

INSPECTION REPORT

Penryn College
Penryn

LEA area : Cornwall

Unique Reference Number: 112044

Headteacher: Marie Hunter

Reporting inspector: Barbara Hilton
3228

Dates of inspection: 15 - 19 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708066

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of students:	11 to 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Poltisko Road PENRYN Cornwall TR10 8PZ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Lawrie Piper
Date of previous inspection:	30 January - 3 February 1995

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		Teaching
		Curriculum and assessment
		Leadership and management
		Efficiency
Husain Akhtar, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance and students' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Philip Winch	English	
	Drama	
	Special educational needs	
Margaret Price	Mathematics	Staffing
David Leonard	Science	
John Richards	Art	Learning resources
Paul Hartwright	Design and technology	
	Information and communication technology	
Marjorie Thomas	Geography	Accommodation
Joyce Sanderson	History	
Peter McKenzie	Modern foreign languages: French and German	
Robin Coulthard	Music	
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Ann Philp	Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

- What the college does well
- Where the college has weaknesses
- How the college has improved since the last inspection
- Standards in subjects
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the college
- The parents' views of the college

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the college 1-4
- Key indicators 5-9

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Educational standards achieved by students at the college

- Attainment and progress 10-30
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 31-34
- Attendance 35

Quality of education provided

- Teaching 36-43
- The curriculum and assessment 44-54
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 55-59
- Support, guidance and students' welfare 60-63
- Partnership with parents and the community 64-65

The management and efficiency of the college

- Leadership and management 66-71
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 72-79
- The efficiency of the college 80-84

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 85-111

Other subjects or courses 112-178

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 179-180

Data and indicators 181-185

MAIN FINDINGS

What the college does well

- Leadership is dynamic and teamwork is outstandingly good.
- Strengths in sport enrich the curriculum, students' self-esteem and its work in partnership with the local community.
- Students progress well overall; their GCSE results represent good added-value.
- Teachers are strongly committed to their students and the college: much of the teaching is good.
- Emphasis on improving literacy very effectively helps students improve in English and their learning in all subjects.
- Links with primary schools are well used to help students' progress.
- Students are helped to make the most of themselves through mentoring, business links and well-structured personal and social education; they are proud of their college.
- Projects are well used to build on strengths and improve learning.
- Governors are very well informed and contribute excellently to the work of the college.

Where the college has weaknesses

- I. Schemes of work and lesson planning are uneven across the college.
- II. Students underachieve in art and rural science.
- III. Subject support for students with special educational needs does not always focus on the next step in students' learning.
- IV. Accommodation for drama limits opportunities for students.
- V. Collective worship is not provided daily.

Penryn College is a good school: its strengths greatly outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents of students in the college.

How the college has improved since the last inspection

The college has made good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is better, GCSE results have improved at a much faster rate than nationally and sports college status has been achieved. The college has tackled weaknesses reported at the last inspection vigorously, particularly those concerning students' language and literacy standards, boys' GCSE results, the responsibilities and work of the governing body, provision for religious education, the use of assessment and schemes of work in several subjects. Provision for information and communication technology is much improved and well used. Arrangements for collective worship have been reviewed but still do not meet requirements. Middle-managers are involved in strategic planning, but more routine management responsibilities are carried out unevenly: in particular, the monitoring of schemes of work and lesson plans. The college is well placed to improve further through its very effective leadership, the good quality of development planning and excellent oversight of governors.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 year olds in national tests and 16 year olds in GCSE in 1999.

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	
			K ey <i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C

Key Stage 3	C	C
GCSE Examinations	B	A

<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average, relative both to all schools nationally and also similar schools. Results in mathematics and science in 1999 were average, but in English they were above average, relative to similar schools. These results represent good progress, relative to students' attainment on entry, which is below average, overall.

Students' overall results at GCSE in 1999 were above the national average and well above average for similar schools. Results for five subjects at the higher grades (A*-C) were average, and above average for similar schools. Students achieved particularly well across the full range of grades (A*-G) where, for both five subjects and one subject, results were well above the national average. Results are improving at a much faster rate than nationally; boys do particularly well. GCSE results represent good progress across Key Stage 4 for all students, including those with special educational needs.

In 1999, GCSE results in English were above average. Mathematics results were average, as were overall results for science. The college makes effective use of targets to improve results, which in English, double-award science, drama, dance and several aspects of technology are good for the college. Results are particularly high in media studies, geography, travel and tourism, music, and physical education. Results were low for the first students entering GCSE in religious education in 1999 and are persistently low in art and rural science.

• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in half the lessons, very good and occasionally excellent in one in five. Teaching is unsatisfactory in only five per cent of lessons.

Most aspects of teaching are good overall. Relationships are good. Teachers care about the learning of individuals and students are managed well. Teachers use their knowledge effectively to focus students' learning and develop their skills, for example through their use of questions in science, and skills' coaching in physical education. In modern foreign languages, while teachers speak French and German fluently themselves, opportunities are missed for promoting fluency among students. Teachers' expectations are usually high, as in music, the development of students' literacy skills in English and across the curriculum, and their use of computers in most subjects. Demands on numeracy across the curriculum, however, are uneven. Assessment is well used to help students' progress, although little information is given to younger students about their progress relative to the National Curriculum. Homework is regular, although the amount set is occasionally light. Time and learning resources are well used, including computers. Planning, however, is uneven. In too many lessons, particularly in art and rural science, planning for a sequence of activities is not well focused on what students need to learn.

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

• **Other aspects of the college**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Generally good. Students are self-confident and helpful. In a few lessons there are pockets of silly behaviour.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall; unauthorised absence is low.

Ethos*	Very positive, based on challenging students to achieve and helping them build on their strengths.
Leadership and management	Strong, with effective partnership between the headteacher, senior managers and governing body. The college works hard and is successful in creating a learning community.
Curriculum	Broad and well balanced with strengths in physical education and outdoor education, the development of literacy and a good range of subjects at GCSE. While links with businesses are well used, no vocational courses are provided. Schemes of work vary too much in quality. Extra-curricular activities are good, particularly in music and sports.
Students with special educational needs	Students make good progress overall, but the effectiveness of learning support is inconsistent because good practice in identifying learning targets in subjects is not shared.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Care for individuals and a positive ethos ensure that individuals matter and social development is valued. Opportunities for cultural and spiritual development are satisfactory. Personal and social education supports students' personal development and progress very well.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Resources are adequate overall. Accommodation is well used, but parts need refurbishment. The library and computers are well used. Staff development has very good focus on improving learning.
Value for money	Good. Governors work hard to manage the budget, which is tight. When account is taken of funding for students' special educational needs, income is below average. Students' results represent good added-value, relative to their attainment on entry.

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

The parents' views of the college

What most parents like about the college	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college is part of the community. • Students are involved in more than just lessons and like the college. • The behaviour of students is good. • The leadership is dynamic. • Standards in subjects, especially English, geography, modern languages and physical education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are not clear about what is taught. • Homework.

Support by parents for the college is strong. Inspectors confirm parents' generally positive views about the college and its role in the community. The concerns, which were raised by relatively few parents, were considered by the inspectors. Opportunities for parents to find out about the curriculum are plentiful, although information is not collected into a single document for each year. Homework is regularly set and adequate, although occasionally more demands could be made on students.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To raise further the standards of work and attainment of students, the governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:-

- I. strengthen the monitoring of schemes of work and lesson plans to promote consistent reference to the National Curriculum or examination criteria, and to provide appropriately challenging work for students of all attainment levels (paragraphs 38, 51 and 67);
- II. improve the teaching of art and rural science, especially the focus on what students need to learn and, in art, the scope for students to develop their individual styles (paragraphs 37, 40, 109 and 128);
- III. strengthen the links between subject teachers and staff supporting students with special educational needs, and build on examples of good practice, in order that support is well focused on the next step in students' learning (paragraphs 38 and 52);
- IV. vigorously seek ways of improving accommodation for drama (paragraphs 76 and 141);
- V. provide regular opportunities for reflection on universal issues, which should include a daily act of collective worship in order to meet statutory requirements (paragraphs 56 and 70).

References to the scheme of work in art and to collective worship were included in the key issues of the last inspection report. In addition to the preceding key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the plan. These are indicated in paragraphs referring to timetabling (47); the lack of vocational courses in Key Stage 4 (44); reference to the National Curriculum in assessing work in Key Stage 3 (53); the implementation of plans to strengthen numeracy (44) and the strengthening of the co-ordination of special educational needs work (66); the convergence of setting targets for results and development planning (68); technical support for science (75).

INTRODUCTION

· Characteristics of the college

1. Penryn College is a sports college for boys and girls aged 11 – 16 in Penryn, Cornwall. It is locally managed by the governors within Cornwall Local Education Authority. The total number of students is 742, with almost ten per cent more boys than girls, the difference being more pronounced among younger students. About half of the students entering in Year 7 come from the nearby primary school in Penryn and the rest come from village schools further afield, and from Falmouth. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals, at 19.5 per cent, is just above the average, nationally. The backgrounds of students reflect the local social and economic characteristics, with areas of prosperity adjacent to areas of marked disadvantage.
2. Nearly all of the students in the college are white, very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and this is representative of local communities. The attainment of students coming into the school is wide-ranging but, overall, below average. The numbers of students with special educational needs and with statements are above average for the size of the college. Most of the students with the most severe level of need have moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia or emotional and behavioural difficulty.
3. In most ways, the characteristics of the college are about the same as at the time of the last inspection. The only particular difference is in the number of students with special educational needs, which has increased by 40 per cent. The college remains smaller than most secondary schools, although its popularity is growing. It is oversubscribed in two year groups and its size is limited by its

accommodation.

4. The overall aim of the college is “achieving through challenge”. The aim is well reflected in the priorities and work of the college. It is frequently stated in college documents and used as the basis of planning. The college makes effective use of data to monitor results and of target-setting to improve its work and results.

Key indicators

5. **Attainment at Key Stage 3¹**

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
99	58	68	126
(98)	(70)	(59)	(129)

5. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	29 (33)	29 (37)	27 (33)
	Girls	44 (50)	43 (38)	29 (34)
	Total	73 (83)	72 (75)	57 (67)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	58 (64)	57 (58)	44 (52)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	27 (31)	26 (27)	13 (18)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	31 (35)	31 (38)	30 (31)
	Girls	47 (46)	47 (44)	41 (31)
	Total	78 (81)	78 (82)	71 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	62 (63)	62 (64)	56 (48)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	8 (28)	38 (22)	35 (14)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

1. **Attainment at Key Stage 4¹**

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
99	67	78	145
(98)	(66)	(62)	(128)

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of students achieving standard specified	Boys	29 (30)	66 (65)	66 (66)
	Girls	37 (36)	76 (62)	77 (62)
	Total	66 (66)	142 (127)	143 (128)
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	45.5 (52)	98 (99)	99 (100)
	National	47.8 (44.6)	88.4 (89.8)	93.9 (95.2)

.....

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

1. **Attendance**

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

reporting year:

		%
Authorised	School	9.3
Absence	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	0.1
Absence	National comparative data	1.1

7.

8. **Exclusions**

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

	Number
Fixed period	33
Permanent	3

9. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	18
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

9. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

9. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

9. Attainment and progress

1. The attainment of students coming into the college is wide-ranging, but overall below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above average, and the proportion with statements more than double the national average. Most of the students with the highest level of need have moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia or emotional and behavioural difficulty.
2. By the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the attainment of students in National Curriculum tests in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) was in line with the average, both for all schools nationally, and also for schools admitting students of similar backgrounds. Results in each subject – English, mathematics and science - were in line with the national average. Relative to similar schools, results in mathematics and science were average, and in English they were above average.
3. Students' average results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in 1999 were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Results for five subjects at the higher grades (A*-C) were average, and above average relative to similar schools. Results were well above average both for five subjects and for one subject across the full range of grades (A*-G); compared with similar schools, these results were very high and well above average, respectively. The school's GCSE results are improving at a much faster rate than they are nationally.
4. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. It is above expectations in about one fifth of lessons and a little better in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Students progress well across both key stages. In lessons progress is almost always satisfactory or better: in about half of the lessons progress is good, and in one sixth it is very good, occasionally excellent. The rate of progress in lessons is closely linked to the quality of teaching. Where teaching is mostly good, as in English, design and technology, music and physical education, then progress, likewise, is good. Progress is good in many science lessons, particularly at Key Stage 3, where students are well challenged, but progress in rural science is slow, because work is not well organised to build on students' understanding. Progress is mostly satisfactory in art, but across a narrow range of skills; the pace of lessons is slow and students are given few opportunities to develop their personal styles.
5. The attainment of students with special educational needs is well below average. They enter the college with low, sometimes very low, literacy and numeracy skills. They find reading difficult and writing even more so. Speaking and listening are better. Students answer questions clearly though their vocabulary is very limited. They make good progress across both key stages. The lowest attaining students make very good progress in reading. They learn to speak at greater length, listen more carefully to instructions, read with greater accuracy and write a short paragraph. By Year 11 they can structure sentences, write neatly and spell basic words accurately. They make steady progress in working with numbers in mathematics, though this is not yet reinforced through systematic approaches in other subjects. By Year 11, they can handle routine operations and everyday transactions with reasonable accuracy.

English

6. Results of National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were in line with the national average, and above average when compared to results in schools of similar intake. Results have risen steadily over the past three years. Girls do better than boys, though in 1999 the gap narrowed significantly. Attainment in lessons is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3.
7. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of students achieving the higher levels (A*-C) in the 1998

GCSE examinations in English was a little above the national average. Girls did better than boys. In 1999, results were higher - they were above the national average - and boys did particularly well. Results in both years were well above the average for similar schools. In 1999, GCSE results in English were better than in mathematics and science. In English literature, the proportion of students achieving the higher grades (A*-C) in 1998 was below the national average, although across the full range of grades (A*-G) the proportion was average and girls did better than boys; results improved in 1999. GCSE results in media studies were well above average in 1998 and improved further in 1999. Results in drama were well above average in 1998, though they dipped in 1999. Attainment in English lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average, overall. Progress is good in English across both key stages; it is very good in media studies, and satisfactory in drama.

(In Section B of the report, drama is reported separately.)

Literacy

8. In English lessons, students speak clearly and listen attentively. They read fluently, sometimes with expression, paying attention to punctuation to help them convey meaning. They write in various forms – letters, poems, play-scripts, narrative, and newspaper articles – and for different audiences. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. Students use information and communication technology well to make presentation more effective. Opportunities are provided in lessons throughout the college for speaking, listening, reading and writing, and while students' performance varies, overall it is satisfactory. Speaking and listening skills are good in most subjects. Reading is relatively little developed in subjects other than English. Opportunities to write are varied and satisfactory. Spelling and punctuation are inconsistent among younger students but better at Key Stage 4.

