 10 and 11 where there are nearly twice as many boys than girls. Nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the average for modern schools and below the average for all secondary schools.

The school has used cognitive ability tests over the last four years to test pupils when they join the school in Year 7. These indicate that the profile of pupils on entry is skewed towards lower attainers with very few really able pupils. There are more boys of higher ability than girls. When pupils join the school from their primary schools Key Stage 2 results in English, mathematics and science are below the national average for pupils achieving Level 4 or above, the level expected at the end of this key stage. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average.

The school was designated as a technology college in 1994 and has an ethos which reflects this status. It is bidding for the third phase of technology college funding and is leading the national field in developing a virtual education action zone¹ with other schools in Kent and Somerset.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hugh Christie Technology College is a very good and improving school that strives and succeeds in improving the self-esteem and confidence of pupils and students. Outstanding visionary leadership ensures that pupils fulfil their academic and personal potential and know that learning is important. Through accessing a range of projects and associated funding the school is at the leading edge in using information and communications technology to support and extend teaching and learning. It provides good value for money.

¹ An Education Action Zone (EAZ) consists of a group of schools working together to improve their performance through introducing a range of initiatives and sharing their good practice. Usually schools are geographically close. Hugh Christie is working with schools that are not geographically close and are in both Kent and Somerset

What the school does well

- Visionary, imaginative and thoughtful leadership ensures that the school is at the forefront nationally in developing its curriculum and teaching and learning.
- Effective and exemplary teaching by curriculum leaders and regular monitoring ensures good teaching and promotes achievement of pupils of all abilities.
- Staff in the school value all the pupils, treat them with respect and enable them to realise their potential as mature members of a learning community.
- The school makes very good use of data to ensure that pupils are achieving what they are capable of and that examination and test results continue to improve.
- There is an exciting, rich and dynamic curriculum that goes far beyond meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. It engenders a sense of enthusiasm for learning amongst pupils and a high staying on rate.
- Good relationships enable all pupils to become confident learners with high self-esteem.

What could be improved

- GCSE results in mathematics and science could be better on the basis of what is achieved at the end of Key Stage 3.
- If the school had greater flexibility in the deployment of its learning support staff inefficiencies in the way they are used could be eliminated.
- Planning and provision for the spiritual development of pupils is not as strong as it is for their moral, social and cultural development

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1995 and has made good progress, particularly over the last three years in improving test and examination results. GCSE results are improving faster than they are nationally. There has been rapid and imaginative use of information and communication technology and the curriculum is constantly under review to ensure that it best meets the needs of pupils. The following progress has been made on the key issues identified in 1995.

- The school has a good annual development plan and a carefully structured longer-term development plan.
- Pupil groupings have been reviewed and many subjects are set from January onwards in Year 7. Setting is appropriately flexible to take account of pupils' progress. One teacher teaches a small group of pupils with special educational needs in each year in Key Stage 3 for English, mathematics and humanities. Support for pupils with special educational needs is through withdrawal and in-class support and is very effective although the constraints on how LEA appointed staff can be deployed often result in too many support staff in one classroom.
- Staff expertise in information and communications technology has been strengthened and is used imaginatively in most subjects to support learning, for example, through departmental web sites where pupils can find a statement about their homework together with further work if they want it.
- The academic monitoring of pupils is done regularly and effectively provides good data for setting both academic targets and action targets. Teaching is regularly monitored through observation of lessons using agreed OFSTED criteria. Test and examination results are analysed and departments held to account for their results. Line management arrangements are not always sufficiently rigorous to ensure that new middle managers are effectively inducted into the schools expectations and procedures.

