

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WIMBLEDON COLLEGE**

Wimbledon, London

LEA area: Merton

Unique reference number: 102681

Headteacher: Fr Michael Holman

Reporting inspector: Brian Evans  
1049

Dates of inspection: 8 – 12 October 2001

Inspection number: 184890

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Edge Hill Wimbledon London
Postcode:	SW19 4NS
Telephone number:	020 8946 2533
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Andrew Kennedy
Date of previous inspection:	1 May 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1049	Brian Evans	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
13807	Christine Haggerty	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for it's students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
4677	Valerie Banks	Team inspector	<p>Geography</p> <p>Information and Communication Technology</p> <p>Information and Communication Technology (Sixth Form)</p>	
10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	<p>History</p> <p>History (Sixth Form)</p>	
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	<p>Modern foreign languages</p> <p>French (Sixth Form)</p>	
7926	James Bowden	Team inspector	<p>Physical education</p> <p>Sociology (Sixth Form)</p>	
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Music	
28097	Sheila Nolan	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Mathematics (Sixth Form)</p>	

19015	Gordon Peacock	Team inspector	Chemistry (Sixth Form)	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
30563	Jacqueline Pentlow	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Biology (Sixth Form) Physical education (Sixth Form)	
1990	Graham Preston	Team inspector	Design and Technology Business education	Co-ordinator, Sixth Form Report How well are students taught?
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science Physics (Sixth Form)	
31680	Phil Redican	Team inspector	Art Art (Sixth Form)	
3731	William Robson	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
15372	Patricia Walker	Team inspector	English English (Sixth Form)	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE**

Wimbledon College is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school for boys aged 11-18 and is in the trusteeship of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). There are 1181 students on roll, more than the average secondary school. The college admits students with diverse socio-economic backgrounds from a wide geographical area that includes 73 different parishes. Fifty per cent travel in to college from outside the local borough. The number of students eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The college is in the midst of a major reorganisation. The local education authority is to change the age of transfer from 13 to 11 year old students in its secondary schools in September 2002. The college is already operating a phased entry policy and there are 50 boys in Year 7 and 75 boys in Year 8. Thirty per cent of boys are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are 286 students in the sixth form which is a higher number than the average school sixth form. Post-16 courses are run jointly with a Roman Catholic girls' school ten minutes walk from the college. Close to one-fifth of students are on the register of students with special educational needs and nearly two per cent have statements of special educational need. These proportions are near the average for secondary schools. The proportion of students with English as a second language is high. Students' attainment on entry to the college is normally above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS**

Wimbledon College is a good school with a strong Christian ethos. Students achieve above average standards thanks to good teaching and positive attitudes and behaviour. The sixth form provision is good and cost effective. The headteacher and senior management team give very effective leadership, which is well supported by parents, staff and the governing body. The college provides good value for money.

#### **What the college does well**

- GCSE standards are above average and improving.
- Teaching is good.
- Behaviour is very good.
- The headteacher gives very clear leadership and key staff and governors are managing the reorganisation of the college very well.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Works closely with parents.

#### **What could be improved**

- The application of students' ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Provision of design and technology in Years 7-9 and encourage the greater take-up of GCSE courses.
- Attainment and achievement in art and design.
- Provision for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Accommodation.

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

### **HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The college was last inspected in May 1995 and there have been major changes in the size and organisation of the college in the last five years. Overall, it has made good progress on the key issues identified in 1995 and this has led to rising standards. Staff at all levels participate fully in college life through good consultative procedures. Students' work is generally marked effectively to support their learning. Teaching and learning show a significant improvement in meeting the needs of students of all attainment levels. Teachers use a wider range of teaching strategies but there is scope for further development in this area. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for students with special educational needs. The extensive building programme to be completed this academic year includes a new learning resource centre and is designed to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The equal opportunities and social inclusion policies

are monitored well. Good use is made of assessment data to support the progress of students from different backgrounds. The leadership of the headteacher in guiding the college through its reorganisation from a 13-18 to 11-18 school and the support he receives from staff, parents and governors provide a strong base for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	C
A-levels/AS-levels	D	B	B	