Mathematics

9. Results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were close to the national average for all schools, and for similar schools. Girls performed better than boys. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades (A*-C) for GCSE mathematics in 1998 was above the national average and well above average, when compared with similar schools. Boys' performance in mathematics in 1998 was better than that in English but not as good as in science, whereas girls did better than in science, but not as well as in English. In 1999, the proportion of students gaining the higher grades (A*-C) fell a little, but more students gained the very highest grades (A*, A). Results were in line with the national average and above average for similar schools. The performance of boys and girls was broadly similar. Attainment in lessons is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages; students make satisfactory progress throughout the college.

Numeracy

10. Standards of numeracy cover a wide range and are satisfactory overall. A programme for improving numeracy has begun in Year 7 mathematics but students' experience across the school depends too much on individual subject teachers, because opportunities have not yet been systematically identified. The school has firm plans to strengthen arrangements. Examples of good practice are found in history, science, physical education and some geography lessons. Little use is made of scale and enlargement in art.

Science

11. In 1999, the results of National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Key Stage 3 were in line with the national average and with the average for schools having similar intake. Girls' results were significantly better than those of boys in 1998, but they were similar in 1999. GCSE results in science in 1998 were above the national average and well above average in comparison with schools having a similar intake. For double-award science, results were well above the national average, but they were low in rural science. Results in 1999 were in line with the national average and above average, relative to similar schools. Results in science were not as good as in English, but broadly similar to the results for mathematics. Attainment in lessons is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3

and this represents good progress across the key stage. Students maintain satisfactory progress across Key Stage 4; they continue to attain in line with expectations in lessons.

Information and communication technology

12. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. GCSE results were just above average in 1998, but dipped in 1999. Students progress well in lessons and across Key Stage 3. Progress is mostly satisfactory across Key Stage 4. Considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection, especially in the use of computers across the curriculum, where many subjects are now making a significant contribution to the development of students' skills.

Religious education

13. By the end of Key Stage 3 students' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus; they have progressed well from low levels of understanding on entry. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is broadly average, although the results of the first entries for the short-course GCSE in 1999 were disappointing; they were well below average. In lessons at Key Stage 4, students make satisfactory progress.

Art

14. GCSE results are well below the national average and have been since the last inspection. Results are considerably below those for other subjects. Students' progress in art, while mostly satisfactory, is not as good as in their other subjects. In lessons at the end of both key stages, attainment is below the national expectation.

Design and technology

15. Attainment in design and technology is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. While GCSE results vary according to technology aspect, they are average, overall. The performance of boys and girls differs markedly for the different technology subjects, with girls doing much better than boys recently in graphics and on the short food technology course. Progress is good across both key stages.

Geography

16. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 matches national expectations and represents satisfactory progress across the key stage. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average; students progress well. Results at GCSE are consistently well above the national average and in 1998 were the highest for geography in Cornwall. Results for travel and tourism are also high. Girls do better than boys at GCSE in geography.

History

17. At the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment in history matches the national expectation; they have made satisfactory progress across the key stage. In GCSE examinations, the proportion of students gaining the higher grades, A*-C, was above average in 1998 but declined sharply in 1999, although all students who have entered have gained a grade in the last two years. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is below expectations, but progress is mostly satisfactory, and for students with special educational needs it is good.

Modern foreign languages

18. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. GCSE results in both French and German are average. Students make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 3; their progress

across Key Stage 4 is good on the whole, and better in listening, reading and writing, than in speaking spontaneously.

Music

19. Standards in music are high throughout the college. GCSE results are well above the national average. Students make good progress across Key Stage 3 and very good progress across Key Stage 4. Extra-curricular activities enhance standards and the contribution music makes to the life of the college.

Physical education

20. Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and better among boys than girls. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average for both boys and girls. GCSE results in physical education and dance are well above average. Progress is good throughout the college. Students achieve well in a wide range of competitive and individual sports and activities, including rugby, the Tall Ships race, cricket, soccer, basketball, table-tennis and climbing. Girls' progress is fostered through a 'healthy living' project. Through outdoor education activities students gain a range of skills, as well as greater self-confidence and an understanding of teamwork. Students of outstanding ability receive specialist coaching and achieve very high standards. Work associated with sports benefits individuals and the whole college, including its work with the local community.

Trends

21. The college has invested much effort in helping boys to improve and it has been successful. While GCSE results at the higher grades dipped in 1999, average GCSE results have improved steadily. The college's rate of improvement is much faster than the national rate and it is particularly good for boys. Results in English, double-award science, drama, dance and several aspects of technology are good for the college. Results are particularly high in geography, travel and tourism, music and physical education. Results were low for the first entrants in the short GCSE examination in religious education in 1999, and are persistently low in art and rural science. Extensive use is made of targets to monitor and improve results, at whole-college level, in subjects, and for individual students.

30. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

22. At the last inspection students behaved well, had good manners, were courteous, and their learning was generally good in lessons: these positive features are still much in evidence. The majority of students concentrate throughout lessons and are interested in their studies. Many are keenly interested and enthusiastic about learning in music, dance and physical education, both in lessons and in extracurricular activities. In lessons, most students listen well to their teachers, particularly when the pace is brisk. Students work well independently - for example, in science investigations, and for GCSE coursework, particularly in English, geography and history. Students contribute well to their own learning, especially when involved in problem-solving and simulation exercises, but occasionally they have too few opportunities to explore ideas, and they become passive. Many students have the skills to evaluate their own performance (for example, in music and physical education) and they use the information effectively to improve. Students with special educational needs respond very well to support in lessons, as observed in a Year 10 English lesson where students appreciated support given in reading *Macbeth*, and in many design and technology, and information and communication technology lessons.
23. Behaviour in and around the college is good. A small minority of responses to the parents' questionnaire and parents' written comments indicated their concern about inappropriate behaviour in some classes. Such behaviour was observed in a very small number of lessons during the inspection. A small minority of students occasionally disrupts lessons, but the great majority of students do not misbehave. There is some silliness in public areas and dropping of litter in the dining area, but students are generally respectful of their surroundings. College property is well cared for. Students are very well aware of the sanctions used by the college and know that any misdemeanours will be dealt with very firmly. Students and parents are confident that any instances of bullying will be firmly tackled. The number of fixed period exclusions has risen since the last inspection, but is now static. Most of these are for failure to accept college discipline: matters such as rudeness and similar unacceptable behaviour

are dealt with by exclusion for one or two days. Permanent exclusions in the last college year total only three and these were for persistent and serious offences. Correct procedures for exclusions are followed in most cases.

24. Relationships in the college are very good. Students are polite, friendly and courteous. They mix well together and respect the opinions of others, as, for example, in personal and social education, and religious education lessons. They work well in pairs, or in groups: for example, there is good collaborative work in physical education and science. A good level of mutual respect is evident among staff and students.
25. Students benefit well from the opportunities provided for their personal development. They show initiative in class by offering to distribute and collect textbooks. They apply for posts as prefects and undertake responsibilities sensibly, as prefects, head boy or head girl. Year 10 boys are conscientious in acting as mentors to help improve the reading of Year 7 boys. Reports on projects undertaken as part of the business challenge initiative reflect excellent teamwork among tutor groups. Groups of students in each year maintain useful dialogue with their business mentors. Young journalists work responsibly with college and local newspaper staff. Parents feel that the college develops students' personalities very well, and they are right. Students are proud of their college.
- 34.

34. **Attendance**

26. Attendance is satisfactory. Students' overall attendance has dropped a little since the last inspection and is just below the national average, but above the 90 per cent threshold. Attendance in most year groups is satisfactory, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Absence is mostly attributed to illness or family holidays in term time, and authorised by parents. Punctuality is satisfactory; the college day and lessons usually start on time.

35. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

35. **Teaching**

27. The quality of teaching is good, overall. It is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in just over half of the lessons and very good or excellent in 18 per cent of lessons. Teaching is generally good in English, including media studies and drama, design and technology, music, physical education, dance, religious education and personal and social education. In other subjects, teaching is generally satisfactory, with some good features.
28. Teachers draw well on their knowledge to help students to progress. In teaching reading in English, their effective focus on the key features of good reading aloud helps students to make very good progress – as, for example, when Year 7 students read poems, and extracts from Shakespeare. Teachers ask well-focused questions which draw attention to the crucial points and promote students' understanding, for example in science lessons with students in Year 10 revising topics such as hormones, and in media studies when exploring ideas about stereotyping in Cornwall. In mathematics, teachers draw effectively on their knowledge to provide clear, well-sequenced explanations. In music, subject knowledge is used very confidently, as in helping students in their composition tasks, because the teacher draws on a wide range of inspiring and pertinent examples. Students' progress in art is limited in some lessons, and does not rise above satisfactory, because teaching does not draw confidently on a range of stimulating approaches. In modern foreign languages, while teachers speak French and German fluently themselves, opportunities are missed for promoting language fluency among students, who rely too much on reading prepared passages aloud.
29. Planning a varied sequence of activities to develop and reinforce learning is a feature of good lessons in many subjects, but when planning is weak, then students' progress is limited. Students are well

challenged in many English, geography, music and physical education lessons, with extra tasks for those who work more quickly and modified work for those who learn more slowly. Planning is insufficient to meet the variety of needs in religious education, and additional materials to supplement the main lesson activities are sometimes overlooked in modern foreign languages. The planning of work for students with special educational needs is inconsistent. Liaison between subject teachers and learning support assistants is usually good and the subject expertise of assistants well used in English, media studies, design and technology, information and communication technology, and music, enabling students to make good progress. In other subjects, there is relatively little joint planning so that assistants are not able to focus on the next learning step.

30. Teachers use a good range of methods to interest and involve students, with good practical work in science (especially at Key Stage 3), investigations in mathematics and longer projects in design and technology. Evaluation of their own work and that of others is well used to help students understand how to improve – especially in physical education activities, including dance. In drama, half-termly evaluation sheets are effectively used by teachers. Teachers in all subjects contribute towards improving students' literacy by placing helpful emphasis on the use of words, and sometimes on reading. In religious education, for example, appropriate time is spent ensuring comprehension of written and oral material, and key words are displayed on classroom walls. Teachers make good use of computers, which help to improve students' information and communication technology skills, as well as their subject knowledge. In history, for example, students word-process their essays and in doing so learn how to improve the structure of their writing.
31. Students are well managed by teachers: this is a general strength. Relationships are good and students are well organised. In occasional lessons a few students are silly, but this is almost always when work does not capture their interest, or challenge them sufficiently. Teachers' expectations are generally high. In English, for example, students read a good range of challenging books. Expectations are particularly high in music, media studies, science and in physical education, where extra coaching helps to raise the skills yet further of students who attain well. In modern foreign languages, expectations of writing are high. In a few subjects, expectations are not high enough. While topics are introduced carefully in art, students have too few opportunities to develop their own styles. Low expectations, weak planning and slow pace limit learning in rural science, although students are well managed on the whole and participate in practical activities with good humour.
32. Time is generally well used by teachers – and good pace is a feature in many lessons in physical education, modern foreign languages and art. In art, the lesson length (50 minutes) constrains some practical activities, although within lessons the pace of learning is held back by the practice of keeping all students in step, which limits their opportunities to work more quickly on their own, as well as their scope for developing individual styles. In all subjects, work in lessons is extended effectively by homework. This is regularly set and marked, but sometimes not extensive. Generally, effective use is made of resources, including the library. Commercial computer programs are used well for students with special educational needs, who enjoy being able to control their own learning and they make good progress.
33. Assessment is generally well used by teachers in lessons – and especially well in music, where teaching builds well on students' strengths and they are presented with interesting, challenging material throughout. Good attention is paid to the Locally Agreed Syllabus in assessing students' progress in religious education. Marking is regular and helpful: students understand how they are achieving in subjects. Teachers indicate GCSE level when work is marked for students in Key Stage 4, but little reference is made to National Curriculum level when work is marked for students in Key Stage 3, which means that opportunities are lost for students to strive to improve.
34. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory, or better, in about 80 per cent of lessons and in 20 per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved considerably and it is now satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, and unsatisfactory in only five per cent of lessons. At the last inspection, good teaching was more frequent at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Teaching is much more even now. Strengths in English and music have been maintained. The last report criticised the length of time spent by teachers in introducing work. This is not generally the case

now. The last report mentioned the need to monitor the quality of teaching. The school has introduced very effective and creative approaches to monitoring lessons and these have contributed well to improving teaching, because of the focus on features which are critical to effective learning.

The curriculum and assessment

Curriculum

35. The curriculum provides a broad and well-balanced range of subjects. Strengths include cross-curricular planning for the development of students' literacy – which contributes effectively to their learning in all subjects, as well as directly to their progress in English. Provision for physical education is strong, reflecting the college's status as a sports college; students achieve and progress well in a wide variety of activities and a project linked to planning an around-the-world yacht race extends their learning into music, science, information and communication technology and other subjects. Through well-organised outdoor education activities, in Years 7 and 8 especially, students gain a range of skills, as well as greater self-confidence and understanding of teamwork. While the development of numeracy is satisfactorily planned in mathematics, the approach to numeracy across the curriculum is not yet systematic. Effective use is made of computers in most subjects, with interesting applications in physical education, for example. The range of subjects offered at Key Stage 4 is good, with students able to couple any two choices to allow specialisation in, for example, the humanities or creative arts. Students' choice at GCSE has been extended through the introduction of subjects such as media studies, dance and travel and tourism, in which students achieve well. No vocational courses are offered, however.
36. Planning for progression and continuity at each end of the college is unusually good. Curricular links with primary schools are established in several subjects, with a strong literacy programme which has contributed to raising literacy standards among students in Year 7. Reciprocal lesson visits involving Penryn College and primary teachers have helped to raise the expectations of teachers in Year 7, and remove unnecessary repetition. Regular music projects involve Penryn College students in working with younger children – for example, students at the start of their GCSE course compose a carol in a pentatonic scale, for performance by pupils at the nearby infant school. Collaborative work has involved information and communication technology, and the Trelissick project aims to have a link in each subject. Collaboration with local secondary schools and post-16 providers has focused on developing progression opportunities for students leaving Penryn College. These include vocational courses to build on students' achievements in physical education and outdoor education - for example, a vocational course at advanced level in outdoor pursuits, and a unit in health and leisure, as well as a full course in health and social care. Development work is in hand to accredit the key skills held by Penryn College students, which will give them a head-start when they progress to vocational courses in further education.
37. Provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Numbers in lower attaining sets are generally low and small groups in Years 7 and 8 are taught separately for several subjects. The size of small groups and support by classroom assistants mean that students benefit from extra attention. Planning is good for literacy and satisfactory for most other subjects. Effective use is made of commercial software programs for both literacy and numeracy.
38. Students have equality of access and opportunity on courses throughout the college. All students enter GCSE in science, the great majority (80 per cent) in double-award science, in which they do well. Success in rural science is much lower, affected by the curricular planning, which is much less thorough than for double-award science. Timetable restrictions reduce the continuity of learning in several subjects, including mathematics, for which the teaching of a few groups is split between teachers. The arrangements for grouping students in several subjects at Key Stage 4 depend on their choice of design and technology aspect, and this results in sharp imbalances between boys and girls in several classes in modern foreign languages and physical education. While teachers try to take account of this, the opportunity for students to learn from each other is reduced - for example, in the improvement of their practical skills in physical education.
39. Personal and social education is very well planned and lesson time is used efficiently. Excellently designed student organisers enable students to monitor their progress and plan for improvements in all subjects. Health and sex education is satisfactorily covered at appropriate stages, supplemented by work in science. Other aspects of personal and social education are well organised and students benefit from both teachers' knowledge and that of outside visitors on topics such as bullying, drugs awareness and

road safety. The strength of the personal and social education curriculum is the emphasis on key skills and approaches which help individuals learn, and this is acknowledged in the acronym PEAKS by which the subject is known (Personal Effectiveness and Acquisition of Key Skills).