- The school now provides effectively for art, performing arts and religious education in Key Stage 4 but does not make adequate provision for religious education in the sixth form.
- Setting arrangements within departments and withdrawal arrangements for pupils to use the computer based programmes for literacy and numeracy skills are based on a sound rationale.
- The roles of subject teachers, tutors and heads of year are now clearer with regard to the way they track pupils' progress and how information about pupils should be used. Termly monitoring is helpful and tutors use the 20-minute morning registration period to monitor their pupils' personal and academic progress.
- The policy for collective worship still does not meet statutory requirements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	C	D	B
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E	D	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

By the end of Key Stage 3 the percentage of pupils achieving the benchmark Level 5² in English, mathematics and science is at or close to the national average and above or well above average when these results are compared to similar schools. Pupils of all abilities make significant gains in their learning in Key Stage 3. Results in mathematics and science have steadily improved over the last three years and in 1999 were close to the national average, but above average when compared to similar schools.

The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C GCSE passes is below the national average but better than similar schools and is in line with expectations on the basis of their Key Stage 3 results. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* - G GCSE passes is above the national average, better than similar schools and well above what could be expected on the basis of their Key Stage 3 results. Results in mathematics and science are below what could be expected from Key Stage 3 results. Results in French, German, geography, child development, English and in GNVQs are good. GCSE results at the school are improving at a faster rate than the national results and in 1999 there was an increase in the percentage of pupils gaining the higher A/B grades.

Over half of the pupils in Year 11 in 1999 remained at the school for their sixth form studies.

² The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 3, are expected to reach Level 5. If a pupil is attaining Level 6 or 7 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a pupil of his or her age.

The average points score³ for GCE A level/GNVQ is below the national average and 1 in ten students does not do as well as might be expected on the basis of their GCSE results. Almost all students studying GNVQs do much better than expected.

Attainment of pupils with special educational needs in both key stages and the sixth form is better than could be expected. Standards of literacy and numeracy are sound and many gains are made in Years 7 and 8 through the use of a computer based programme. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms the good progress that pupils make at the school.

The college has set targets for GCSE results over the last three years using standardised tests to predict what pupils might achieve. Although doing better than similar schools the real target is to be at or above the national average and for the headteacher nothing else will do.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and settle quickly into lessons. They are punctual despite the distance between one building and the other. Many of them take up the opportunities offered at lunchtime and after school both for leisure and further study.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school, even where corridors and stairs are narrow and over-crowded.
Personal development and relationships.	Pupils work very well with each other and have very good relationships with their teachers. Whilst very keen to show initiative when asked, few pupils take the initiative in their learning of their own accord.
Attendance	Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly in line with national figures.

Pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. In discussions about the school and their work they were confident and articulate and spoke warmly about their teachers and what was provided for them. In many lessons their behaviour was exemplary. Attendance, although in line with the national average, is still an aspect that the school wishes to improve further.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching was satisfactory or better in nearly all the lessons seen during the inspection. It was good or better in eight out of 10 lessons and very good or excellent in nearly a half. Teachers are highly skilled practitioners with a very good command of their subject and knowledge of the requirements of examination courses. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers use a very good range of strategies to maintain high levels of

³ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 3 the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. GCSE grades are also awarded points as are A level grades.

motivation and involvement of pupils of all abilities. Lessons are enhanced by many different activities and learning resources. Information and communication technology is well used across the curriculum and makes an important contribution to progress in literacy and numeracy. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective and is supported by the daily use of an integrated learning scheme in Years 7 and 8 and by departments both using and developing literacy and numeracy skills as part of their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent: the school offers a rich curriculum that fully meets the needs of the pupils. There is a strong emphasis on information and communications technology and vocational courses. There are well-managed initiatives, innovative projects and a wide range of good quality extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: the curriculum provided and the way the timetable is organised ensures that the pupils' with a range of special educational needs make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: pupils are well-integrated within the school and have full access to the wide range of opportunities provided by the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development in all that it does. Its provision for cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is mainly confined to religious education and is not explicit across the rest of the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school supports and prepares students well for examinations. It uses an effective computerised assessment package to monitor the progress of pupils against their predicted examination results and their previous best performance.