**Key**

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

Students' attainment on entry to the college varies slightly from year to year because of the college's phased entry in Years 7 and 8 but it is normally above the average. Results in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 were above average for English, mathematics and science. In comparison with schools with similar socio-economic characteristics, students' performance was well above the average in mathematics and science and above average in English. The overall trend in test results is in line with the national trend. The provisional results for the 2001 tests at the end of Year 9 show an improvement on the previous year's figures for the proportions of students reaching Levels 5 and 6 in all three core subjects. The proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\*-C and A\*-G in GCSE examinations in 2000 was above average and in line with the average for similar schools. GCSE results have been above average for the past three years. Provisional GCSE results for 2001 show a significant improvement over those of 2000. Mathematics results have consistently been above average and include a well above average proportion of GCSE A\* and A grades. In English and science, results have varied between average and above average in 1999 and 2000 but showed significant improvement in 2001. In design and technology, physical education, French and Spanish results were below average in 2000 but improved significantly in 2001. In art, GCSE results were below average and showed no improvement in 2001. In all other subjects, results were above average apart from history and geography where they were close to the average. Results gained by students entered for two or more A-levels or AS equivalents have risen steadily and in 2000 were above average. The 2001 results confirm this continued improvement. Students on GNVQ Advanced courses achieved results that were above average. Results were in line with average for GNVQ Intermediate courses. These standards are matched by the quality of work seen during the inspection. Students in Years 7 to 9 make good progress overall when account is taken of the number who are entering the college from a range of different middle and primary schools at different times. The progress of gifted and talented students is particularly good in relation to their prior attainment because the college identifies and responds to their needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and with English as their additional language make satisfactory progress. Students in Years 10 to 13 make good progress. Students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are above average. The college has met its realistic and challenging targets which are well founded on the detailed analysis of performance data and the regular monitoring of individual students.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are keen learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Students have a good awareness of their impact on each other. Very occasionally in Years 7 to 9 a minority of students disrupts the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Above average. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good and makes a major contribution to effective learning and to standards achieved. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection when a quarter of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Good teaching is seen in all years. Students have good attitudes to learning. Students made good progress in over half the lessons mainly because the teaching was planned to meet the needs of them. Good relationships between students and teachers assist learning. Major strengths in the teaching are teachers' knowledge of their subject and their classroom management which creates a positive climate for learning. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and it is satisfactory in science. Teaching is very good in ICT where students develop skills of learning for themselves. Teaching is generally good in most other subjects. In design and technology, students' work in a number of lessons in Years 7 to 9 is not challenging enough because there are not enough specialist teachers. In art, teaching is unsatisfactory overall because teachers' expectations are too low. The college is placing a high priority on teaching basic literacy and numeracy but there is little co-ordination between subjects in their practice. Most subjects do not include a planned approach to applying students' ICT skills. The needs of gifted and talented students and those with English as an additional language are met well. There is scope for more partnership between teachers and support assistants in meeting the need of students with learning difficulties. Students have very good attitudes to learning. Their concentration spans are good and they respond well to the praise and encouragement of teachers and this has a positive effect on their self-esteem. They work with purpose both on individual assignments and when required to work in small groups.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Overall, provision is broad and relevant. The college is extending its range of vocational courses in the upper school. The design and technology curriculum in Key Stage 3 does not meet National Curriculum requirements. Programmes of study in art are unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The college meets most targets set in students' individual education plans (IEPs). More support is needed for students with reading difficulties in Years 7 to 9.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The joint provision between the college and the local education authority works well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The personal, social and health education programme contributes strongly to students' personal development.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Good. The college provides a very safe environment and the quality of pastoral support is good. The college has good systems for monitoring and supporting students' academic and personal development.

The college aims to provide a good range of learning opportunities to cater for the aptitudes of all students. There are good procedures for ensuring students' welfare, and promoting attendance, behaviour and personal development. The college has the confidence of the great majority of parents who are pleased with the arrangements for reorganisation.

### HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is strongly supported by the senior management team, staff and governors. Most middle managers provide good leadership of their areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors provide very good support to the college. They monitor standards well and carry out responsibilities assigned to them effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior and middle managers, governors and LEA officers monitor and evaluate standards systematically in most subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Efficient use is made of the college's existing resources. Non-teaching staff provide valuable support.

Accommodation in the college is inadequate for the increasing size of the college. An extensive building programme is due for completion next spring and summer terms but even so small classrooms have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Learning resources and staff are adequate. The headteacher and governors apply the principles of best value very well in their financial planning.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their sons like college.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The college expects their son to work hard and achieve his best.</li> <li>• The college is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The college helps their son to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Information on son's progress.</li> <li>• Provide more activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the college. The pastoral staff work closely with parents. Teachers, including the headteacher and senior staff, are easy to approach. The college has an above average range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence indicates that in most subjects homework supports students' learning very well. The college is currently reviewing the format of students' annual written reports to provide parents with more detailed information on their child's progress in each subject area.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

This is an increasingly popular Roman Catholic boys comprehensive school that provides a combined sixth form jointly with its neighbouring Catholic school for girls. The joint sixth form has over 530 students including 280 students from the college. Around 70 per cent of Year 11 students continue their education at the college, and a further 40 or more students are admitted from outside the combined sixth form schools. The combined sixth form provides a wide range of subjects and vocational courses that cater for students with a wide range of prior GCSE attainment. The majority of students have above average qualifications and embark on mainly two year courses leading to GCE Advanced (A), Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and Advanced Vocational qualifications.

**HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

The sixth form is successful and cost effective. Its results have steadily risen in recent years and in 2000 were above national averages. In 2001, standards have generally been sustained. Students achieve well in most of their courses, and benefit from a range of additional courses and activities that enhance their experience and contribute well to their personal development. Teaching is good in almost all subjects and courses and is very good in some. Leadership and management are good. The sixth form provides good value for money.

**Strengths**

- The rising standards in the sixth form have been largely sustained with most students making good progress particularly in the vocational courses. Over 80 per cent of students enter higher education.
- The generally good teaching is challenging and the students appreciate the effort that staff make to support their learning.
- The college through its combined sixth form provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses with considerable enhancement.
- The excellent Catholic ethos extends to the sixth form through the strong pastoral care that contributes to the high standards in attitude and behaviour.
- The monitoring of students' academic progress is very thorough and fully involves the teaching and pastoral staff.
- The management and co-ordination of the joint sixth form is well organised and effective.