1. Much work on careers is included in personal and social education, including evaluating strengths and weaknesses and making choices. Arrangements are satisfactory at key points when choices have to be made. For example, in Year 9, choice booklets and open evenings provide information for students and their parents to help students to plan appropriate subjects to study for GCSE. All students benefit from work experience in Year 10 and individual interviews with careers officers in Years 10 and 11. Two initiatives provide particularly good opportunities for students to find out about their own strengths and weaknesses, and do their best: a business challenge in Year 9 and the involvement of business mentors. In the business challenge, each Year 9 tutor group plans, organises and presents a major problem-solving project, over the course of a week (projects have included setting up an ice rink, and environmental improvement schemes). Business mentors each work with a small group of students (this scheme involves about 100 students, drawn from each year and has won national recognition).
2. A good range of extracurricular activities is provided, including a wide variety of games and sports. For students wishing to improve their music skills there is a wind band, choir and instrumental lessons, which the governors support generously. At lunchtimes computers and the library are well used. A homework club meets after school. Students seeking extra challenge can go to the 'brain club' and a team of students, with participants in most years, acts as journalists on behalf of the college and produces a regular newspaper, *The Pennant*, and a supplement for the *Falmouth Packet*, the local newspaper.
3. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum, while broad and balanced, did not meet the National Curriculum requirements in several subjects (information technology, design and technology, art and physical education) which was reported as a key issue. Overall planning is much better now, and requirements are met. The quality of planning varies, however: good detail indicating how aspects of the National Curriculum, or GCSE requirements, are covered in several subjects including English, science, design and technology and geography is evident; planning in most other subjects, while broadly satisfactory, is uneven and lacks detail. Planning for rural science and art is weak. Where planning is weak, students' progress is affected because it depends too much on their particular teacher. On the other hand, good planning promotes consistent practice and good progress among students – as in reading, as a result of detailed planning in English, and in students' use of computers across the curriculum, resulting from good planning for information and communication technology.

Assessment

4. The college's arrangements for assessment are good. Students' attainments are tested on entry and at regular intervals as they move up the college. The progress of individual students can be tracked. Data are available for Years 7 to 10 and in about a year's time a complete set will be available, up to GCSE. The information available on students is used to place students into groups on the basis of their attainments for about half of their subjects, from Year 8 onwards. Other subjects are taught in mixed groups. The grouping arrangements generally work well, because they enable teachers to plan appropriate work: the groups in Years 7 and 8 for students with special educational needs are a good example of this. Assessment arrangements for students with special educational needs are good overall. A wide range of tests is used to monitor progress and data are carefully recorded and used to inform students' individual education plans and their annual reviews. The targets of students' plans are often too vague to be used to monitor progress and use in lesson planning.
5. Teachers' use of marking is generally good. Marking is frequent, regular and students understand how they are doing in their work. In Key Stage 4, marks often refer to a GCSE grade, although lower down the school little use is made of National Curriculum levels in marks which are given. This means that opportunities are lost to help students understand what they can do to improve. When formal assessments are made, marks are entered into students' organisers. This practice enables checking by students, parents and teachers of progress made and targets are set to help students improve. National Curriculum tests and assessments are correctly in place at the end of Year 9. Heads of year and form

tutors monitor students' achievements across subjects to identify possible underachievement, and where help may be needed. Heads of department monitor attainment in their subjects and set targets for results at GCSE. At whole-college level, information is used to predict GCSE results, and set overall targets for the college to achieve. GCSE results are reviewed annually by the headteacher, senior management team and departmental governor with each head of department, to plan strategies for further improvement.

6. Arrangements for assessment are much better than at the time of the last inspection, when the assessment policy was new. Students had not been assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, departments used different systems and arrangements were patchy. Now, assessment arrangements are systematic and good. They are well used to raise achievement, although their use is sharper throughout Key Stage 4, because regular reference is made to GCSE grades, than through Key Stage 3, where little reference is made to National Curriculum levels, except at the end of Year 9.

54.

54. **Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

7. The personal development of students is central to the aims and values of the college. The generally good provision reported at the last inspection has been maintained. The many efforts to enhance students' experience are to be commended. Shared values underpin the sense of community which is an important focus of college life.

8. Opportunities for students' spiritual development are mainly provided through work in subjects. Religious education contributes substantially in all years and assemblies provide a structured opportunity for exploring issues. Although reported as a key issue following the last inspection, assemblies are still provided only once each week, and fail to fulfil statutory requirements. Themes are recorded and a range of staff is involved. Opportunity for reflection is provided at the end of each by the head of religious education. They are well planned and major Christian festivals are celebrated. Several areas of the curriculum contribute effectively to spiritual development. A science lesson, for example, used music to help students reflect on the wonder of the universe. Conflict is explored in art through war paintings, and in English through war poetry. Geography, dance and drama also make good contributions. Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory.

9. Provision of students' moral education is good. The commitment to teach students right from wrong is clear and many areas of the curriculum contribute much of value. Staff do their best to provide a common and immediate response to behaviour problems. Teachers are good role models. The Key Stage 4 religious education programme explores a wide range of current moral issues. Expectations of good behaviour are clear and supported by team building and outdoor education activities in the lower part of the college. Students have opportunities to raise money for charities, entertain the elderly and take part in a range of community activities. Within the curriculum, geography encourages students to examine environmental issues, science sets particularly high standards of behaviour and in English literature lessons students have opportunity to discuss behaviour, when exploring characters and plot. Students are well supported and there is a strong sense of community in the college.

1. Care for individuals and a positive ethos ensure that individuals matter and their social development is valued. Older students are supportive of younger ones. For example, they run a dance club and become mentors to younger students. There are opportunities for students to exercise responsibility throughout the college. They help in the library, in the information technology rooms, at parents' evenings and in dance and drama productions. They are keenly aware of the implications of litter and seek ways of removing it from around the site. Their contribution to local primary schools is valued. As prefects they are attached to Year 7 tutor groups. They produce a college newspaper, contribute to the *Falmouth Packet* and help in a variety of college activities which support the local community and promote understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. The link with the yachtsman Pete Goss and the associated web-site are parts of an exciting project which enhances the college's emphasis on challenge. Students' social development is enhanced by a well-delivered personal and social education programme. Self-esteem and confidence are raised by planned challenges in the outdoor education programme. A good range of extracurricular activities widens students' experience. The activities are particularly strong in sports and much is offered through music, drama and dance, including productions, as well as

through a Christian union. Students can serve on the students' council. Teachers provide many opportunities through work in subjects for students to take responsibility with younger children, for example in music and physical education. Overall, provision for students' social development is very good.

2. Cultural development is primarily fostered through the curriculum and is satisfactory, overall. Visits to theatres in English, a wide variety of opportunities in music, field trips in geography, a visit to a local church for religious education and sports activities all play their part. Dance is particularly popular amongst girls and visits have been organised to a variety of places to widen students' experience. Local studies and contacts with many services and individuals in Penryn have enhanced ties with the community. Outside speakers are a regular feature of the personal and social education programme. Finding opportunities to experience at first hand the range of British cultures is not easy in Penryn. Major world faiths are studied in religious education, native American culture in history, and an impressive range of music from a variety of cultures all help. Groups of students benefit through French and German exchanges, and visits to Norway and Denmark. Wider links have enabled South American students to study English within the college.

59. Support, guidance and students' welfare

3. The last inspection described the environment as safe and happy and the pastoral system as successful. The college has maintained its caring ethos. This is acknowledged by students and parents, who feel that the college is caring and supportive.
4. The trusting relationships which the students enjoy with their teachers give them the confidence to share their concerns and help them cope with the problems which arise in everyday life. Induction arrangements are effective and students, some of whom are from outside the college's locality, settle in well. The teachers know their students well and are sensitive in their dealings with those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs, which are promptly identified and are usually effectively met. Academic progress, personal development and behaviour are monitored with care. The information gained from assessing and monitoring students is wisely used. Students know their marks, mentoring support is provided, appropriate work is planned. Specialist help is provided for students with special educational needs. The curriculum for personal and social education includes issues relevant to students' welfare and progress. The school offers good careers guidance to its students and this, together with the personal and social education programme, allows students to make sensible decisions about their futures.
5. Good behaviour and attendance are promoted through policies, communications with students and their parents, and rewards, stamps and certificates. Notable success is recorded in a special achievement book which is kept in the entrance hall and formally read to students, termly in assemblies. Measures to promote discipline and good behaviour are effective. The vast majority of students know the high standards expected of them and show proper respect for college rules and conventions. The college has worked successfully with parents and students to eliminate any concern about harassment or bullying. Proper records of attendance are kept and statutory requirements are met. Information about attendance is efficiently processed and appropriately used for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Parents are satisfied with the arrangements and say that the 'first day response' initiative has been helpful. The college benefits from the support of the education welfare service.
6. Staff act responsibly on child protection matters. Specialist and welfare services are well used for providing additional support for students who need it. The governors have a responsible attitude towards health and safety. Appropriate policies have been agreed and responsibilities allocated to designated members of staff. Routine risk assessments are carried out.

63. Partnership with parents and the community

7. Parents are generally well satisfied with the information they receive and standard of education that the college provides. The college values parents and has recognised its special role in helping parents support their children's education. Communication with parents is well managed. The prospectus, letters and annual reports inform parents about the college's work and students' progress. Progress reports on students inform parents about their children's attainment and attitudes, but do not always refer to national standards until the end of Year 9. Opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress

are frequently provided. Students' organisers contain a wealth of information and provide further opportunities for parents to communicate with the college, but in practice they are little used in this way by parents. Parents' involvement in the education of their children is satisfactory, overall. They work closely with the college on the literacy strategies. Some parents help with sporting events, camping, coaching and school productions. The parent-teacher association, which was thinly supported at the time of the last inspection, no longer meets. Involvement of the parents of students with special educational needs in the review of their progress is satisfactory.

8. The college is an important part of the community, as reported in the last inspection. It offers a number of facilities and opportunities to the community it serves, ranging from developing literacy strategies with primary schools to sharing sports and leisure facilities with adults. Part of the accommodation houses pre-school groups. An interactive web-site has been developed for the community to access *Race 2000*, to be undertaken by Peter Goss, a world-class sailor who gives much personal support to the college. These initiatives boost students' confidence in their college and enhance the partnership between the college and its community. The college uses the wider community very productively. Liaison with local primary schools is very good, helps the transition of students into the college and promotes curricular continuity in literacy and other subjects. Students organise keep fit activities through the 'huff and puff' scheme with local infant and junior schools and gain awards in sports leadership through this work. In music, students compose carols which they teach younger children, for performance at Christmas. The Trelissick project involves college teachers, local artists and poets in working with primary students at the gardens. Links with the local educational business partnership and careers' service help students to make well-informed choices. Educational visits, notably the outdoor experiences in Years 7 and 8, and visitors from the community support the curriculum, extend students' experience and contribute significantly towards their personal development. Many employers support a well-organised work experience programme in Year 10, and also the mentoring scheme for which the college has won national recognition. The college works in partnership with a local newspaper, *The Falmouth Packet*, which accepts regular contributions from students who act as journalists and produce a supplement, as well as the college's own newspaper, *The Pennant*. Links through sporting activities are substantial and contribute strongly to the ethos of the college.

65.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

65. Leadership and management

9. The college is strongly led, through effective partnership between the headteacher, senior managers and governing body. They have captured the support and commitment of the local community, which is proud of its secondary school. They have successfully achieved sports college status and GCSE results are improving well. Staff greatly respect and like their senior managers, particularly their dynamic, rigorous and caring approach which engenders strong teamwork and warm loyalty. Governors are knowledgeable about the college, well organised and have excellent oversight. Leadership in several subjects is strong, including that of English, mathematics, science, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education; curricular leadership is weaker in rural science and in art. The special educational needs area has lacked a permanent leader for over a year. Day-to-day arrangements have been managed satisfactorily, and overall arrangements are in line with the Code of Practice. Insufficient attention has been paid to the co-ordination of support across all subjects so that, in some, the support of assistants for individual students is not focused on the next learning step, to help students to progress.
10. The college engages in a great deal of monitoring and review: of finance, results, teaching and the work of departments. Monitoring of the work of the college and its development is mirrored by the monitoring of individual student's progress, through excellent use of student organisers. Monitoring is thoughtful and supportive, rooted in identifying the factors which are critical in improving teaching and learning. For example, the monitoring of teaching is linked to teachers' own learning, support for which is funded through individual learning accounts (part of the college's method of resourcing in-service training). The approach has been successful. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 80 per cent of lessons, and this proportion has now risen to 95 per cent, with corresponding reduction

in unsatisfactory lessons, from 20 to only five per cent. Nonetheless, monitoring is patchy of two important aspects of work: lesson planning, and schemes of work. In the latter case, monitoring is too infrequent to be effective. Immediately after the last inspection, the college supported its staff in making curricular changes by inviting in local authority advisers. Schemes of work in several subjects are good – for example, in English, science, geography and religious education – although weaknesses have still to be tackled in art and rural science.