The curriculum is a strength of the school and its regular review ensures that it continues to meet the needs of all pupils. The only weaknesses are in the sixth form where there are no opportunities for students to take part in religious education as is required and no opportunities for them to participate in sport or a broader general studies programme. The school's commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve both their academic and personal potential is evident in the very strong and coherent monitoring of their progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent: resulting in good achievement by pupils. The headteacher provides a visionary perspective to the planning and implementation of many initiatives to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. He is well supported by senior and middle managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They provide very good support to the school. They have ensured that statutory policies are in place and all statutory duties are fulfilled with the exception of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is very good and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress. This includes senior and middle managers and the use of external agencies and consultant inspectors.
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan provides a clear framework for spending priorities. Excellent use is made of the school's own resources and of specific grants that are available nationally for the school to bid for. Specific technology college funding has enhanced the extensive inclusion of information and communication technology within the curriculum.

The leadership and management of the college has many strengths and few weaknesses. However, the governing body, whilst very effective, is not involved enough with what happens in practice in the school and has too little contact with the leaders of subject departments. Best value principles are constantly being applied to the provision of services and overall good value for money is achieved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress that their children make. • The good quality of teaching at the school. • The high expectations that the school has for children. • The way the school responds to questions or problems. • The way the school involves parents. • The encouragement for children to become mature and responsible adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour, particularly in the playground. • More homework being set.

Only six parents attended the meeting for parents and all were pleased with the work of the school, particularly in relation to the progress that pupils make and in relation to the extra-curricular activities provided. Some concerns were expressed and were supported by the responses to the parents' questionnaire about the varying amount of homework set by subject teachers and about pupils' behaviour. The inspection team found that homework was set regularly but is often not well recorded in pupils' planners so that parents do not know exactly what is required. During the inspection the team found behaviour in classrooms to be very good and behaviour on corridors and in the playground to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Visionary, imaginative and thoughtful leadership ensures that the school is at the leading edge in developing its curriculum and teaching and learning.

1. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership for the school in raising standards. The range of initiatives that the school is involved in is impressive and expands the teaching and learning opportunities for pupils across the whole curriculum. The college has four aims and a statement of values that underpin all that it does. These are also used to ensure that all initiatives and projects support the achievement of those aims.
2. The headteacher is well supported by an active and committed governing body with a range of professional expertise. There are very effective senior managers and heads of department in nearly all areas who share the headteacher's commitment to raising standards.
3. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and of pupils' progress is a key feature of the college's quality assurance procedures. Where necessary the college has used external agencies and consultant inspectors to provide advice. In addition the school has received a number of external validations and awards for its work. These include Investors in People; Crested, an award that recognises the school's work with pupils with dyslexia; a Quality Mark from the Basic Skills Agency, for work in raising basic skills and Childline, for the school's anti-bullying initiative. Additionally the school's international work has been recognised in its affiliation to the US-based Coalition of Essential School and in an award in July 1999 from the Central Bureau. Priorities and targets for both whole school and subject departments are clearly set out in the school development plan and action plans are in place to meet targets and deadlines.
4. There is very good financial management and very good use is made of specific grants that the school bids for to support the wide range of provision. Technology college funding has enhanced the use of information and communication technology both within the curriculum and to support the management and administration of the school. The school has over 250 networked computers, video-conferencing facilities, a web site, a recording studio, a radio station and electronic message screens. These provide a rich technological backdrop for the school and enhance learning opportunities for pupils. Best value principles are constantly being applied to the provision of services and overall good value for money is achieved.

Very effective and exemplary teaching by curriculum leaders and regular monitoring ensures good teaching and promotes achievement of pupils of all abilities.

- 5 Results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are below the national average when pupils join the school. By the end of Key Stage 3 the percentage of pupils achieving the benchmark Level 5 in the core subjects is at or close to the national average and above or better than in similar schools. In maths and science the average points score is broadly in line with the national average and better than in similar schools. In English it is below the national average but broadly in line with similar schools. Boys do better than girls but this is because there are more able boys in each year in the school than there are able girls. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 3, making significant gains in their learning.
- 6 The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C GCSE passes is below the national average but better than similar schools and is in line with expectations on the basis of

their Key Stage 3 results. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* - G GCSE passes is above the national average, better than similar schools and well above what could be expected on the basis of their Key Stage 3 results. The average points score is below the national average, better than similar schools and in line with what would be expected on the evidence of their Key Stage 3 results. Results in mathematics and science are below what could be expected from Key Stage 3 results. Results in French, German, geography, child development, English and in GNVQs are particularly good. GCSE results at the school are improving at a faster rate than the national results and in 1999 there was an increase in the percentage of pupils gaining the higher A/B grades.