**What could be improved**

- While the delivery of discrete key skills is well established in the vocational courses, and the use of ICT is strong, the identification and development of key skills is more limited elsewhere.
- There is a need to make more effective use of management information systems to support the otherwise good monitoring of attendance and academic progress.
- While the specific higher education and careers events are well planned, there is a lack of access to day-to-day specialist careers guidance and resources.
- While teaching is consistently good in terms of challenge, in some curriculum areas the range of teaching and learning strategies is more limited with restricted use of resource-based learning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS**

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average and most students achieve well. Teaching is good overall. A small number of students do not contribute sufficiently to discussion.
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average and improving. Students benefit from good teaching and learn to adopt a scholarly approach to their work.
Physics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are below average. Teaching is good in that it is well informed, if less engaging in some of its delivery.
Chemistry	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Teaching is good although the range of teaching strategies is limited. Students are well motivated and achieve well.
Biology	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Teaching is good with strengths in depth of coverage with students responding well to high teacher expectations.
French	<b>Good.</b> Good, and often very good, teaching with high expectations that ensure good progress and standards above average.
History	<b>Good.</b> Students respond positively to the very good and well-informed teaching and achieve above average standards.
Sociology	<b>Very good.</b> Students respond enthusiastically to the very good teaching and they make very good progress and achieve well above average standards.
Business studies	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is well informed and learning is mostly good, if rather teacher directed. Students achieve in line with expectations and attain average standards.
Vocational education	<b>Very good.</b> Teaching is good and assessment practice very good and in most courses students make very good progress, often from modest prior attainment, to achieve A-level standards in line with national average.
Art and design	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> While there is good 3-dimensional work, much of the learning is undemanding and student progress is unsatisfactory. As a result, A-level standards are below average.
Physical education	<b>Good.</b> Provision of practical activities in the sixth form is good. Those students taking GCE A/AS level make good progress and achieve or exceed their target grade.
Information and communication technology	<b>Very good.</b> The very good teaching engages the interest of students and enables them to achieve above average standards.

The very broad range of curriculum provision is complemented by a good general studies course, including religious education as a component, theology, games and other activities. A wide range of enrichment activities further enhances the personal development of sixth form students. These include a classics trip to Greece and a Battlefields Tour to France. The more able programme and the Leadership Challenge programme also make useful contributions to personal development for particular students.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The college provides very effective guidance for students in a sixth form with a strong and supportive Catholic ethos. In this it endeavours to maintain balance between its high expectations about student dress and behaviour and its efforts to give greater responsibility through the prefect system with some increased autonomy. Students are appreciative of the support they receive, including tutor advice and various higher education and careers events. Despite this, a large majority of students felt that careers and higher education could be further improved in terms of the day-to-day accessibility of careers advice and resources.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is well led and managed. Development planning, including the curriculum, has been very good and governors have had an active role. Academic and pastoral monitoring of students is thorough and effective steps are taken to identify and address weaknesses although improved information systems would strengthen procedures. The college is successfully developing its joint sixth form provision with the nearby neighbouring girls' Catholic school.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are well taught and staff are accessible and supportive.</li> <li>• They are expected to study and work hard and do independent research.</li> <li>• Their work is regularly marked.</li> <li>• They appreciate the range of courses and consider their induction into the sixth form was good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is insufficient access to careers advice and resources.</li> <li>• They would like to be consulted more in the running of the sixth form.</li> <li>• Some students feel that in some subjects they could be better informed about their progress.</li> <li>• Study facilities could be better.</li> </ul>

Students are very positive about the sixth form in terms of the teaching and support they receive and the range of courses they can take. These strengths have been confirmed in the inspection. Their views about careers were initially surprising given the number of careers and higher education events but most of the students' concerns were about the accessibility of careers staff and resources on a day-to-day basis and in this respect the students' views were just. Some students felt that being in the sixth form made little difference in terms of any privileges over the younger students. The sixth form students are accorded greater respect through their roles as prefects and senior prefects and they do run various whole activities including the school council, although they do not have their own student forum. The college has placed considerable emphasis on improving academic monitoring and assessment, although it has still to be fully established in some subject areas, and this is reflected in some students' experiences. The college would concur with the view that independent learning resources need improvement and it is a measure of teachers' efforts to support learning that many students do not see it as a major problem.

## **COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

*Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement “outstanding” in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to “very weak”.*

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The college's results and pupils' achievements

***Attainment** refers to the standards students achieve compared to national averages. Standards are also compared with results obtained in similar schools, that is those with a similar uptake of free school meals. **Achievement** refers to the progress students make in terms of where they started when they entered the school, or when they started their GCSE or sixth form courses. Thus good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that students do well and make better than expected progress.*