11. Staff are closely involved in planning improvements: consultation is thorough, involving all staff and, through the management forum, heads of departments and heads of year. Teachers' concerns about homework and its monitoring led, over several years, to the development of students' organisers which are unusually detailed and helpful for individual students. Continuing concern about the importance of homework has led teachers in modern foreign languages to display homework tasks on the walls of their rooms. This practice has now been adopted across the college. Priorities have focused on raising achievement. The progress of developments is regularly monitored. In the last three years, curricular initiatives have led to improved literacy levels among younger students; strengthening of the personal and social education programme; more consistent use of homework; the inclusion of technical vocabulary in student organisers; and the introduction of new subjects at GCSE, including media studies, travel and tourism, dance, religious education and rural science. Planning for improvement in results is implicit in the approach to development planning. GCSE targets are agreed with governors as a separate initiative. Development plans for subjects include review of results and priorities for improvement. Convergence of targets for results and planning for improvement is an area for development. All statutory requirements are met, except that concerning a daily act of collective worship. Assemblies provide opportunity for reflection or prayer, but each student attends only one weekly and no regular opportunities are provided on other days.
12. The overall aim of the college "*achieving through challenge*" is strongly reflected in its work. Students are proud of their college and most participate well in lessons and its activities. The college aim is reflected in a wide range of experiences provided at both key stages, and students' success. Policies are carefully formulated to link the aims and values of the college with practical arrangements. The implications of each policy for the key people involved are highlighted. The ethos of the college is strongly positive, based on helping students and staff make the most of themselves in school and the local community. The learning fellowship initiative for teachers has generated good innovative practice - for example, to raise the attainment yet further of high attaining students. The college makes excellent use of curricular initiatives to extend opportunities and raise achievement. The acquisition of sports college status, development of literacy and business mentoring are good examples of this and all have received wide recognition.
13. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. GCSE results have improved at a much faster rate than the national average and the quality of teaching is better. Good improvement has been made on the key issues of the last report:
 - *Plan and implement a whole school language policy with a view to raising literacy standards across the curriculum.*

Very good progress has been made within the college and with local primary schools. The college has been recognised as a national centre of excellence, one of five in the country. Exemplary work has been shared through in-service training led by college teachers for schools across the south-west of England, London and South Wales
 - *Continue to investigate and develop strategies aimed at improving the attainment performance of boys at GCSE.*

Since the last inspection boys' results have improved markedly. This issue has been tackled well.
 - *Ensure (i) the teaching of information and communication technology is in accordance with national Curriculum requirements; and (ii) seek to provide for adequate information and communication technician support and sufficient computers for this to be achieved.*

Provision and support for information and communication technology are good and students attain in

line with national expectations. Computers are well used in most subjects and by individual students in the library and computer rooms, which are very busy at lunchtime.

- *Formalise the operational arrangements of governing body sub-committees, including the finance sub-committee, and clarify their authority and relationship with the full governing body.*

Governors are well informed, experienced and scrupulous in their arrangements. This issue has been tackled well.

- *Re-establish firmly the process of annual school development planning and setting it in the context of a plan covering a longer period than twelve months.*

Plans cover a three-year period and are reviewed annually. The process for planning is systematic, well-focused and involves all staff.

- *Review the position for (i) acts of collective worship and (ii) religious education through personal and social education at Key Stage 4 in order to meet statutory requirements.*

Reviews were carried out and improvement made in the provision of religious education which now meets statutory requirements. No change has been made in the provision of collective worship.

- *Support subject departments in the development of consistent practice with the recently produced school's assessment, recording and reporting policy; and ensure all statutory requirements in this respect are met.*

Assessment procedures are good and statutory requirements are met. Variation remains in the extent to which students in Key Stage 3 are informed about their attainment relative to the National Curriculum.

- *Ensure all subject schemes of work comply with National Curriculum statutory requirements in terms of programmes of study; particularly at Key Stage 3: technology, art, physical education and information technology aspects within mathematics.*

National Curriculum requirements are now met in all subjects.

- *Focus on supporting the role of middle managers with the task of departmental strategic planning; and the monitoring and evaluation of team performance.*

Heads of department and heads of year are involved fully in development planning and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Insufficient emphasis has been placed on monitoring the planning for lessons. Schemes of work are monitored too infrequently.

1. The school is well placed to continue improvements through its strong leadership, good development planning and the excellent oversight of governors.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

2. There are enough teachers to meet the curricular needs of the college. Their qualifications and experience generally contribute well to students' attainment, and notably so in English, music and mathematics. Teachers in physical education are very well qualified and, together with the availability of many highly trained coaches, contribute strongly to students' achievements. The number of part-time teachers, who are appropriately qualified and experienced, is high and this constrains timetabling arrangements. For example, some classes in mathematics are shared between teachers, which affects the continuity of students' learning.
3. The high proportion of students with special educational needs entails a considerable demand for classroom support. The level of provision is good. Some classroom assistants have subject responsibilities and support is most effective when teachers plan and target a specific focus, as, for example, in English and design technology. Other classroom assistants are responsible for the progress

of particular students. While many of the classroom assistants are well experienced, at the time of the inspection some were new to the college, and had not had the benefit of an introductory programme. The number of technical support staff in subjects is adequate overall. The provision has increased since the last inspection. Support for information and communication technology was included in a key issue of the last inspection report; it is now good, and support is extended to local primary schools. Although the quality of support in science is good, the number of allocated hours is inadequate and this results in apparatus not being repaired: students are required to work in larger groups and the development of practical skills is restricted. Other staff with responsibilities in the library, reception, administration, caretaking and catering are friendly, helpful and efficient. They know students individually and through their good relationships contribute well to the ethos of the school.

4. New teachers generally feel well supported by their departmental colleagues. The induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are appropriate; they feel well supported at whole-college and departmental levels. The arrangements for the professional development of teachers are very good and focus on improving learning. College initiatives to improve learning include rigorous monitoring by senior managers and staff in departments to assess standards in teaching and learning and determine relevant training needs. The learning co-ordinator, an advanced skills teacher, leads this development. Other recent training has included applying assertive discipline techniques, and subject-specific courses. A research project has explored how parents might help with their children's learning, and produced an action plan to improve communication with parents and involve them with aspects of the curriculum. Appraisal of classroom teachers is up-to-date. The college plans to include non-teaching staff in the appraisal process and has made application for assessment for investors' in people status.
5. Arrangements for staffing have improved since the last report: technical support has been increased to include a technician for information and communication technology, but not enough technical time is given to science. Staff development for teachers is generously resourced and a model of good practice.

Accommodation

6. The college's accommodation is adequate to teach the curriculum but its quality is very varied. Some specialist accommodation is good, such as that for the teaching of information and communication technology, and humanities. The music room is spacious, allowing good access to keyboards and other activities, although access to resources becomes a problem when some classes are taught in the conference room. The sports hall, gymnasium and well-maintained playing fields provide good facilities for physical education. These are supplemented by the use of a wide range of off-site facilities, which enables the school to offer an extensive range of practical activities. However, the department does not have a designated room for theory lessons, which presents problems of access to resources. All science lessons are taught in laboratories. Three are separated from the rest of the science accommodation, resulting in inefficient use of technicians' time, and the main preparation room is too small. Provision for art and drama is poor. The drama studio is small and limits the range of students' activities. Art accommodation is inadequate and the kiln room is small for the size of classes. Plans are in hand which will improve science and art facilities but no improvement is planned for drama.
7. The college has a rolling programme for redecoration and refurbishment within tight budget constraints, so that parts of the buildings are showing signs of wear as they await improvements. Students are justified in expressing some concerns about the poor state of toilets. The buildings and grounds are generally well maintained and litter is quickly removed. The community makes extensive use of the amenities in the evenings, weekends and holidays. Central areas of the college are used to celebrate students' achievements and interests, and displays are used effectively in subject areas (for example, in mathematics, science and humanities) to create stimulating environments for learning. Since the last inspection the college has made improvements to security. Access for physically disabled people is now good. A new video-conferencing centre has been added. The college has plans and has raised substantial monies towards a major building project to extend its community sports provision but it awaits decisions by the local council in order to proceed.

Learning resources

8. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Books are adequate to meet curricular needs, but not all departments have sufficient text-books for students to take home. The library is well used throughout the day, and has a small number of computers, some with Internet access. The ratio of computers to students is broadly average. Information and communication technology facilities are well maintained, effectively deployed and used. Not all subject areas have computers for immediate use, however the college plans to provide at least one computer in each teaching room. Information and communication technology resources are much better than at the time of the last inspection.
9. The college makes excellent use of local resources and facilities, with an extensive outdoor education programme. The college's very good relationships with the local community help to provide additional resources through sponsorship, and the time given by local business people - for example, to mentoring support for students.

The efficiency of the school

10. The quality of financial planning is very good. While the total amount of money coming into the college is just below average for a school of this size and type, this includes funding for a much higher level of special educational need than is usual. When funds targeted at students with special educational needs are subtracted from the income, then funding is below average. Governors have worked hard to achieve a balanced budget and maintain support for students with special educational needs. Expenditure has been pared in many areas, including repairs and maintenance. Monies allocated for special purposes – for example for sports college status – are used to resource the special purpose and also general college work. The budget is tight.
11. The cycle for planning for improvement follows the budget cycle. Planning in departments is well focused on improving results, and priorities are linked to resource allocations. The college has successfully achieved sports college status and monies have been well spent to benefit the physical education department, the whole school and the wider community, especially through collaborative work with primary schools and the use of college facilities by the wider community. Staff development is carefully funded. Through a range of initiatives teachers can both keep up with their subjects and also research aspects of teaching and learning - for example, on the effectiveness of the reading scheme. The college works hard and is successful in creating a learning community.
12. Teachers, overall, are well used to help students progress, yet large classes in several subjects, including science, art and design and technology, limit the scope for practical work. Administrative, library and care-taking staff combine efficiency with helpfulness to students, who are known individually. Finances are carefully administered, making appropriate use of information technology. Governors have reduced the burden on senior teaching staff by transferring tasks to office staff. The paperwork for assessment and for examinations, and arrangements for supply cover, are efficiently administered. Accommodation is used effectively. The rooms for most subjects are grouped, which enables efficient use of resources and the development of a subject ethos. Resources for learning, especially the library and computers, are very well used.
13. Special educational needs funding is appropriately and fully spent. Governors recognise the great diversity of students' needs and supplement funding which is delegated to them. Co-ordination of day-to-day arrangements is satisfactory but the effectiveness of subject support for individual students is patchy. Monitoring and planning of the work of learning support assistants have been insufficient to ensure a consistent close match between the individual education plans, or learning plans, of students and the tasks they are asked to do in lessons.

14. At the time of the last inspection the budget was efficiently managed, and this is still the case, but governors were not well organised. This is no longer the case. They now play a leading role in budget management, are astute and have made very useful proposals – for example, in the transfer of administrative tasks to office staff. Planning for improvement was over only one year at the time of the last inspection, and now spans a longer period – three years – with an annual review. Governors give whole-hearted support to the college in its involvement with external initiatives, of which sports college status and association with Pete Goss are paramount. Many local businesses, including a construction firm and the local newspaper, give generously of their time and enrich the curriculum. The amount of money coming into the college and the attainment of students on entry, are both below average. Good quality educational provision enables students to progress well and achieve standards which overall are just above the national average. The college provides good value for money.

84. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

84. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

84. English

15. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the results in National Curriculum tests in English were close to the national average, though above average when compared to results in schools of similar intake. Results have risen steadily over the last three years. Girls do better than boys in the end of Key Stage 3 tests in English, though in 1999 the gap narrowed significantly. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of students achieving the higher grades (A*-C) in the 1998 GCSE examinations in English were a little above the national average; girls did better than boys. In 1999, GCSE results were higher than in 1998, and above the national average; boys did particularly well. Results were well above the average for similar schools in both years. In 1999, results in English were better than in mathematics or science. In English literature, the proportion of students achieving the higher grades (A*-C) in the 1998 GCSE examinations was below the national average, though average across the full range of grades (A*-G); girls did better than boys. Results in English literature improved in 1999. In media studies, GCSE results were well above average in 1998 and even better in 1999.
16. In English lessons and work seen at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is average. Students speak clearly and directly, and listen carefully to their teachers and to their friends in group work. They read fluently, sometimes with expression – as in a Year 7 lesson where students read together part of a speech from *Macbeth*. Students write in a range of forms – such as autobiography, book reviews, poems, play scripts and instructions for activities, as in a lesson where students prepared to write instructions for the making of an animated film. Paragraphing, spelling and grammar are average; punctuation within a sentence is sometimes missed. Highly attaining students command a wide range of vocabulary and write moving poems, such as on the killing of elephants, and vivid descriptions of a white wilderness, having read Jack London's *Call of the Wild*. The work of lower attaining students is interesting in content, but they find it difficult to sustain accuracy.
17. In lessons and work seen at the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is above average. Students converse animatedly about their work and ambitions, and listen attentively to others, responding appropriately. They read aloud with good pace and suit their voice to the role, in reading a play - as in a Year 10 lesson on *Macbeth* where lower attaining students created an eerie impression of the witches. Students develop further their writing, adapting the style to the audience – as in a letter to a member of parliament about the under-funding of an organisation against cruelty to animals. Lower attaining students write as they speak. The literature work of average and lower attaining students sometimes lacks precise judgments, which are not supported by evidence from the text. However, work on *Hobson's Choice* and *Our Day Out* shows firm understanding of character. Higher attaining students reach above-average standards. For example, they present ideas with accuracy and clarity when comparing the book and film of the *Elephant Man*. Presentation is good at both key stages, and information technology is skillfully used to enhance the appearance of work. In lessons and work seen in media studies, attainment is well above average. Students compose their own magazine on a computer, with excellent attention to layout. They understand the impact which photographs, headings and print size have on readers and draft very successfully, so raising the standard of the finished product.
1. Students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons and across both key stages. Students learn to speak in different situations, such as individually to the class and in small groups, suiting the style of speech to the occasion. They learn to listen carefully to instructions. They benefit from the extensive provision for reading and rapidly improve their reading skills. Students practise writing creatively and discursively, and respond sensitively to literature. They learn to make effective use of computers in presenting their work – for example, when composing the front page of a newspaper. Students, including those with special educational needs, make excellent progress in media studies. They learn to show keen awareness of the target audience when writing a magazine article, and to employ a wide range of techniques to capture the reader's attention.