- 7 Over half of the pupils in Year 11 in 1999 remained at the college for their sixth form studies. The average points score for GCE A level/GNVQ is below the national average and one in 10 students do not do as well as they might on the basis of their GCSE results. Almost all students studying GNVQs do much better than expected when compared with their GCSE results.
- 8 Attainment of pupils with special educational needs in both key stages and the sixth form is better than could be expected. Standards of literacy and numeracy are sound and many gains are made in Years 7 and 8 through the use of a computer based programme.
- 9 The steady improvement in results over time and the achievements of pupils during their time at the school is a result of good teaching. Teachers are highly skilled practitioners with very good subject knowledge and knowledge of the requirements of examination courses. Many have an infectious enthusiasm for their subject that captures pupils' imagination and interest. In a Year 11 mixed ability history lesson the teacher skilfully taught revision skills using mind-maps whilst at the same time helping pupils revise the topic "Work in the 20th century" and providing a framework that they could use to answer questions in their GCSE examinations." Her humour and enthusiasm and her clear explanations inspired pupils' confidence as they prepared for their GCSE examinations.
- 10 Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Teachers plan their lessons well and use a very good range of strategies to maintain high levels of motivation and involvement of pupils. A good example of this was in a Year 10 lower set mathematics lesson where questions about the previous lesson were followed by a clear explanation of what was going to happen next and then practical tasks. An overhead projector was well used to demonstrate and illustrate the tasks. There was a very purposeful atmosphere generated and a high level of commitment from the pupils. Good quality teaching made a significant contribution to not only the work done in the lesson but also to the enjoyment experienced by pupils.
- 11 Many of these activities are timed to inject pace into lessons which helps pupils to maintain their concentration and ensure that the work is covered. In French, for example, all lessons are conducted in French as far as is possible. A series of short tasks are used for pupils to experience and use the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Helpful hints were given about how to get the best marks in the GCSE examination.
- 12 In many lessons questions are skilfully used to check what has been remembered from the previous lesson and also to summarise the learning at the end of a lesson. In a history A level lesson skilled and extended questioning took students through changes in the economy in Germany between 1918 – 1933. Students' responses were good as they added explanatory phrases to their graphs. The lesson moved at a good pace with

students contributing many relevant ideas.

- 13 Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour from the moment pupils set foot in the classroom and most respond positively to this. Information and communications technology is well used across the curriculum and makes an important contribution to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Other subjects also contribute to the development of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills through their planned use of these skills within lessons. Teachers make regular use of CD Roms in lessons and in modern foreign languages the most up-to-date technology enables teachers to access computer-based resources for the whole class to see on a large screen. More use could be made of information technology in mathematics.
- 14 Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to both plan their lessons to meet the needs of all pupils and to manage their behaviour. A particularly good example of this was seen in a physical education lesson where a Year 9 group that included pupils experiencing difficulties with their behaviour was very well managed using firmness, calmness and good humour. Good use of the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs was seen in English where specific activities for three pupils were written into the lesson plan, namely that they should use dictionaries and spelling sheets. The individual education plans seen were readily available and written in a very helpful easy-to-use format.
- 15 In some subjects, for example, English, maths, science and French, work is marked regularly but there is not enough information about what the pupil needs to do next in order to improve.

Staff in the school value all the pupils, treat them with respect and enable them to realise their potential as mature members of a learning community.