1. Overall attainment of students on entry to the college is above average. As an interim arrangement, before the college is fully reorganised into an 11-18 college, a significant number of new students are admitted to the college in Years 7, 8 and 9. As a result, the attainment profile varies more than usually from year to year. In 2000, by the end of Year 9, the attainment of students in the National Curriculum tests was above average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage of students reaching the higher Level 6 was well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. The trend in the college's average score for all core subjects was in line with the national trend. In comparison with similar schools, students' performance was well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. The provisional results for 2001 show a significant improvement in the proportions of students reaching Levels 5 and 6 in all three subjects.
2. The college makes good progress in consistently meeting its targets for 16 year olds, which are above average. In 2000, the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE A\*-C grades and five or more A\*-G grades was above average. Students' GCSE average points score was close to average when compared with schools of similar socio-economic characteristics. The trend in the college's averages between 1996 and 2000 was below the national trend. However, provisional results for 2001 show a substantial improvement and the proportion of students attaining the higher GCSE grades was better than in any of the previous five years.
3. In English, GCSE results have varied. They were above average in 1999, close to the average in 2000 and above average again in 2001. Mathematics results have been consistently above average. In 2001, they were above those of English and science. They include a well above average proportion of students attaining the highest GCSE A\* and A grades. Higher attainers have very good numerical skills and are confident in using a range of mental methods in their calculations. Science results were below average in 2000 but, in line with most other subjects, showed a significant improvement in 2001. All higher attainers entered for chemistry and physics in 2001 attained A\*-C grades.
4. In art, GCSE results were below the average in 2000 and showed no improvement in 2001. In design and technology, results were well below average in 2000 but in 2001 improved significantly with the appointment of new specialist staff. In geography and history, GCSE results were close to the average. In ICT, music and business studies, results were well above average. In French and Spanish, results were below average but show an improving trend over the past two years. In physical education, GCSE results were below average but students generally performed better than in their other GCSE subjects.
5. Inspection evidence indicates that students in Years 7 to 9 make good progress and achieve above average standards in English, science, history and ICT. Students achieve well and attain well above average standards in mathematics. Achievement in art is unsatisfactory and standards are well below expectations; students lack confidence in their work. In design and technology, standards are well below expectations in Key Stage 3 and students make slow progress because their design awareness is lacking and their practical making skills are limited. Standards in geography, music, physical education and modern foreign languages are in line with expectations and students achieve satisfactorily.



6. Inspection evidence shows that students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and attain standards that are above expectations in English, mathematics, science, history, ICT, music and close to the average in design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Achievement in art is unsatisfactory and standards are well below expectations.
7. Students' literacy skills are above average. Overall, the development of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. There is some inconsistency between departments on the teaching of literacy. Some departments do not have a policy to demonstrate how they will concentrate on developing basic skills in their teaching. Students' standards of attainment in numeracy are above average. The National Numeracy Strategy is making a good impact on standards in mathematics but in other subjects there is limited planned use and support for numeracy. Students have above average ICT skills but only a few subjects provide planned opportunities for applying these skills.
8. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most subjects. By the end of Year 11 all achieve some GCSE qualifications. Several students with special needs continue to study successfully in the sixth form and make good progress so that they achieve GNVQ qualifications at Foundation and Intermediate level.
9. The small number of students with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily. Very few students arrive with little or no English. Teachers work closely with the local education authority's language unit to provide good support for basic literacy skills.
10. The gifted and talented students are well served by the college. Departments identify students who are gifted and talented and set them targets which are written into their diaries. High attainers work hard, show keen interest and achieve well. In mathematics and science, for example, high attainers are set extension work and participate in events such as the "physics challenge". The wide range of extra-curricular activities involve a high proportion of students and provide them with excellent opportunities for students to develop their talents in the fields of music, drama and physical education.

### **Sixth form**

11. GCE A-level results have steadily risen in recent years and in 2000 were above national average. In 2001, standards have generally been sustained. Students achieve well in most of their courses, and benefit from a range of additional courses and activities that enhance their experience and contribute well to their personal development. In 2000, pass rates were well above average in business studies, geography and sociology. In mathematics, results were above average. In all other subjects A-level results were close to the average in 2000 except for art and classical studies. The proportion of students achieving the higher A and B grades in 2000 was above average in mathematics, business studies, French, geography, history and sociology. In AS courses and in post-16 vocational courses in 2000, attainment was well above average in 2000 in religious education, above average in business and close to the average in general studies. Provisional results for 2001 showed a small improvement in the A-level pass rate but students' average point score is slightly down for students entered for 2 or more A-levels.
12. In most of the reported subjects and courses, students mostly achieve in line with or better than expectations based on target grades derived from students' GCSE performance. In September 2000, the AS level was introduced as a discrete, intermediate qualification leading the GCE Advanced level (A2). A number of students were under pressure to cope with the heavier workload of studying more subjects than previously and this adversely affected course retention rates and pass levels in some subjects. However, overall results showed that twelve subject areas had 100 per cent pass rates with 40 per cent or more of students in some courses achieving grades A or B.
13. In September 2000, all GNVQ Advanced courses were renamed Advanced Vocational Certificates in Education (AVCE) or Vocational A-levels. They parallel changes in the GCE A-level. In the year, there was a fairly high drop out rate as some students struggled to cope with