2. Students' attitudes to English are good. In lessons, their response is at least satisfactory in all lessons, good in most and very good, occasionally excellent, in half. They are interested in their work, and many show enthusiasm for reading: Key Stage 3 students concentrate hard during the ten minutes of silent reading at the start of every English lesson. Usually, students concentrate well on their tasks, though a few at Key Stage 4 waste time during group work and this holds back their progress. Behaviour is very good. Students are polite, considerate towards others and co-operative. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, students listened attentively to others who, working in pairs, adopted the character of Jack London, and answered questions on his book *Call of the Wild*. In a Year 7 lesson, students showed sincere appreciation of their friends' efforts to create a piece of emotive writing about fox-hunting. Students' very good relationships lead to effective collaboration during group work – as in a Year 9 lesson when students arranged in sequence separate lines of poetry. In another Year 9 class, students created a ball scene in Verona, wearing masks they had made, in connection with their study of *Romeo and Juliet*. Students can be relied upon to plan in groups without close supervision, and work independently at the computer – as in a Year 7 class for lower attaining students, where they worked on commercial software to improve their understanding of words and of reading. Students' attitudes to media studies are excellent. They are highly motivated. Behaviour is impeccable and the quality of collaboration in group work is very high.
3. Teaching in English is a strength and has a positive impact on students' attainment, progress and response to learning. In nearly every lesson teaching is good, and it is very good in half the lessons. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use effectively in questioning students to assess their understanding. They have high expectations of how students should behave and what they can do. For example, Year 8 students with special educational needs were asked to draft the front page of a newspaper on a computer. A very good feature of this lesson was the teacher's excellent management of three learning support assistants who gave well-focused help and promoted very good progress in literacy. Teachers plan lessons carefully to encompass a variety of activities. For example, in a very good Year 7 lesson, students read their own poems silently, then aloud in groups, while other students evaluated the reading against given criteria. The whole class read a witches' speech from *Macbeth* with special attention to pauses, and discussed the use of colons and semi-colons in haiku and pre-twentieth century short poems. Occasionally lessons end with little consolidation of what has been learned, and this limits progress. The pace of most lessons is brisk, and students are actively involved in their own learning. Teachers focus closely on the use of language and this helps students to appreciate good writing - as in a Year 8 lesson on an extract from *Great Expectations*. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent, and this encourages students to speak out in class. Work is conscientiously marked with comments clearly showing students how to improve. Homework is set regularly and arises naturally from the lesson.
4. Teaching in media studies is excellent. The teacher has very good subject knowledge, promotes constructive relationships and very high standards in the classroom, and involves students actively in learning. Students respond and progress excellently. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, students worked independently at computers to produce a magazine for coursework assessment. The teacher and learning support assistant checked carefully that students understood what they had to do, and gave well-focused individual support. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the use of specialist language – such as deconstruction, picture cropping and denotation – and this enables students to discuss their work with precision.
5. The English curriculum is well planned to give a balanced coverage in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Provision to improve and broaden literacy skills is very good. This includes ten minutes of silent reading at the start of every Key Stage 3 lesson; use of a reading journal begun at primary school; reading recovery sessions, and a spelling zone in student organisers. Students with special educational needs benefit from working on a commercial software programme, though insufficient time is allocated to this. The school's initiatives have been recognised nationally, and the head of department and a senior teacher have gained valuable experience through addressing teacher groups in many schools. These visits have led to further enrichment of the curriculum. Assessment is well recorded and data used in planning future work. English makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the study of literature. Students consider characters in books they study which are as varied as, for example, *Macbeth* and *Hobson's Choice*, and in group discussions they have opportunities to share perceptions. In their study of poems and other cultures, students working

towards GCSE look at how people in different lands live and make comparisons with their own lives and environment.

6. The department is very strongly led and all teachers are committed to raising attainment. They share ideas and work towards a common purpose. This approach has a positive impact on learning. The head of department has initiated successful strategies to raise the attainment of boys, such as the introduction of more non-fiction in reading and a media unit in Year 10. Paired reading between Year 10 and Year 7 boys, devised by another English teacher, has also been successfully adopted. In 1999, results in the National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations show a narrowing in the gap between girls and boys' performance. The head of department monitors the work of his colleagues thoroughly by visiting lessons, and looking at exercise books and students' organisers. Resources are adequate and well used, though there are insufficient pre-twentieth century and multi-cultural books, and this restricts the literature curriculum

7. The response to the last inspection report has been very good. Attainment has improved at the end of both key stages. At the time of the last inspection, GCSE results were below the national average: now they are above average. Reading was focused around a narrow range of texts and students had a limited response to books: now students read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, and respond with enthusiasm. The college has given much emphasis to promoting reading through a summer school for students about to enter Year 7. A booklet for primary school parents, *Reading for the Twenty-first Century*, seeks to involve parents in their children's reading, and this is well supported by the head of department's visits to local primary schools. Many opportunities are provided for students to write in a range of forms, and self-evaluation is successfully encouraged through the use of review sheets. Considering the high quality of teaching and firm commitment to raising attainment, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Literacy

8. Awareness of the need to improve literacy skills has been well fostered by the literacy working party. In English, students speak clearly and listen attentively. They read fluently and older students read with good expression. They write in various forms, and spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. Opportunities are provided in various lessons for students to practise skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Speaking skills are generally good and students are confident speakers. For example, in physical education, students give instructions and explain movements and, in science, all students, including the reluctant, are encouraged to talk about their work. In geography, students report back on group discussion of topics, such as where a supermarket should be located - however, in response to questions, students answer only briefly. In modern languages, speaking spontaneously is weak; students generally speak from a written text, which limits fluency and accent. Listening skills are almost invariably good. In music, for example, these skills are very well developed: students listen carefully to teachers' instructions and to one another in group work. Opportunities for reading aloud are limited, except in religious education. In science, students in Year 7 need support to extract information and interpret meaning; higher attaining students at Key Stage 4 use information technology in research, but there are relatively few opportunities for wider reading. In history and geography, however, students both read books for research and use computers. Students on the physical education GCSE course find the reading of anatomy and physiology texts difficult; key words are insufficiently emphasised. Students practise writing skills in many subjects, including extended writing in history and geography. In history, teachers help students to structure essays using a computer. In geography, students present enquiries to a satisfactory standard but opportunities are missed in lessons to promote literacy among lower-attaining students. In modern languages, written work observed was mostly copying of what had been spoken or heard. However, in religious education, students have opportunities to write for different audiences. In science (Year 7), students write creatively on *A Day Without Oil*, but handwriting and spelling are poor. Technical accuracy in science is much better at Key Stage 4 and students are good at note-taking.

95. **Mathematics**

9. Results of the National Curriculum tests in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were close to the national average for all schools, and in line with the average when compared with similar schools. Girls performed better than boys. GCSE results for mathematics in 1998 indicated considerable improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining the higher grades (A* - C)

was above the national average and well above the average when compared with similar schools. Boys' results were broadly similar to the girls'. Boys' performance in mathematics was better than in English but not as good as in science. Girls' performance in mathematics was better than that in science but not as good as in English. Although the proportion of students gaining the higher grades (A*- C) in 1999 dipped below that of 1998, more students gained the highest grades (A*, A) than in previous years. Results matched the national average and were above average relative to similar schools.

10. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment covers a wide range and overall is close to the national average. About half of the students in lessons attain in line with, and sometimes exceed, the national average. By the end of the key stage, the majority of students has an understanding of number and students who attain highly are sufficiently skilled in number operations to manipulate formulae and solve simple equations. Students in middle attaining classes understand both linear and square measures and find areas by counting squares. The computational skills of students in the lowest attaining classes are weak; they have limited knowledge of multiplication tables. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' computational skills are generally much more secure and students, even from the lowest attaining classes, convert simple fractions to decimals and percentages, and understand simple ideas of proportion. Overall, attainment is average at the end of the key stage. The majority of students have a sound understanding of algebraic principles and represent relationships between data using linear graphs. They calculate area and volume of a variety of shapes. Higher attaining students use the theorem of Pythagoras competently in two- and three-dimensional shapes. Generally, recall skills are weak and boys, in particular, lack the skills to plan their revision.
11. Students' progress is satisfactory in all lessons at Key Stage 3 and in most lessons at Key Stage 4. In more than a quarter of the lessons progress is good and occasionally it is very good; this is linked to good and very good teaching. For example, in a Year 7 class, students consolidated and extended their knowledge of coordinates through the teacher's well-planned practical activities which were both interesting and stimulating. At Key Stage 4, a group of higher attaining students confidently manipulated formulae assisted by the teacher's skilful questions, encouragement and support. The progress made by students with special educational needs is similar to that of others. Occasionally, when classroom tasks are not varied or stimulating, students do not make sufficient progress.
12. Students' response to mathematics is satisfactory. In about half of the lessons seen it was good; occasionally it was unsatisfactory. Most students display an interest in the tasks they are set and generally collaborate well. They sustain concentration if the work remains challenging throughout the lesson, otherwise students' concentration wanders, as observed among a minority of students in a Year 10 class who did not concentrate, distracted others and affected the progress of the whole class. Students are mostly well-behaved: they are friendly and courteous to teachers and to one another.
13. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in about two lessons out of five at Key Stage 3 and in a little more than a quarter at Key Stage 4; occasionally, teaching is very good. Teachers give clear explanations. Most lessons are well planned and teachers manage the students well. Relationships between the teachers and the students are good. In the better lessons teachers draw on students' earlier learning and use a variety of activities and strategies to maintain interest and motivation. Weaknesses occur when students are given tasks that offer little challenge and time in the lesson is wasted. Expectations are higher at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Procedures for assessing students' attainment are good. Assessments of the units of work are used to monitor students' progress but are not individually linked to National Curriculum attainment levels. Schemes of work have been thoroughly reviewed to take account of curricular changes but not all aspects are sufficiently detailed to fully support teachers in their planning of lessons.
14. The department has strong leadership. The head of department is highly committed to raising the attainment levels of all students and has made substantial improvements. She is ably supported by a team of hardworking teachers. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and shared by all teachers. Action plans are devised to improve standards. The provision of classroom support for students with special educational needs is good. While generally helpful, teachers do not always liaise with support assistants to plan and agree the most effective focus for support. A number of timetabling weaknesses obstruct students' progress. For example, a few groups are shared between two teachers;

many groups are large; in one half of Year 10 there is no middle-attaining group, which results in one student working on an individual programme of work in another group and she receives limited support.

1. Response to the last inspection has been good. GCSE results have improved considerably, including the results of boys. Opportunities for the development of students' computer and communication skills feature consistently in the schemes of work. For example, spreadsheets are used to calculate standard deviation, and the use of graphic calculators help students to understand linear and quadratic functions. The pace of work for students is better in the majority of lessons, as a result of improvements in the schemes of work, but is still not satisfactory in all lessons and is an area for improvement.

Numeracy

2. Standards of numeracy cover a wide range and are adequate, overall. Students use calculators competently and generally appropriately. A programme for improving numeracy skills has begun in Year 7, and while not yet systematically developed throughout the school, plans are in place to achieve this. Students' experience varies depending on their mathematics teaching group. Some subject areas make effective use of number. In geography and physical education, students at Key Stage 4 record, illustrate and interpret data effectively. In history, at Key Stage 3, old money is converted into decimals accurately and, in geography, students use numerical references and scales on maps to determine the location of places. In science at Key Stage 3, limited use is made of number, yet higher attaining students show they can manipulate numbers successfully - for example, in the application of the law of moments. At Key Stage 4 in science they use number more extensively to involve percentages in calculations of formulae. Numerical aspects of rhythm are well developed in music and students' grasp of these contribute to their musical literacy. Insufficient use is made of pattern, scale, enlargement and perspective in art.

103. **Science**

3. In 1999, the results of National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Key Stage 3 were in line with the national average and with the average for schools having similar intakes. Girls' results were similar to those of boys, although they were lower than in the previous year. GCSE results in 1999 were in line with the national average, and above average relative to similar schools. In 1998, GCSE results were better: they were well above the average for similar schools. In both years, results in science were similar to those in mathematics and lower than in English, and almost all students gained a grade. In both years, four-fifths entered double-award science and their results were above the national average, but results in single-award science and rural science were low. Results at the ends of both key stages were lower in 1999 than in 1998 because students' progress was adversely affected by frequent changes of teacher owing to long-term illness. Although there has been no disruption to lessons in the current school year, students' attainment is still affected by lack of continuity in earlier years.
4. In lessons and in written work seen during the inspection, the attainment of students in Year 9 reflects results in the National Curriculum tests; they are on target to reach levels in line with national expectation by the end of Key Stage 3. The great majority can describe how properties such as the conduction of heat and electricity are used to distinguish metals from other solids and can explain why the sun appears to move around the earth. Their initial answers to questions are sometimes superficial, as, for example, in stating that potassium is dangerous 'because it explodes'; this has an adverse effect on their attainment in tests.
5. At the end of Key Stage 4, students' overall attainment in lessons is in line with national expectation. In the higher attaining groups studying double-award science, students show that they can attain A*, A grades; for example, they can explain how different types of chemical bond are formed. Students handle equipment carefully and safely. In double-award science they are encouraged to predict the outcomes of experiments and to think critically about the reliability of results, but they have few opportunities to plan their own work. In rural science students do less well than they should because they leave some of their work unfinished without drawing out the scientific principles underlying their observations; for example, they carry out experiments on osmosis in potatoes but do not speculate about reasons for changes they observe. Students' writing skills are variable, particularly in Year 7, but most write well by the end of Key Stage 4. Good examples of imaginative writing (about life without oil) and poetry (about forces) were seen during the inspection. Students have good opportunities to develop their information

technology skills, but their use of number is not systematically developed.

6. The attainment of students when they enter the school in Year 7 is below the national expectation; most are unable to use the correct scientific names to describe the human respiratory system. They make good progress across Key Stage 3 and by the end of Year 9 their attainment is in line with expectation. Their progress in lessons reflects this; for example, in Year 9, students made good progress in understanding the enormity of the universe in comparison with the earth because the teacher brought the subject alive by describing his own contemplation of this. Students make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 4. Their progress in lessons is occasionally very good, as in Year 10, when the relationship between the teacher and her students was such that they were keen to do their best for her. However, progress is sometimes unsatisfactory because the main learning points are not reinforced and students leave too much work unfinished. Students with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 3.
7. Students behave well and concentrate throughout the full length of almost all lessons. They respond well to teachers' questions and many further their understanding by asking questions of their own, particularly when teachers give positive encouragement by emphasising the importance of respecting each other's contributions. They co-operate well with each other during practical and small group work. In a few lessons there are exceptions to this positive picture, when work is presented in a way that does not engage students' interest.
8. Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 4. Some lessons in both key stages are very good, but there are also occasional unsatisfactory lessons in Key Stage 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most use this well to give clear explanations, sometimes using analogies to clarify understanding. In very good lessons the pace is brisk, questions are well focused and students are fully challenged, as in Year 8 when low attaining students were encouraged to make predictions about the outcome of an experiment on the effects of different heat insulators and then draw simple conclusions from their results. Teachers expect good behaviour, and instances of inattention are usually dealt with firmly at an early stage. Weaknesses in less good lessons, particularly in rural science, occur when learning objectives are unclear and there is insufficient challenge. In these lessons teachers concentrate too much on facts without developing the ideas which help students to understand what they observe; as, for example, when considering evaporation without encouraging students to explain how particle movement in the liquid is affected by temperature. Opportunities are sometimes missed for students to find out through experiment, as in Year 7 when they followed detailed instructions to examine seeds rather than discover the various parts of the seed for themselves. Marking of students' work is good. Teachers make detailed comments and set targets; many examples were seen during the inspection of students improving their work by meeting the targets set.
1. The department is well led. Following a difficult period involving substantial staff absence, there has been greater stability recently and the department now works well together as a team. Rural science provides good opportunities for students taking the single-award course to experience vocational aspects that are particularly relevant to the area in which they live. However, the course is not well organised and students are not being given demanding enough work. The appearance of the laboratories is greatly enhanced by very good displays of students' work, but several are in need of refurbishment and three are inconveniently sited away from the main science area. The technicians provide very good support for teaching but have too little time to fully maintain all equipment. The development of students' practical skills is restricted because some teaching groups are too large (up to 35 students) and some equipment is not in good working order.
2. GCSE results in 1998 were similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Plans to restructure the management of the department have been hampered by instability in staffing. Teaching has improved overall, but there are still occasional unsatisfactory lessons.