- 16 Teachers and support staff show a good level of concern and respect for pupils. Tutors link effectively with the teachers responsible for their pupils' academic work to ensure that their needs and abilities are known. The school has improved its support, guidance and welfare procedures since the previous inspection to ensure they make a good contribution to the standards pupils achieve. Parents are satisfied with the quality of care in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable. The environment is safe and effective child protection procedures are known and understood by staff.
- 17 Teachers deal with situations sensitively and skilfully and avoid confrontation. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with calmly and pupils are helped to understand why their behaviour is unacceptable and how they might remedy the situation. The "isolation room" is well used to ensure that extremely poor behaviour does not prevent other pupils from learning. Pupils sent to the "isolation room" are subsequently helped back into lessons to resume their learning as soon as possible. Moral thinking underpins much of the school's work, for example, rights and responsibilities in learning are displayed in all classrooms and pastoral protocols which identify stepped procedures for dealing with poor behaviour are based on rights, responsibilities and rules. These procedures focus on finding ways of helping pupils remain part of the school community. Staff provide very good role models for pupils in the way they deal with potential incidents in classrooms and the way they talk to and work with pupils. There is a strong sense at all levels of leadership in the school of a moral obligation to provide the best for pupils and to help them achieve.

- 18 The school has an effective school council which is recognised as part of the decision making process in the school. A number of pupils are trained as anti-bullying counsellors to help other pupils who might experience difficulties. This is a valued and successful programme of support. There are high expectations of work and behaviour and many teachers, through their relationships with pupils, inspire them with the confidence to believe that they can achieve. Many very good opportunities are provided for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

The school makes very good use of data to ensure that pupils' are achieving what they are capable of and that examination and test results continue to improve.

- 19 The school supports and prepares pupils well for examinations and for life after school. It uses computerised assessment programs to monitor the progress of Key Stage 3 pupils in literacy and numeracy against their initial levels of attainment and to monitor the progress of Key Stage 4 pupils against their predicted examination results and their previous best. Considerable care is taken by the staff to encourage pupils to come to school regularly and on time so that they make best use of the opportunities available.
- 20 The school maintains detailed student records. There is intensive tracking of individual pupil's progress using test results and teacher assessments to predict what pupils might achieve. The use of regular assessment ensures that they are achieving in line or better than could be expected. Teachers use the results of assessments with pupils, and sometimes parents, to set both long and short-term targets in order that pupils may improve. Parents who had attended the Parents Day consultations spoke highly of the quality of the discussion they had had and their appreciation of having such detailed information. The process of target setting is thorough and represents best practice. Targets are set, ways of achieving the targets identified and deadline dates fixed.
- 21 Pupils in Key Stage 4 who are experiencing difficulties with their academic work or are experiencing difficulties with their behaviour are provided with mentoring support on a fortnightly basis. The whole process works on the basis of clear roles and responsibilities for teachers, tutors and heads of year who all work together with one objective in mind – that pupils will achieve their best. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored and very effective work is done with them to help them understand how to learn.
- 22 The whole school system for monitoring pupils' progress is well supported by very rigorous assessment practice in departments. Noted during the inspection was the good practice in science where regular testing gives pupils a very good idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. In geography assessment is against National Curriculum levels.
- 23 The school is imaginative and innovative in its work on preparing pupils for examinations. Two sets of trial examinations enable pupils to learn from their experience and to improve their examination technique. A revision skills day run by an external consultant and follow up work in English, mathematics and science to tackle an examination question enables pupils to apply their learning to a real situation. Further bursts of revision techniques are provided by tutors in tutor time and subject teachers focus on subject specific revision skills. The school is also developing National Curriculum guides for subjects in Key Stage 3. These enable pupils and parents to know what pupils must be able to do to achieve a specific level. What is particularly helpful is the breaking down of level statements into sub-levels so that progress can be identified.

An exciting, rich and dynamic curriculum that goes far beyond meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum engenders a sense of enthusiasm for learning amongst pupils and a high staying on rate.