the additional demands of both Vocational Advanced level and Advanced Subsidiary level. However, of the 30 boys on the courses in business, health and social care, leisure and recreation and information and communication technology, only one student was unsuccessful.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Ninety per cent of parents report their children like college. The above average attendance of students confirms that view. This aspect has improved since the last report. Students are keen to come to college. They enjoy college and the friendships they make continue outside of college. A high proportion of students take part in a wide range of activities, which are available before and after college and during the lunch-break.
15. The behaviour of students in lessons and around the college is very good. This has a positive effect on their learning and the standards achieved. Students are welcoming, polite, co-operative and friendly to visitors. Very occasionally in lessons, the behaviour of a small minority has a negative effect on the working atmosphere in the class. There is a warm, caring atmosphere in the college and this has a very positive effect on students' learning. Students understand the rules, which are applied consistently across the college. Most students regard the sanctions imposed by college as fair.
16. Students report that the college is very strict about bullying. On the rare occasion that it does happen, staff deal with it immediately. Students feel safe. There were no incidents of bullying seen during the week of the inspection. An examination of the college's conduct book clearly identifies incidents of unacceptable behaviour and the very strict action taken by the college. There have been 46 fixed term exclusions over the past twelve months involving 26 students. When students return to college, they have to attend Saturday morning detentions to make up the work that has been missed. This sanction is proving to be very effective in reducing the number of exclusions. The college monitors the ethnicity of students who have been excluded and the exclusions are in proportion to the make-up of the college community. The last report identified that black Caribbean students had a higher number of exclusions proportionately than other students. This is no longer the case. Staff act as good role models and speak to students with respect and the students respond to this.
17. Students' personal development and relationships within the college are very good. Students understand the impact of their actions on others. Students' respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is excellent. The college has a strong Catholic ethos, which generates respect for feelings, values and beliefs. There were many occasions during lessons when it was noted that students discussed a number of difficult issues, listening carefully and responding thoughtfully. For example, during a drama lesson students were discussing an article about violence in young children sensibly and sensitively. The charity representatives from each form organise a number of events throughout the year to support national and international charities. This gives students an awareness of the wider world. The personal, social and health education programme and the good use of tutor time enhances students' understanding of the impact that their actions have on others.
18. Students' personal development is good. Students of all ages are involved in the college routines. Their peers elect the college council members and this gives all students the opportunity to put their views to the college through its council member. The very popular breakfast club came about as a result of the college council. The club is popular and was well attended during the week of the inspection.
19. The relationships between students, and between staff and students, are very good. Students collaborate well which is very effective in building very good relationships in the college. The many team sports are very effective in building relationships and the house system supports the ethos of working together. The very good relationships in the college ensure a calm and welcoming ethos.
20. Attendance is above the national average and well above the average for the borough. Unauthorised absence is below the national average and well below the average for the borough. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and this has a positive effect on

progress and attainment. There is a very small amount of truancy, which is identified quickly and the appropriate action is taken. Registration in the mornings is taken quickly and efficiently, but there is no formal registration in the afternoon. However, subject teachers take a register at the start of each lesson and a member of the administrative staff collates the information at the end of the college day. This ensures effective monitoring of attendance. The college plans to introduce a computerized registration system. Most students arrive on time and, generally, tutor time is very well used.

21. Students with special educational needs have positive attitudes to work and want to learn. They try hard and concentrate even when they find the work difficult. Many are keen to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, several Year 10 students were able to work independently, with minimal supervision, on a touch-typing programme to improve their keyboard and word processing skills.

### **Sixth form**

22. Around 70 per cent of students from Year 11 stay on in the sixth form. They have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy their time in the sixth form. The atmosphere in the sixth form is very relaxed and friendly. The students have a wide range of responsibilities as prefects and senior prefects. They support staff in a number of areas, for example, supervising younger students at break time and supporting the less confident students in the playground as part of the sixth form mentoring scheme. This has a very positive effect on building strong relationships throughout the college. The senior prefects take an active role in supporting younger students. For example, they hold the positions of chairman, vice chairman and secretary for the college council. However, the sixth formers did not have their own forum. The college responded to this immediately and, during the inspection, put in place a system for students to have a voice and a budget for their own college council. Students undertake voluntary work in the local community and many successfully take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
23. The attendance of sixth form students is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is high. This is due mainly to the fact that students in the sixth form do not like to bring in a note from their parents to explain their absence. There is very little truancy. The college needs to improve the registration of students in the sixth form in the mornings and in the afternoons. There is no effective system for students to sign in or out during the college day. However, the college is in the process of introducing computerized registration and these issues should then be addressed.

### **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

24. Teaching is a developing strength and makes a positive contribution to effective learning and to the standards achieved. The quality of teaching is mostly good throughout the college. Students make good progress. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the lessons seen, good or better in 56 per cent and very good or better in 20 per cent. One per cent of the teaching was excellent and 5 per cent unsatisfactory. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when a quarter of lessons were considered less than satisfactory. The improved quality of teaching and learning is also recognised by the parents. The percentage of good and very good teaching was a little higher in Year 11, consistent with the above average and improving GCSE results. The relatively few unsatisfactory lessons were nearly all in Key Stage 3 classes. They were unsatisfactory either because a small number of students hindered the learning of others in the class or because the pace of learning was not matched to students' attainment levels.
25. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, history, geography, music, physical education and GCSE design and technology. Much of the teaching in these subjects is typically well informed and challenging. In ICT, teaching is very good, particularly where teachers provide well informed individual support that encourages students to work with others to discuss and develop their own ideas. Teaching in modern foreign languages, science and Key Stage 3 design and technology is satisfactory and is well informed and prepared, although some lessons are less challenging and less effective in fully engaging the interest of students. These particular weaknesses are most evident in art teaching which is unsatisfactory overall.