SUBJECTS OR COURSES**Information and communication technology**

3. Attainment in information and communication technology lessons at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. GCSE results in 1998 were just above average for the full course and well above average for the short course. Results in 1999 were lower. Boys performed better than girls on the full course, and girls did better than boys on the short course. Attainment during lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 is near national expectations, except for a few students with learning difficulties who achieve well below expectations. They use the keyboard correctly, can prepare pages with text and pictures, and use a variety of fonts. They understand the use of a data base and the production of graphs. Attainment is similarly in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 4. Students are capable of planning coursework projects and combining information and word-processing, data bases and questionnaires effectively to draw conclusions. Some well-structured and assessed projects are developed in Year 11 on business applications.
4. Progress during Key Stage 3 lessons is satisfactory and sometimes better than this: where the teacher has structured the lesson well, it is very good. During Key Stage 4 lessons, progress is generally satisfactory, but occasionally poor, when the teacher has insufficient information technology experience and lacks confidence. Considerable consolidation of understanding and skill is provided by work in English, mathematics, science and geography lessons. Computers are also used in modern languages, history, drama, design and technology and religious education lessons. During lessons there is usually sufficient prepared material to allow students of high attainment to make good progress while those with lower attainment can also work at a good pace for them. Students with special educational needs make good progress in literacy and numeracy through effective use of commercial software programs.
5. Students show interest in using information and communication technology when their work has a clear purpose. A high proportion of students continue to develop their skills and knowledge by choosing to study information technology for GCSE. Others learn through the use of information technology in various subjects. All students have an e-mail address; social contact is encouraged. Many students use the Internet regularly. Students use the computers during break, lunch time and after school. Most students behave well, work together, help each other and concentrate on the task. A few students take responsibility for major initiatives such as producing a newspaper and placing art and music information on a school web-site. Some students and teachers are involved in the Goss Challenge racing project and are preparing educational web-site pages of information and teaching materials for other schools.
6. At Key Stage 3, most teaching is good or very good; none is unsatisfactory. In a well-planned Year 7 lesson, for example, techniques were explained clearly using the overhead monitor, control was effective and different worksheets were in use for students at different levels of previous attainment. Moral issues arising from the use of information technology are discussed. Time is used effectively, but some Year 8 and 9 lessons lack precise targets. Key Stage 4 lessons are generally satisfactory, although there are occasions when preparation is insufficient. Most of the classes are taught by an information technology specialist who has considerable experience and uses his knowledge to plan appropriate work for all years. Other teachers have less experience and expertise so that they lack the confidence expected by the students, and this is affecting teaching and learning. However, lessons are generally well planned and follow the scheme of work. Assessment has been very well developed since the last inspection. In a Year 8 lesson, achievements were being recorded as targets were met and they were charted on the screens. Other work is marked regularly and given positive comments. Marks are aggregated and contribute to formal assessments.
7. The co-ordinator has organised the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, so that most subjects benefit from its use. Since the last inspection, information and communication technology has been introduced as a separately taught subject in Years 7 and 8. The schemes of work are well structured so that they provide support for teachers and ensure progression. The potential of information and communication technology is widely understood by staff, who convey this to students. Careful monitoring of the work across the curriculum has ensured that statutory

requirements are met. For example, English uses information technology for communication purposes and geography for data handling. Controlling and modeling are taught in science, and certain other applications in mathematics. Personal fitness measuring equipment has been ordered for the physical education department. Measurement is an area of study that needs strengthening, although students are aware of the way in which light levels were measured and recorded during the recent solar total eclipse. The college has created its own intranet pages for each department; these have links to sites on the world-wide web.

8. An extensive training programme has been planned for early in the year 2000 in response to requests from staff. The information technology departmental classroom assistant very effectively helps all students, and especially those with learning or behavioural difficulties. Since the last inspection an information technology support technician has been appointed, who is able to extend help to primary schools. Curricular weaknesses have been tackled: all National Curriculum requirements are now met.

Religious education

9. Students have below average knowledge and understanding of religious education when they enter the college in Year 7. They make good progress and, by the end of Key Stage 3, they achieve in line with the expectations of the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus for students of their age. Progress is satisfactory across Key Stage 4, and in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is broadly average, although the results of the first entry for the short-course GCSE in 1999 were disappointingly low.
10. By the end of Key Stage 3 students know a range of facts about the world's major religions. They understand the importance of symbols and higher attaining students are beginning to use religious language with confidence. They talk confidently about festivals, have a secure knowledge of the teaching of Jesus and know much of the background to the Gospels. Students of all attainment levels understand that belief affects life-style - for example, that fasting is part of Muslim belief. The work of high attaining students is extensive, but the depth of understanding of lower attaining students is limited by poor recall.
11. By the end of Key Stage 4, students have a satisfactory understanding of basic facts about Christianity and Islam. They recognise that moral issues can be considered differently from various standpoints. In lessons the standard of debate on issues of current importance (for example, experiments on animals) is good among high attaining students, who reason well and draw effectively on their previous learning. Written work is variable in quality and some lacks depth. Lower attaining students write as they think.
12. Progress across Key Stage 3 is good. Students quickly acquire new vocabulary and a range of basic information about various world religions. In lessons they develop an understanding of the importance of religious writing - for example, of the Jewish Scriptures and of the Koran. They empathise with topics and develop a sense of history. In lessons at Key Stage 4 progress is never less than satisfactory and sometimes it is good. Through discussions students of all attainment levels develop a critical understanding of issues. Progress in written work is more variable and, while satisfactory for higher attaining students, it develops too slowly for middle-attaining students. Those with special educational needs receive a good level of support and progress well as a result.
13. Students generally behave well and take a full part in lessons. They cooperate well with each other and work well as individuals and in pairs. Most students are confident in expressing their own opinions and respect those of others. They are considerate of the feelings and beliefs of others. A few show initiative, but generally students have few opportunities to research independently.
14. The teaching of religious education is good, overall. Teaching stimulates the imagination and provides a good historical understanding as well as giving opportunities to explore related contemporary issues. The importance of beliefs to life style is stressed. The pace of lessons is good, methods are varied and stimulating material is used. Written tasks are creative. Assessment is well-linked to the Agreed syllabus. Teachers' expectations of higher and lower attaining students are appropriate but, too

frequently, middle-attaining students are allowed to coast. Occasionally, discussion is allowed to be unfocused and individuals stray into irrelevancies. Relationships are good and students are well managed. Teachers are committed to their work and students.

15. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, when religious education was included as a key issue in the report, because none was provided at Key Stage 4. This is a well-managed department with a good scheme of work. A sound start has been made in raising standards, though improving the written work and level of understanding among middle-attaining groups is a priority for development. While resources are still limited new purchases have been well chosen and students are benefiting as a result.

124.

Art

16. Standards of attainment in art are below the national expectation at the end of both key stages. GCSE results are well below the national average, lower than in most subjects in the school, and have been since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 3, aspects of students' work is in line with the national expectation, including students' knowledge and use of the art elements, texture, shape and pattern. For example, Year 9 students, having studied African masks, design and make imaginative and well-constructed masks of their own, using the facial features of animals as a basis for their designs. However, drawing from observation lacks depth and understanding. The work of Year 9 students with tone and colour is not as advanced as expected nationally. Year 8 students find placing figures in perspective very difficult when drawing and painting an imaginative city scene. They appreciate Lowry's paintings of similar subjects, but find the subtle perspective distortions that he uses confusing.
17. At the end of Key Stage 4, while standards in lessons are below average overall, a small number of higher attaining students, with innate artistic ability, produce work of above average quality. Most work remains within a rather narrow subject range. During the course, students make use of a range of drawing and painting media, and card sculpture, but work in ceramics and computer-aided design has been too limited, resulting in low standards in these areas. Projects are not researched sufficiently through direct observational drawing. Links with the work of well-known artists and art movements are made, but these are not well enough developed and used in students' own responses to set themes. Sketch books do not provide adequate personal records of the ideas and materials explored, and annotation and documentation of thoughts and processes are weak. However in some aspects of work attainment is close to expectations. For example, lino prints by Year 10 students show direct influence of the work of the German Expressionists; they are carefully made and show good understanding of the medium. Most observational drawings at this key stage show personal commitment and expression, but standards of technical accuracy are below average.
18. Progress in lessons is generally satisfactory, but across a narrow range of skills. In some classes students, younger students especially, are not sure of what is sought and therefore cannot do their best. Progress tends to be disjointed and constrained by activities. Year 8 students working on a 'city life' theme made satisfactory progress in painting skills, but many gained little understanding of perspective because they did not understand the overall task. Students' GCSE coursework is voluminous in quantity: large scale paintings show commitment, energy and improvement in handling media, yet relatively little improvement in the use of art concepts to create effects. Progress across the key stages is barely satisfactory.
19. Students have good attitudes to their art lessons, but not always to the tasks set. In the majority of lessons students are attentive to teachers' introductions. Most are willing to contribute to question and answer sessions, although many remain passive, particularly if tasks are routine and give little scope for individuality, and few are sufficiently committed to work for the higher grades. Behaviour is almost always satisfactory to good, and students use the art materials carefully and respect the displays. All take pride in their art work and have formed good working relationships with their teachers, and peers.
20. While teaching is mostly satisfactory, and occasionally better, aspects of teaching are weak in too many lessons, resulting in a minority of unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is satisfactory overall, including understanding of the GCSE examination requirements and assessment criteria, but this is not used effectively. Little reference is made in lessons and assessment to the specific criteria for the higher grades. Expectations of students are generally too low; they are not sufficiently high or focused. Tasks are sometimes routine and do not exploit students' interests and backgrounds. Planning is adequate: projects cover the broad requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3

and the examination requirements at Key Stage 4, but they do not promote personal creativity, and depth of understanding. The scheme of work lacks detail showing the development of skills and understanding of each stage. Good reference is made, however, to the work of artists and art movements. Varied teaching strategies are used to retain interest throughout the lessons, and individual feedback in Key Stage 4 aids progress. In the best lessons, good use is made of the lesson time and all resources are prepared and are well organised. In too many lessons, time is not well used, because lessons lack pace. In a few lessons, valuable time is wasted on managing students who are indifferent to the tasks set.

21. The department's assessment system lacks detail and reference to the National Curriculum, but folders of exemplar materials and displays of students' work are being prepared to give students an idea of the different levels of attainment. Although homework is regularly set and marked, and is related to current projects, students' personal study skills are not being developed well enough. Most of the deficiencies identified in the last inspection report remain. Expectations are still too low and documentation inadequate. Management of the subject in the past has not promoted sufficiently high standards. Following the appointment of a full-time teacher, and a new head of the art, design and technology department, there is significant evidence to suggest that both provision for the subject and standards of attainment are set to improve.

130. **Design and technology**

22. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations for design and technology. GCSE results vary according to technology aspect but are, overall, average. In 1998, results were average for the graphics full GCSE, above average for the resistant materials full GCSE and well above average for the textiles short GCSE. Results were low on the food technology GCSE courses but improved markedly on the short course in 1999. Results of the child development course were broadly average in 1998 and better in 1999. The performance of boys and girls differs markedly for the different technology subjects, with girls doing much better recently than boys in graphics and on the short food technology course. Attainment in design and technology lessons is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Students achieve equally well in designing and making in most subject areas. Students are well aware of the design process and use their imaginations well when drawing possible ideas. They are familiar with the need to conduct research and to evaluate their products. Their practical skills are well developed towards the end of Key Stage 3, particularly when using wood; this was seen when Year 9 students were making a clock mount from wood and connecting parts by dowel joints. They used imagination in their designs and produced effective and colourful clocks. Information technology is used to very good effect in a few projects. Most items made by Key Stage 4 students are well finished and are often useful - for example, dresses being made by girls in a Year 11 textiles class.
23. The great majority of students make good progress during lessons and across both key stages. This is because the teaching is well planned and organised and classroom support is good. Improvement in understanding the importance of design and students' practical skills both improve well. Key Stage 3 students finish their work well and are proud to take it home. Students with special educational needs keep up with the rest. Higher attaining students are encouraged to create more complex designs and to work accurately when making products. In a Year 11 food technology lesson students' coursework showed that they had learned to present and communicate their ideas effectively.
24. Students show interest in the tasks they are set because they are directed towards making products which they like, and tasks are presented so that they develop a sense of ownership. For example, when a Year 7 class was making a 'crank and slider' toy they were asked to produce and colour their own designs for the mechanism. Students sustain concentration because the tasks are varied and appropriate and they have time to think creatively. They behave well, are courteous and trustworthy. Relationships are generally good and students help each other practically and socially when working in groups. They have opportunities to show initiative through regular homework which helps to develop their capacity for further study.
25. Teaching is good in nearly all lessons during Key Stage 3 and in two thirds of the lessons during Key Stage 4. Other teaching is sound and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. In most cases, teachers'

knowledge and understanding allow them to plan and deliver effective and stimulating lessons. For example, when a Year 10 class was being given information on vacuum-forming, useful examples were shown as illustration, and the class was presented with ten targets to be achieved in the 50 minute period. However, teachers lack confidence in some subject areas and there is a need for further training to extend their skills. A technician and support assistant work within the department and provide considerable expertise and help to all students; these are particular strengths. Teachers understand the needs of the students and have high expectations of them. Planning is based firmly on the schemes of work and organisational strategies are effective. Time is well used, even though single lessons are short for some of the activities. Teachers often use interesting examples and materials to introduce lessons and they discuss the social implications of aspects of technology. Information technology is now being used to improve the presentation of design work but its use is still insufficient, and little use is made of spreadsheets. Teachers manage students well, although it becomes more difficult to organise classes safely as class size increases. A good feature of some lessons is that students are encouraged to progress with designing and making side by side. Students benefit from instruction by a craftsman in woodworking, after school. Some students and teachers benefit from involvement in the Goss Challenge project, in which teaching materials are being prepared to cater for worldwide interest in the building of an innovative twin-hulled racing yacht. Assessment is systematic and provides useful information for students, but the distinction between marking for effort or for attainment is not clear, except where National Curriculum levels are being used for Year 9.