- 24 Whilst the curriculum is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and provides for the varying needs of all its pupils it also has many other features that capture the interest of pupils and secure their commitment to learning. Since the last inspection the school has strengthened learning opportunities in the performing arts, music, art and religious education by increasing the time allocated to those areas. There is a particular and appropriate emphasis on the skills of literacy and numeracy through the computer based course in Years 7 and 8 and through other subjects. Information and communications technology is increasingly being used within subject areas often through particular well-designed projects and initiatives. In English pupils work with other Tonbridge schools to create a website giving details in text and photographs of Tonbridge Castle. In Year 9 pupils use the Internet for research, create a website and liaise with a French and German school. A small group of Year 9 pupils have jointly planned, with the French and the German school, a presentation on the environmental impact of the motor car. This will be presented later in the year in Hanover, Germany. The college web site has departmental web sites where pupils can find their homework or additional work for them to complete. All around pupils can see the impact of technology, particularly information and communications technology on their daily lives. There is a wealth of extra curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school, particularly but not only, in sport and the arts.
- 25 In Key Stage 4 there have been many developments to the curriculum since the last inspection. They have been designed to meet the differing needs of pupils and include a strong emphasis on information and communication technology and the further provision of vocational courses. From 1999 onwards all pupils have to take a vocational course. Pupils have access to information and communications technology through their GNVQ course and there is a growing use of this technology in curriculum subjects, such as science. The use of information and communication technology at the school exceeds that seen in many other schools. In the sixth form distance learning with video conferencing is well established for A level law, psychology, electronics and accounts. In the electronics course the tutor is based in Newcastle but visits the school on six occasions during the year to meet students and assist with coursework and practical projects. Also in the sixth form there is a French exchange and opportunities for work experience in Sweden. Whilst out of this country students keep in touch with their studies here using e-mail and the Internet. The school is a regional centre for two industry-based information and communications technology courses which allows sixth formers to work alongside adults to gain internationally recognised qualifications.
- 26 The school is committed to making sure that as many pupils as possible, despite their difficulties, remain in full-time education as far as is possible. It also tries to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs. Pupils are put into sets in a number of subjects but these arrangements are so flexible that pupils can move easily between sets. The college is very conscious of the need to ensure that girls have equal opportunities particularly as boys outnumber girls. Option choices can result in gender imbalances in some subjects but skilful teaching ensures that this is not a problem for the girls.

Relationships within the school enable all pupils to become confident learners with high self-esteem.

- 27 Relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils support each other when working together in pairs or group work. The structured yet often relaxed atmosphere in classes

encourages pupils to become fully involved in the lessons. Good relationships between pupils support learning. Pupils respond positively when given opportunities to show initiative within the classroom, in homework and other activities. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the social and academic life of the school. They relate well to each other in their smaller teaching groups and get on well with other pupils in the school. Students from different countries who spend part of their year in the sixth form are made welcome.

- 28 The TEON (Tonbridge education on line) project provides opportunities for pupils to work with pupils from partner primary schools. Lessons often require pupils from Hugh Christie to help pupils from the primary schools. They do this well and build the confidence of primary pupils both in using computers and in coming to the school. Parents spoke at the parents' meeting about the way the school helps pupils to deal with situations that occur, including bullying and any poor behaviour in lessons. Pupils of all abilities spoken to during the inspection were courteous, helpful, confident and mature. Many sixth formers demonstrated a self-awareness beyond their years as they talked about the choices they had made or had to make. There is a real sense of community in the day to day life of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

GCSE results in mathematics and science could be better on the basis of what is achieved at the end of Key Stage 3.

- 29 The school is well aware that GCSE results in mathematics and science are well below what could be expected on the basis of what pupils achieve at the end of Key Stage 3. In both subjects results at the end of Key Stage 3 have improved and both departments now need to capitalise on these improvements in Key Stage 4. In mathematics there is good teaching of lower achieving groups including a range of good short tasks which maintain their interest, an imaginative approach to increase motivation and good use of support staff to assist pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. There is insufficient detailed departmental planning to ensure that all teachers set an appropriate pace and challenge for the different ability groups, in particular, the most able.
- 30 In science whilst nearly all lessons were satisfactory there were few lessons where teaching was very good or excellent. There is good use of information and communication technology and the department has a lot of data on what pupils have achieved. This data however is not used for planning purposes nor is it used to hold teachers to account for the work of their groups. There is also insufficient matching of work to meet pupils' needs and marking of pupils' work does not clearly indicate what they need to do in order to improve.
- 31 In science and mathematics teaching across each of the two departments needs to draw on the best practice that exists in both departments.