26. Students have very good attitudes to learning. For example, during a history lesson at Key Stage 3 students stayed on task and were very responsive to the teacher's questions about the similarities and differences between today and Roman times. Students respond well to the praise and encouragement of teachers and this has a positive effect on their self-esteem. Students have a high expectation of teachers and want to be challenged during lessons.
27. In most subjects, teachers have good subject knowledge in lessons that are well planned and demonstrate usually very good management of student behaviour. All of this has a positive impact on students' learning through the creation of a constructive if, on occasion, more formal classroom context. Students concentrate and work hard in lessons and often make considerable gains in their understanding and skills. As the college has specialist teachers in almost all areas exceptions to this are rare. For example, in design and technology, where there is a lack of specialist teaching in a number of lessons in Years 7-9, students make unsatisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and practical skills, although even here the class management is effective and student behaviour satisfactory.
28. While there has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and in the subsequent results, in many lessons teachers rely heavily on whole class teaching and make more limited use of other teaching styles such as group work, problem-solving activities and practical inquiry. Some subjects such as English make sound use of question and answer and discussion although even here the teaching does not always respond sufficiently to the different needs of students, nor consistently use methods that actively involve students in the lesson. In the less effective lessons, activities such as copying from the board or 'reading round the class' continue for too long. In some subjects, such as mathematics, science and geography, this lack of variety in teaching approach is related to a lack of stimulus materials and practical resources so limiting the more independent investigation skills. ICT is well taught in the discrete lessons where the specialists provide challenging and well-designed activities that enable students to be actively involved and develop a wider understanding of the different applications. Teaching in the GCSE design and technology classes also enables students, through their project work, to use ICT to improve their research analysis and presentation skills. In many other subjects, the use of ICT is still limited as a teaching tool.
29. Most subjects use homework effectively to support class work. The quality of marking students' work is often good although there is some inconsistency in practice. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, ICT, mathematics and English, marking is conscientiously and regularly completed. In ICT and modern foreign languages, there are good examples of how more detailed marking can help students improve their work.
30. The quality of teaching for students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Learning support teachers and assistants provide sensitive help and useful advice for these students in some lessons. They know students' needs well and ask searching questions to check and develop their understanding. A few students are self-conscious about being supported in class. Support staff therefore avoid targeting them too obviously and work effectively with several students during the lesson. However, as at the time of the last inspection, there is insufficient liaison and joint planning of lessons between subject teachers and support staff. For example, a boy with literacy difficulties made little progress when the class was reading a play about Oedipus in a classics lesson. The reading level was much too difficult for him. The support teacher missed the opportunity to simplify the vocabulary and clarify the plot because she did not know what the subject teacher had planned to teach. A few students receive individual tuition to improve their literacy skills in the learning support base. Sometimes teachers challenge and interest students in these lessons by planning a variety of suitable activities that they base on their knowledge of these students' needs. However, some students were withdrawn from lessons for the first time during the week of the inspection. Teachers and support assistants did not assess their needs precisely. As a result, they set work that was too easy and students were not sure what they had to learn.
31. In mainstream lessons, teachers rarely adapt teaching resources such as worksheets to help students with special educational needs. However, these students learn well when teachers

give them extra, individual support in lessons. This is especially effective in music, physical education and ICT, when students are involved in practical activities.

32. The teaching of literacy and oracy is generally effective in most subjects although there is no explicit guide to good practice across the college. Different subjects emphasise accuracy in spelling technical terms and, in the better lessons, teachers use question and answer and discussion to that help develop oral skills. This is evident in English lessons but also the vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 where there is a focus on key skills. In English in particular, teachers make good use of questioning to probe students' thinking and extend their understanding and skills. By contrast, in mathematics there is little emphasis on developing language skills.
33. The teaching of numeracy and mathematical understanding is generally good although there are inconsistencies within the department and across the college. Some subject teachers are more effective in developing these basic skills. These include physical education, geography, design and technology and ICT in aspects such as data-handling and measurement. In mathematics, lessons have been positively influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy with activities that have built on earlier work in middle and primary schools. The good lesson activities ensured students are well motivated and helped further develop their basic skills.
34. Students with English as an additional language have good learning skills because teachers take account of their language levels in their planning. There is a good partnership between the specialist teacher and the subject teacher in many subjects.

### **Sixth form**

35. The overall standard of teaching in the sixth form is good in the way it has supported students' learning and contributed to the generally better than expected progress they make. In the 45 lessons and other work observed, two-thirds of teaching was good and a quarter of all teaching was very good. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory.
36. In almost every subject the standard of teaching is good and in history, ICT and sociology it is very good. Apart from the range of expertise and personal skills that most of the teachers share, there is a strong professional commitment to student learning and, in many cases, a very good teacher-student rapport. This is clearly recognised by the great majority of students who value the support they receive.
37. The specialist teaching is well informed and enables students to make good progress in developing their understanding. In subjects such as history, sociology and economics, students develop a sophisticated understanding of different theoretical models and concepts through the teachers' ability to elucidate and exemplify intellectually challenging ideas. This challenge is evident in most lessons although in most lessons teachers have high expectations of students, not only in the GCE courses but also in the vocational courses where students often achieve well in relation to their prior GCSE attainment. In general, students respond well to the concern teachers have for their progress in terms of effort and productivity.
38. Lessons in most subjects are generally well planned in terms of the intended learning outcomes and in the vocational courses there is a mix of teacher directed work and other activities where students are more actively involved in their learning. However, in too many other lessons the teacher's desire to sustain lesson pace and impart valuable information results in a number of unintended consequences. At times, as in English, there can be extended teacher exposition with too little time taken to involve students and ensure understanding. In biology, physical education, business studies and mathematics, the teachers' laudable efforts to provide structured information results in students being more passive and less independent learners. In some subjects, such as the GCE A/AS levels in business studies, the narrower range of teaching methods is related to the lack of accessible and more varied learning resources.
39. Even so, class management is often very good and teachers have developed increasingly effective means of monitoring and supporting student progress. Marking and assessment are

particularly good in the vocational courses where students know the required outcomes and their areas for improvement. The increased use of target setting is being well used in most subjects including history, chemistry and mathematics