26. Support for teaching and for curricular development are strong features now that a new head of department is in post. Schemes of work are carefully related to the National Curriculum and statutory requirements are met. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Relationships and teamwork are good and the ethos is strongly positive. The schemes of work are sufficiently structured to provide progression, even where there are shared classes; further details of time to be spent on each section could usefully be included.

Drama

27. All students at Key Stage 3 have a weekly drama lesson and it is an optional subject at Key Stage 4. The proportion of students achieving the higher levels (A*-C) in the 1999 GCSE examination was in line with the national average. Results in the 1998 GCSE examination were well above the national average; students did better in drama than in most of their subjects. In 1999, although all students achieved within the range of grades A*-E and more reached the highest grades (A*,A) than in 1998, results were not as good because of increased accommodation problems and the lack of classroom support for students with special educational needs.
28. From judgements made from lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment was average at the end of both key stages. However, there is a significant minority of students at Key Stage 4 achieving above average standards in both practical work and written evaluations. By the end of Key Stage 3, students can enter a role, though not all can sustain it. They show ability to understand character and how lighting may be used. In writing, they can explain what they have learned in drama and give examples. They understand subject-specific vocabulary such as freeze-frame, improvisation, climax, apron stage, and background. By the end of Key Stage 4, students can sustain a role, though lower attaining students find this more difficult. Students act out a script using expressive voice, appropriate gesture and props. They show awareness of audience and skill in using effective make-up. A scrutiny of written work showed that students can sketch careful stage plans and write about atmosphere in a play. Students' evaluation of their own work – as when adopting the role of stage manager or painting a set – are clear but, sometimes, ideas are underdeveloped. Drafting is well used. For example, in a piece of work on making costumes for *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, effective use had been made of a computer to present neat text, sketches and photographs. Students with special educational needs achieve well, relative to their low attainment at the start of their work. A student with a statement, for example, completed a careful, well-presented folder on masks.
29. Students, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 3 and good progress across Key Stage 4. Progress in lessons is satisfactory at both key stages. Students

improve their use of gesture and space. Speech becomes more expressive and students sustain a role for longer. They learn to suit language to the situation. In writing, they learn to evaluate their own work and the work of others, giving examples to strengthen their arguments. Older students make better progress across Key Stage 4 than in individual lessons because they benefit from opportunities to perform and rehearse in their own time.

30. Students' response to drama is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. They enjoy drama; those with special educational needs join in lessons well and gain in confidence. Concentration is sound, though weaker in Year 7 where students do not listen carefully enough to instructions. However, they show commitment to their work by making their own props. Most students behave well, though a few lack self-control. Year 9 students interviewed were interested in drama and felt that constructive criticism from their friends helped them to improve. At Key Stage 4, students collaborate well in groups when rehearsing pieces to be assessed for the GCSE examination, and have a mature attitude to their studies.
31. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. The teacher has good subject knowledge, which helps students to develop ideas in practical work – as in a Year 8 lesson centred on *The Plague*. Lessons are planned in detail, though not enough time is given to evaluation and this limits progress. Resources are well used and explanations very explicit. Occasionally, instructions are too long and students lose concentration. Appropriate attention is given at the start of lessons to the need for care when moving around the studio. Group work is well used, especially at Key Stage 4. Owing to the cramped space in the studio, the teacher designates other areas of the school in which students can rehearse, and circulates to monitor progress as well as possible. A learning support assistant is deployed effectively to support students who have statements of special educational needs in Year 11. Written work is well marked with comments aimed at assisting students to improve.
32. The drama curriculum is carefully planned and makes a good contribution to speaking and listening targets in the National Curriculum for English. Schemes of work give appropriate emphasis to evaluation, though this was not a strong feature of lessons observed during the inspection. Until recently, there have been major productions which have been well received by the local community. Opportunities are still provided for students to participate in drama evenings and to rehearse at lunchtimes and after college. Students enjoy theatre visits and benefit from workshops in college, led by outside specialists. Information technology is used in Year 8, and Year 9 students make effective use of use of a computer program to help them write about a programme for a musical. Assessment procedures are good, and students' progress in performance is well monitored. The teacher in charge of drama teaches nearly all of the drama lessons. She is committed to maintaining high standards at GCSE, and to giving students of all attainments the opportunity to participate in performance.
33. Response to the last inspection report has been good. Self-assessment sheets have been developed for each year group and are filled in termly. Contributions to speaking and listening in the schemes of work have been strengthened. Attainment in 1998 was higher than at the time of the last report, though results fell in 1999. The reasons for this have been given in preceding paragraphs. The single greatest obstacle to attainment and progress in drama is the poor accommodation. The studio is too small and lacks adequate lighting and sound equipment. Its proximity to toilets makes it an unpleasant working environment. Learning time is wasted while students disperse to different areas of the school and reassemble. The hall, the other main teaching area, is not close to the studio.

Geography

143. Results in the GCSE examinations are consistently well above average and in 1998 were the highest in Cornwall. Students attain more highly in geography than in many other subjects. A small number of high attaining students are prepared for a second qualification in travel and tourism, based on lunch-time lessons and additional pieces of coursework, in which they are also very successful.
34. Students' attainment in geography at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations.

Students employ a good range of resources to select and use information, including some information and communication technology. Higher attaining students demonstrate good levels of understanding of geographical ideas. For example, students in a Year 9 class made use of indicators of development to make comparisons between living standards in countries of the European Union. A well-planned programme of fieldwork contributes effectively to the development of satisfactory enquiry skills. Good use is made of local issues; for example, in Year 8, students drew on their knowledge of a local superstore to study factors affecting the location of industries. Lower attaining students have difficulty in reading for information and in describing and explaining ideas in their own words, which limits their understanding. By the time they leave the college, students' attainment is above national expectations. Students in Year 11 demonstrate good levels of understanding of physical and human processes. For example, they can explain the relationship between plate boundaries and the distribution of volcanoes and earthquakes. They make good use of information to compare the effects of earthquakes in contrasted regions. Coursework is a strength; many of the students use a good range of methods to collect data and higher attaining students demonstrate good levels of analysis and evaluation of their results, some effectively comparing their results with secondary sources of information supplied by the tourist board.

35. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and across Key Stage 3. Students in Year 7 consolidate their map skills and build on their knowledge of local places to make comparisons with London. Students acquire and use a satisfactory specialist vocabulary as they gain geographical knowledge and skills. Higher attaining students are challenged by fieldwork and by opportunities to work independently to research topics in the news, such as the effects of natural hazards around the world. Progress is more limited in some activities when demands are lower and students are only expected to copy. Students with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Learning support assistants are effective in helping individuals to keep up with the work. However, in some lessons with low attaining students not enough emphasis is placed on helping students to improve their basic literacy skills. Very occasionally, students do not make satisfactory progress because a few are difficult to involve in tasks, do not listen to the teacher and time is wasted in establishing order. Students in Key Stage 4 make at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. They make good progress when the work is well planned to develop skills alongside the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. For example, students in a Year 11 lesson were asked to apply their knowledge of places to that of earthquakes, to account for contrasts in their effects and this helped them to learn quickly. On the other hand, Year 10 students, while using textbooks effectively to find information about urban growth and its effects, were given little opportunity to develop their skills of analysis and interpretation, and progress overall was only just satisfactory.
36. Students respond well to challenging teaching in geography. They behave well and show interest in their work, sustaining good levels of concentration. Students make efforts to present their work neatly and handle resources with care. They respond well to opportunities to work both in small groups and with a degree of independence. Their positive attitudes to work contribute to their satisfactory progress. However, when required to listen to the teacher or when tasks are not sufficiently varied through the lesson, there is some silly behaviour and lessons are occasionally interrupted, and establishing order wastes time. Students are sometimes inconsiderate when they arrive late for lessons.
37. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3, with good features; at Key Stage 4 around half the teaching is very good and the rest is satisfactory. Specialist teachers of geography are knowledgeable and experienced in the subject, so that students are appropriately challenged in lessons. This is reflected in well-planned fieldwork which enriches the work of students and contributes to good standards in coursework for GCSE. In most lessons, planning is very detailed and effective, ensuring a wide variety of tasks which hold students' interests; in other lessons, planning focuses on the lesson's factual content, and activities for students are less well thought out. Overall, a good range of teaching and learning styles is used to vary the experiences of students. The most successful lessons use a range of resources to stimulate interest. Non-specialists and less experienced teachers in Key Stage 3 tend to depend too much on textbooks and worksheets. Relationships are generally good; teachers are supportive and approachable. They have effective class discipline on the whole, but very occasionally silly behaviour is not controlled well enough, so that students do not make sufficient progress. Homework is regularly set, providing good opportunities for students to carry out independent research. Marking is regular; some is detailed and constructive and includes useful targets for improvement. However, the quality of marking and target-setting lacks consistency across the department.

38. The department has responded positively to the previous inspection report. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and enquiry skills have been improved through a well-devised programme of fieldwork. The GCSE results have improved steadily and are now well above the national average. The department is aware of the need to link assessments more closely to the levels of the National Curriculum. Leadership is effective. Non-specialist teachers are well supported by detailed schemes of work and a centrally produced bank of resources. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is regular, which has contributed to raising attainment in the subject.

History

39. In GCSE examinations, the proportion of higher grades (A*-C) was above average in 1998, but declined sharply in 1999. However, all students have obtained a grade in the last two years. Over the last few years, results have fluctuated, but no clear trend is apparent. Last year, all Year 11 students, representing a wide ability range, were taught in one large class, which slowed down progress.
40. At the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment in history is in line with national expectations. They have a sound grasp of historical periods, referring to specific dates or broader periods of time. Their knowledge and understanding of major events are secure. Higher attaining students understand and explain changes, such as those which occurred during the Industrial Revolution, in good detail and with confidence. Students know that the reliability and possible bias of evidence should be considered and most can do this. In their extended writing, higher attaining students evaluate sources of evidence - for example, on the expansion of trade and industry; those of average attainment give reasons for the change, while the lower attaining students list a number of causes. The ability to develop ideas in writing has improved since the last inspection, but in some lower attaining classes attainment it is still too variable, and too low.
41. Students at the end of Key Stage 4 have a basic framework of knowledge, but in lessons they add little detail to descriptions and explanations. Overall, attainment is below expectations. The higher attaining students consider the reliability of sources of evidence but do not develop or form links across their own knowledge in a sustained way. However, coursework, which includes a local study on the gunpowder industry, involves research from a range of evidence and all students produce extended and well-presented writing, with photographs of the site. Higher attaining students evaluate evidence and reach a judgement; most students explain the rise and fall of the industry and the low attaining students give a simple narrative answer.
42. Progress in lessons and across Key Stage 3 in history is satisfactory. Students develop their understanding and use of historical terms, their reference to sources of information, and their organisation of written work. Recent emphasis on skill development is promoting chronological understanding (in Year 7), the reasons why events or change occurred (in Year 8) and enquiry skills (in Year 9). However, in lower attaining classes, factual knowledge, rather than skills, is stressed, which limits students' progress. Classroom assistance, where available, enables students with special educational needs to progress well. Progress across Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall and for those with special educational needs it is good. The main factor in promoting good progress is the local study, which provides an opportunity to apply historical skills. Students make effective use of historical terms and organise their writing effectively.
43. Attitudes to learning are most enthusiastic in the higher attaining classes in Key Stage 3, where students are motivated to do extra work at lunchtimes and at home. The majority concentrate in lessons and work well with one another. Enquiry skills are fostered, particularly in the higher attaining classes. Occasionally, lessons are disrupted by students who seek attention, do not work quietly and make little attempt to concentrate. Key Stage 4 students are more purposeful, work hard in class and show perseverance in their coursework. Positive attitudes have been maintained since the last inspection.
44. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4, though a small

percentage is unsatisfactory. Teachers' knowledge is sound and is effectively used, as seen when they were conveying the flavour of life in the Neolithic period to Year 7. Teachers use time and resources well: they make effective use of questions to summarise at the end of lessons; video recordings, the departmental computer and the library are well used. Expectations are high in most lessons. However, teachers lack confidence about the demands that should be made on some lower attaining classes. They strive, however, to adapt work and to include in every lesson some oral work and varied activities. Homework is regularly set and marked and is often well used to develop enquiry skills. The quality of teaching is similar to that reported following the last inspection.

45. The department is aware of the need to revise the schemes of work to provide specific opportunities for information technology, to emphasise skills as well as content and to link criteria for work assessments more closely to National Curriculum levels. The head of department, newly in post, has already identified priorities and various strategies to strengthen attainment, particularly at Key Stage 4. The monitoring of classroom practice, which has already begun, needs to focus on matching expectations, methods and activities more closely to the needs of the students, particularly in the lower attaining classes.

Modern foreign languages

46. The college provides French as the first modern foreign language to all students from Year 7. In addition, students may choose to study German from Year 9. Either language is then continued through Key Stage 4. Students are able to study both languages up to GCSE; because numbers were low this year, the second language is being taught in lessons after school.
47. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. GCSE results at the higher grades (A*-C) have improved since the last inspection. In 1998, they were average in both languages and results were similar in 1999. Results in French were at the average for all subjects in the college, and results in German were better than that. French results have been consistent over the last three years, and German results have shown an improvement. Results in both languages across the full range of grades (A*-G) have been consistently above college and national averages over the last three years.
48. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Students' listening and understanding are good and spoken response is satisfactory, but the use of the spoken language for genuine communication is hardly developed at all. For example, Year 9 students in French lessons understood well a spoken passage about holidays and their written answers to oral questions were satisfactory, but the activity did not require them to speak spontaneously. Students' writing is variable: the highest attaining students write well and accurately; others undertake tasks which are relatively straightforward, such as comprehension and copying. Year 9 students starting to learn German listen and respond well. The highest attaining students make successful attempts at writing simple sentences about their town, while lower attaining students find this difficult. Levels of attainment are reasonable, bearing in mind students have been studying German for only two months.
49. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectations, overall. Listening and understanding skills are good and spoken response is satisfactory but speech is often prepared and read, which causes loss of accent and fluency. Spontaneous spoken language for genuine communication rarely occurs and students rely too much on the use of English to confirm understanding. For example, in a topic on weather students understood the imperfect tense in listening and reading activities but were more hesitant about speaking, not having developed instant reaction in French. Writing skills of the highest attaining students are good and work is often accurate. Independent reading is developing well. Year 11 students learning German attain in line with expectations. They listen and read accurately, but they are less confident in speaking and writing.
50. Progress is satisfactory in lessons and across Key Stage 3. Lessons begin with practice to confirm and reinforce previous learning. In half the lessons observed, no new knowledge was acquired, although existing knowledge was practised using a wider range of skills. In other lessons new topics were introduced and new learning occurred. Progress in speaking lags behind reading, writing and listening. Progress is good in lessons and across Key Stage 4. As at Key Stage 3, lessons all begin by confirming previous knowledge or practising tasks undertaken at home. The pace and challenge in the teaching very often lead to the introduction of new work and extension of skills. On the whole, listening and writing skills develop well. Progress in reading is satisfactory. The weakness overall is in the development of spontaneous speaking. Schemes of work include approaches for students of different attainment levels. In a few classes at both key stages students of different abilities are making insufficient progress in reading and writing because appropriate materials targeted at their particular needs are not being used. Boys and girls make equal progress. A small number of very able students have opportunity to progress rapidly through the examinations structure.