If the school had greater flexibility to deploy all its learning support staff inefficiencies in the way they are used could be eliminated.

- 32 Staff who support pupils with special educational needs are either funded and managed directly by the LEA or are funded and managed by the school. The LEA funds and manages the support for pupils with statements of special educational need who as part of their statement are given a specific number of hours of support per week. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and all staff in the team are effective in the way they work with pupils in their lessons. Even when pupils are absent support staff that work with statemented pupils attend the lesson to take notes

and to ensure that they can support the pupil on their return. However, because the school places pupils in sets according to their ability and in Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils with special educational needs work as a group for a large proportion of the week there are sometimes a large number of support staff present in these classes. Sometimes the nature of the lesson is such that pupils do not need intensive support for the whole of the lesson and older pupils appreciate having some space to develop their independent learning. Whilst the school can manage and deploy its own staff in response to the situation in individual lessons it has not got this flexibility with LEA staff and best use therefore is not always made of such support staff.

Planning and provision for the spiritual development of pupils is not as strong as it is for their moral, social and cultural development

- 33 The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and is strongly based on the aims and values set by the school. It is the strength and commitment to these aspects that emphasises the lack of a similarly articulated commitment to the spiritual development of pupils. The curriculum at the school presents opportunities for the development of this aspect of personal development but they are missed because the nature of spiritual development has not been defined and opportunities not identified in planning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve the GCSE results in mathematics and science so that pupils achieve what they are capable of by:
developing a more closely co-ordinated scheme of work, common expectations and greater challenge for more able pupils in mathematics;
providing work that better matches pupils' different levels of ability, using data on pupils achievements to identify where teaching needs to improve and by improving marking in science;
in both subjects identifying and drawing on the best practice to increase the proportion of lessons where teaching is very good.
- (2) Work with the LEA to identify how best to deploy LEA support staff in classes where high levels of adult support are present.
- (3) Plan and provide for the spiritual development of pupils in all aspects of the curriculum by:
defining what is meant by spiritual development;
building this aspect into departmental schemes of work;
exploiting the many opportunities that occur but are often missed.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8.7	37.0	34.8	17.4	2.1	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 school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	930	187
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	100	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	48	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	422	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	65

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.85
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.57
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 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	134	77	211

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	90	79
	Girls	44	49	29
	Total	123	139	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58(59.1)	66(61.2)	5 (49.5)
	National	63(65)	62(60)	55(56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18(30.9)	34(28.6)	13(20.2)
	National	28(35)	38(36)	23(27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	74	95	84
	Girls	48	52	40
	Total	122	147	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58(33)	70(63)	59(64.7)
	National	64(62)	64(64)	60(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26(14)	37(24)	17(33.3)
	National	31(31)	37(37)	28(31)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	111	70	181

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	39	102	106
	Girls	24	67	68
	Total	63	169	174
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	35(39.5)	93(96)	96(99.3)
	National	46.3(44.6)	90.7(89.8)	95.7(95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	34 (33.3)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	42	100
	National	n/a	n/a

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	38	19

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
School	11.1	16	12.7	2.1	3.7	2.7
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

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 pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	21	76.2
	National	n/a	n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	1073
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school 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	46	6
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	70.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	46
Total aggregate hours worked per week	922

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	21
Key Stage 4	20

Financial information

Financial year	1998
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	£
Total income	3,154,103
Total expenditure	3,057,957
Expenditure per pupil	2,832
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,136
Balance carried forward to next year	123,282

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1075
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	50	10	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	48	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	57	16	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	57	16	3	2
The teaching is good.	25	68	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	46	11	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	5	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	53	9	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	50	4	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	56	7	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	53	4	2	10