40. Students on the special educational needs register learn well on GNVQ courses at Intermediate and Foundation level. Teachers set challenging work but they are aware of students' needs and give extra individual support when necessary, which enables them to succeed.
41. Provision for the teaching of key skills is satisfactory. It is well established on vocational courses, and accreditation is available in ICT and in the application of number. In ICT, provision is good and students learn to use computers in practical ways that will help them with their courses and prepare them for life after college. For example, in one lesson students were learning to look for cars for sale on the Internet and were using spreadsheets to see how long it would take them to save enough money to buy one. Provision in subject areas varies across the college. In English, communication skills are developed through discussions, and in French there is some good group work when students are practicing their oral skills. Number skills are developed in mathematics, and the majority of A-level students have adequate skills for the rest of their courses. In physical education, the results of questionnaires are analysed to produce averages and means, and in chemistry, there is well structured number work. However, opportunities to develop key skills in subject areas are not well signposted, and co-ordination is not fully effective.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

42. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 and post-16 meets the statutory requirements in offering a broad and relevant curriculum including a wide range of academic and vocational courses. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. In Key Stage 3, the statutory requirements are not met in design and technology because there are insufficient specialist teachers to deliver the prescribed curriculum and there is a lack of staff training and development for the technician and non-specialist staff. Art in Key Stage 3 is also restricted in terms of the breadth of opportunities students are given for working within different media. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced in Year 7 and schemes of work have been revised to match this framework. An amended version of the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced in Year 7, and a second foreign language in Year 9.
43. In Key Stage 4, a broad range of subjects is offered including an increasing range of work-related courses. Some split classes exist in mathematics with poor distribution of lessons across the week.
44. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available to the main school. This covers an extensive range of cultural, sporting, academic and leisure activities as well as study support. This supports personal development beyond the curriculum and is provided voluntarily by over 36 staff on a regular basis. Attendance by over 600 students indicates the success of this area. In addition, many school visits and longer trips are organised. Recent examples have included French exchanges, a North Wales trip, a canoeing trip to France, a classics trip to Greece, as well as Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and retreats. The large number of students involved in musical, dramatic, or sporting activities indicates that the college is offering an important opportunity for students to practise academic and personal skills learnt in the timetabled curriculum. An annual dramatic production and regular musical events are highlights of this programme.
45. All students complete a two-week work experience placement during Year 11, and preparation for this is a major component of the college's personal, social and health education programme. Its organisation is co-ordinated by senior staff and every student is visited by a member of staff at his placement. Debriefing exercises ensure that the optimum impact of work experience is emphasised in its learning outcomes and links into the curriculum. This is

an area of strength for the college, successfully engaging the whole of Year 11 in a work related activity.

46. Careers advice and guidance is provided in liaison with the local Connexions Service with a Careers Officer dedicated to the school completing both individual and group interviews with Years 9 to 11 students. This is a critical link in the options process in Year 9, and is successful in meeting students' needs. The college has developed excellent links with its neighbouring school and the post-16 consortium arrangements demonstrate this success. There are extensive links with local churches, local community links, and good links with feeder schools. Sporting links have also been developed locally in athletics, rugby, cricket, and golf to the benefit of students.
47. All students have personal, social and health education as part of their curriculum. This is taught weekly. The provision for this is good and fully reflects the ethos and values of the college. It makes a significant contribution to students' personal development, ensuring that specific issues, such as drugs and sex education, are taught in a sensitive and informative manner within the framework of Catholic teaching. The programme has been restructured since the previous inspection. Elements of citizenship are incorporated ahead of the legal requirements to do so. For example, the college held a shadow election last year at the time of the general election. Some aspects of the programme are successfully taught by outside speakers, such as those from the police force or the local health authority. Schemes of work and other supporting documentation are thorough and co-ordinated effectively by the teacher in charge of the subject. A wide range of topics is covered: these include human rights, bullying, democracy, pet care and a tour of the college chapel.
48. The contribution of the community to students' learning is very good. There are a number of sporting links with the local community, which are of direct benefit to students' athletics, rugby, cricket and golf. The local police, fire service, college nurse and ambulance service all support the work of the college. Students visit a number of local residential homes, the Merton Toy Library and the Wimbledon Guild to carry out community service. The college has very good business links, which are used with Trident to provide the very good work experience that is available to the students. Past students provide very good links for the college with the Red Cross, the Parish scouting movement and the venture scouts. This has enabled students to take part in overseas experiences. Links with the Catholic Church are also very good. The college has many overseas visitors through their links with the Missionary Headquarters. These lead to exchange visits for some of the students. The many and varied, local, national and international links which the college has developed over the years significantly enhance the quality of the curriculum.
49. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. A strong sense of the spiritual is woven into the everyday life of the college, and students have frequent and extensive opportunities for reflection on their own and other people's lives and beliefs. For example, there are regular retreats and days of reflection, which can be linked to particular stages of education, such as following work experience. Mass is said every morning, and is attended by up to forty students. There are daily acts of collective worship, in assemblies and in form tutor groups, and at these times spiritual insights are linked to moral and social issues, such as current conflicts in the world. There is a pattern and rhythm to the cycle of prayer through the year which reflects the life of the college, such as a welcome Mass held at the beginning of each year. Prayers are treated seriously and devoutly by students whether in assemblies or at the beginning of lessons. The work of the chaplaincy also makes a strong contribution to the spiritual life of the college, promoting the school's Catholic ethos at all levels with students and their families and with staff.
50. Provision for moral development is excellent. Clear moral values are expressed in the college's mission statement, which has been recently revised. This expresses a strong framework for all members of the school community to consider principles that distinguish between right and wrong. There is clear moral teaching through the religious education and the personal, social, and health education programmes, by promoting principles such as fairness, responsibility and honesty. For example, in a lesson on pregnancy, there was considerable stress placed on the shared responsibilities of parenthood, and there was a serious, mature