51. As at the last inspection, students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, they concentrate well and are enthusiastic in lessons, particularly in Year 7. They work well in the whole-class situation and concentrate while others are speaking. However, they do not maintain this concentration in pairs or small groups and lapse into English too readily. At Key Stage 4, there is good concentration and commitment to learning a language. Although spoken French or German may be hesitant and pronunciation approximate, students respond well, both individually and in groups, to learning in those languages, when opportunities are provided.
52. As reported at the last inspection, teaching is always satisfactory or better. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. At both key stages, planning is satisfactory but teachers do not always make use of materials for reading and writing matched to the needs of individuals. Teachers make consistent use of spoken French or German but do not insist on students using the foreign language in general classroom exchanges. English is used too often to confirm meaning. Plans show that dialogue is encouraged through work in pairs and groups, though none was observed during the inspection. At Key Stage 4, particularly, the pace and challenge of lessons are good and some imaginative teaching methods were observed which encouraged students, in one particular lesson, to combine all four language skills with the use of information and communication technology.
53. Support for students with special educational needs is provided by a learning support assistant. At the time of the inspection the assistant, who is a linguist and is permanently attached to the department, contributed little to lessons, because she had only just been appointed. The department receives copies of individual education plans and devises its own individual learning plans but the two are not related closely enough, and the targets are too vague.
54. Assessment meets statutory requirements at Key Stage 3, and meets the requirements of the examinations boards and informs curricular planning at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, the opportunity to involve students in recording and tracking their own progress is missed. The department organises a programme of visits abroad, which enables students to experience family life and the world of work. Generally, however, too few authentic resources are introduced into lessons to cultivate cultural understanding among students.
55. The management and co-ordination of the department are good. Staff performance is monitored through observation both as part of appraisal and as part of arrangements for sharing good practice.

Music

56. Standards in music are high. GCSE results are well above the national average. Music makes a very good contribution to the life of the college. In Year 7 students understand basic notation and rests and use their knowledge effectively in rhythmic compositions incorporating place names in Cornwall. Singing is well in tune and confident. By Year 8, most students can clap independent parts in a task involving complex African polyrhythms. Their score reading has improved so they can follow recordings of African 'Adiemus Songs'. By the end of Year 9, attainment is above national expectations. Students achieve good standards in composing and performing. They compose in a variety of styles which include jazz, blues, pop and the use of Indian scales and instruments. All students use electronic keyboards competently. Students have a thorough knowledge of the elements of music specified in the National Curriculum and all theory is effectively learned through its practical application. The small amount of written work is carefully expressed and well presented. Students are able to use technical musical terms accurately and they develop their expressive vocabulary well by talking about the music they hear.
57. By the end of Year 11, attainment is above expectation. Students develop proficiency in improvisation which helps them to compose fluently. They compose in a wider range of styles and use the 12-tone scale and graphic scores. Compositions are consistent and authentic in style and students exploit well the tonal possibilities of the instruments they use in each piece. Most students can use a commercial computer program competently for composing or notating their music. Standards of performance vary

from advanced to elementary, since some students have studied an instrument seriously only since the beginning of Year 10, but they achieve commendable standards. Students have a good knowledge of a wide range of musical works from different eras, in different styles and from various parts of the world.

58. Students make good progress in lessons and across Key Stage 3. In Year 7, where progress is usually very good and sometimes excellent, students learn to sing tonic sol-fa patterns from the board and they understand the pentatonic scale. They use tuned percussion and keyboards for composing and employ ostinato patterns successfully to extend their composing. In Year 9, students learn the various stages in the composing of a song in which they use the Dorian mode and suitable supporting chords. The progress of students of all attainment levels is good. Higher attaining students compose tunes with well-shaped phrases over suitable harmonies, which they learn to perform accurately. Lower attaining students compose melodies which are sometimes angular, and in their performances the musical pulse tends to be unsteady. Students with special educational needs are usually assisted by learning support assistants. They are fully involved in all practical activities and generally make good progress. In the main, boys make similar progress to girls but, occasionally, a few make slower progress because their attention drifts.
59. In Key Stage 4, students build on the good grounding they have received in the elements of music and progress is generally very good. In Year 10, students develop composing in interesting ways - for example, by composing pentatonic songs which they will subsequently teach to infant children. Composing and performing over a wide range of styles are encouraged and students make very good progress by capitalising on their individual musical strengths and interests. By Year 11, students develop an understanding of many different musical styles and their improvising skills are well developed, which enhances their progress in composing. For example, in one lesson students responded to the stimulus of an impressionist painting by improvising in groups on a wide variety of instruments. They produced successful sound pictures representing 'clouds' and a 'deserted castle'. Both collaborative and listening skills were well developed through this very successful exercise and results showed a good feeling for instrumental colour. Students develop a firm understanding of relevant musical theory through all activities.
60. In Key Stage 3 students, with very few exceptions, behave well and show a commendable level of enthusiasm for their music lessons. They are attentive and listen well to the teacher. When dispersed for independent work in groups, they co-operate well and are responsible and trustworthy in their use of equipment. When listening to each other's performances, they are appreciative and give constructive evaluations. In only one lesson was a small number of lower attaining boys unco-operative and unable to work purposefully on their own. In Key Stage 4, students are strongly committed and diligent. They are highly motivated and collaborate with a high degree of proficiency. They are enthusiastic and keen to talk about the work in which they are engaged. The skills of negotiation required for successful paired and group composing are very well developed.
61. Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 3. Some teaching is excellent and a very small amount is unsatisfactory. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 4. All lessons are carefully prepared, topics are intrinsically interesting, and resources are appropriate. Students are presented with a carefully calculated and progressive sequence of activities which challenge them over the whole range of ability and through both key stages. Time is carefully apportioned to activities to ensure a good pace of working. Questions are well used to focus attention and check students' understanding. The teacher uses her musical and communication skills to very good effect; examples are exciting and relevant. Teaching is enthusiastic and students derive obvious enjoyment from their achievements in lessons. Discipline is usually very good. Individuals are very well supported. In a small minority of lessons, however, overall discipline is not strong enough to prevent a few students from misbehaving and preventing others from making good progress. The teacher has an excellent knowledge of each student's needs in Key Stage 4 and she enables students of all abilities to make very good progress. There is constructive use of praise in all lessons to acknowledge students' attainment. Assessment of work in progress is very good and carefully calculated to encourage further development. The standard of direction by visiting instrumental teachers in the various extra-curricular ensembles is very good.
62. The management of the department is very good and its day-to-day organisation is excellent. The part-

time assistant teacher is well supported. Management of the instrumental lessons taught by visiting teachers is very good. The curriculum is excellent. The schemes of work contain an unusually wide range of interesting activities. These are carefully calculated to enable students of all abilities to make the best possible progress throughout both key stages. All requirements of the National Curriculum and the GCSE examination board are met. The departmental handbook contains the required range of information but, as at the time of the last inspection, details of schemes of work and, in particular, the teaching methods used, are not full enough. This is the only unresolved issue from the previous inspection report. Although assessment in practice is very effective, information about the procedures and criteria for assessment is skimpy, and the development plan for music lacks priorities and detail. Music makes a very good contribution to the school's provision for students' social and cultural development. Students encounter a particularly wide range of music from different world cultures. There are many opportunities in the course of a year for the school's musicians to perform in school and within the community. Links with feeder primary schools are strong and mutually beneficial. Overall, music is a considerable strength of the school.

Physical education

63. Standards of attainment in physical education at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations overall, and boys achieve better than girls. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above expectations for both boys and girls. GCSE results in physical education in 1999 were well above the national average, much better than in 1998. The college's results in 1999 ranked highly among Cornish schools. GCSE results for dance are high. The standards achieved represent good progress throughout the college.
64. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 students have satisfactory competence in a range of skills. In hockey, for example, Year 9 students perform actions with satisfactory consistency and link separate actions effectively to play a game. They anticipate and show good awareness of tactics. In gymnastics, they perform a wide range of skills and create sequences of movement. Students appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In practical activities the commitment and enthusiasm of boys spur them on and they achieve better than girls by the end of the key stage.
65. At the end of Key Stage 4, boys and girls achieve above national expectations with high standards among some groups – for example in playing rugby, where students adapt and refine their skills and use them with precision. They appreciate the strengths and limitations of performance and work well together to outwit the opposition. In dance, performances are consistent and effective. Students undertake different roles – as dancer, arranger and composer – and have satisfactory knowledge of modern dance routines. Students use subject vocabulary accurately and can explain rather than describe the strengths and weaknesses of performance. Students' written work is usually well presented, particularly that of girls. Higher attaining students, girls especially, write good critical accounts of their work and how to improve it. They have a thorough knowledge of the rules of the games they play, and the etiquette of many activities, and use these correctly.
66. Progress is consistent amongst most groups but a few students in Years 7 and 8 lack confidence in themselves as sports performers and this holds them back. Encouragement and structured activities enable them to catch up by the end of Year 9. The skills students acquire in evaluating performance and their growing appreciation of a healthy lifestyle contribute well to their overall progress. Participation in extra-curricular activities enables students to build well on their learning in lessons. In lessons at Key Stage 4 students work hard to increase the precision, clarity and fluency of their movements in the various physical education and dance activities provided. In basketball, for example, students gain new skills and incorporate them effectively into their performance, through practising individually and in small-sided activities before playing a full game. Overall, boys and girls progress equally well in practical activities and girls progress better than boys in written work, which is generally well presented and more evaluative by the end of Year 11.
67. Students behave well in physical education and dance activities. They work well individually, in small groups and larger teams. They respect one another and their teachers and work safely, following

instructions sensibly. They wear appropriate clothing, follow rules correctly and apply them fairly. A few students in Key Stage 3 lack confidence in themselves and this limits their performance. Very nearly all students participate and contribute well in lessons. Students with very high levels of skill show great persistence and enthusiasm, particularly at Key Stage 4.

68. Teaching is good in physical education and dance, throughout the college. The teachers of physical education and dance are very capable; they are practising sports-people at the highest level of their chosen activities, and well qualified to teach a number of skills. Dance teachers have exceptional skills. Teachers are committed to both achieving high standards of performance and also to providing an enjoyable experience for the students. Their work is supplemented by 12 highly qualified coaches able to support particular activities, including cricket, table-tennis, soccer and basketball. Teachers plan their work thoroughly and effectively, use a range of teaching and learning approaches and manage their classes well. Theory work is aided by the good use of videos and literature from various medical sources. However, the lack of a dedicated room in which to teach GCSE theory is detrimental to standards: learning resources are not readily available and on occasion room changes are necessary half-way through double lessons. Relationships between teachers and most students are good. A twilight extra-curricular session for students and parents on step aerobics is an example of good relations: the class is popular and the standards reached are good. A few Year 11 students behave unacceptably. One Year 11 theory class exhibited a measure of discourtesy by their zealous chatter against the teacher's voice. Most students respond well and are committed and enthusiastic both indoors and outdoors. Extra-curricular activities are well planned and extend lesson opportunities. Students are encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible. The list of events and fixtures shows a very good range of physical education at lunchtime, after school and in the evenings. Work with primary schools is extensive - 'tag rugby' involves 120 primary pupils; joint work also includes gymnastics, girls' football coaching and the 'huff and puff' club.
69. Schemes of work and teaching programmes all comply with National Curriculum requirements. Assessment and records of achievement are used well. Subject leadership is very good and morale high. Since the last inspection standards have been raised significantly. The college has earned sports college status through which provision for students and work with the community are enhanced. Many opportunities are provided, some local – for example, the Tall Ships race – and some national, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme - and students with outstanding ability are transferred to an Elite Performers' Programme. All students benefit from outdoor education experiences in Years 7 and 8. Many gain awards for achievement demonstrated in a particular activity - for example, life-saving, first-aid, the Rugby Union Preliminary Award and Junior Sports Leader Awards. Overall, the physical education and dance programme is well organised and successfully raises standards which benefit individuals, the life of the college and its work with the local community.

INSPECTION DATA**SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

70. The team consisted of 13 inspectors who spent a combined total of 47 days gathering first-hand evidence in the college. In all, 164 hours were spent visiting classes, in discussion with students and looking at their work, and visiting assemblies and form times. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and many several times. Lesson visits were arranged to sample the work of each subject across year groups and the range of ability of students in the college.
71. A wide variety of evidence was considered. Planned discussions were held with staff responsible for subject areas and different aspects of the work of the college. There was a formal discussion with the chair of governors accompanied by other key governors. All of the inspectors joined an informal meeting with local people who work in partnership with the college. Examples of students' work were looked at in lessons and representative samples of students' work in each year group for each curriculum subject were scrutinised by inspectors. Planned discussions were held with students in each year group, and informal discussions with many more. Documentation provided by the college was analysed both before and during the inspection. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 44 parents. The team considered 452 replies from parents to a questionnaire about the college.

181. DATA AND INDICATORS**1. Student data**

	Number of students on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of students with statements of SEN	Number of students on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	742	44	157	145

183. Teachers and classes**183. Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	38
Number of students per qualified teacher:	19.5

183. Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff:	21
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	489

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	75.3
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	25
	KS4	23

184. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998-99
	£
Total Income	1,615,781
Total Expenditure	1,568,280
Expenditure per student	2,243.61
Balance brought forward from previous year	139,269
Balance carried forward to next year	186,770

185. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	750
Number of questionnaires returned:	452

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the college	23	61	12	4	0
I would find it easy to approach the college with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37	55	6	2	0
The college handles complaints from parents well	19	51	26	3	1
The college gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	21	59	12	7	1
The college keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23	55	16	5	1
The college enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	28	58	12	2	0
The college encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	38	47	12	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24	58	10	7	1
The college's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	27	54	15	4	0
The college achieves high standards of good behaviour	22	56	18	3	1
My child(ren) like(s) college	31	52	12	3	2

185.

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents at their meeting and in written responses were very supportive of the college, which they feel is closely involved in the local community. Their children like coming to the college, and the wide range of activities provided, and they behave well. Parents feel that the leadership of the college is dynamic and that standards in subjects are high – especially in English, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. In their replies to their questionnaire, the areas a few parents were not happy about concerned the curriculum offer and understanding of what is taught, and homework.