response from students in Year 9. All students study for the religious education GCSE examination, which considers moral issues as part of its coursework. Student involvement in charities is also very strong, and they help decide which charities the college will support. Assemblies are clearly focused, and are planned to cover a wide range of topics, including racial justice and tolerance and togetherness. Subject areas also make a significant contribution to moral development, for example in history, where prejudice and discrimination were examined in a lesson on the history of Northern Ireland

51. Provision for social development is excellent. The college encourages students to take responsibility and develop an understanding of living in a community in many ways. For example, there is a school council, which considers issues that students feel are important, and their views are given serious consideration in meetings with the headteacher twice a term. The college places great importance on the need to behave well in the locality, and this has a positive effect on students' attitudes. For example, members of the public recently telephoned the school to thank students for helping a sick person who was travelling on the train.
52. Provision for cultural development is very good. The school strives to develop an appreciation of students' own cultural traditions in many ways. In music, there is a good take-up of instrumental tuition, and there are three orchestras and five regular concerts through the year. The school fosters a respect for other cultures through its religious education programme and through the work of a number of subject departments, such as history, where lively discussions were seen in one lesson critically examining the history of the slave trade. In some subject areas, however, opportunities to celebrate the richness and diversity of different cultures are not always fully developed. A very good level of awareness of other cultures is also fostered by contact with other Jesuit schools around the world, including those in South America and India. The college seeks to prepare students for life in a multi-cultural society by stressing the importance of equal and fair treatment for all, and by valuing students as individuals. Strong staff commitment to this aim is seen in the recently formed ethnic minority awareness group which plans to involve students in its work in the very near future.
53. A particularly successful development enhancing the skills of gifted and talented students has been used in both Key Stage 4 and post-16. The college meets most of the requirements for students with special educational needs that are outlined in their statements. However, one boy does not receive the daily individual or small group tuition to which he is entitled. The college does not provide sufficient help for several students who have difficulty with reading, especially in Years 7 to 9. The present arrangements for withdrawing students for extra help with literacy skills lack flexibility. As a result, one student misses his only lesson of music of the week. Most boys on the special needs register are able to cope successfully with the full range of GCSE courses offered by the college. The college also provides appropriate alternative courses at Key Stage 4, such as Part One GNVQ and an option support course. The option support course helps boys with the study of their other courses. However, it requires further development. A lack of communication between departments means that teachers do not know enough about the work that boys are doing in other subjects. The course also lacks sufficient content to challenge students throughout Years 10 and 11.
54. The curriculum key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed with markedly improved provision for students with special needs. An improved policy towards achieving better equality of access and opportunity has been implemented.

### **Sixth form**

55. In the sixth form an increasingly large range of A/AS and vocational courses and retake GCSE courses are offered. This is effectively enhanced by the consortium arrangements with its partner school. One-year courses at Foundation and Intermediate level provide appropriate progression routes for some students. Curriculum 2000 has been successfully implemented with a wide range of AS courses which have been converted by the majority of students into A2 courses. This good range of curriculum provision is further enhanced by a good general studies course including religious education as a component, theology, games and other activities.



56. The personal development of sixth form students is further enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities building on the programme in the main school. The Leadership Challenge programme makes a useful contribution to extend opportunities for personal development. All GNVQ students have work experience built into the course and now A-level students are involved in a work-shadowing programme which builds on the main school work experience. This is a valuable contribution which enhances the student's work related experience. All students taking vocational courses complete key skills accreditation for communication, application of number, and information and communication technology. The college intends that all other students should work towards producing accreditation. However, while students' use of information and communication technology is strong, procedures for identifying and developing all three key skills in courses outside of vocational education are still limited.
57. Students receive considerable help in terms of higher education through special events and tutorial support although day-to-day access to specialist careers guidance and resources is more limited.
58. GNVQ courses at Foundation and Intermediate level provide suitable opportunities for students on the special needs register to continue their studies in the sixth form. For example, the college is developing effective links with the local college of further education to allow one student to follow an appropriate life skills course.
59. All students in the sixth form have personal, social and health education as part of their curriculum. This is taught weekly. The provision for this is good and fully reflects the ethos and values of the college which aim to develop mature, Christian adults. A wide range of topics is covered in the post-16 programme including issues such as racial justice, poverty, study skills, and the celebration of music. The programme is supported by a number of outside speakers, for example students in Year 13 are visited by a speaker from the Jesuit Alumni Association on the subject of a gap year.
60. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. The excellent planning and provision seen in the main school is still in evidence in the sixth form. Opportunities for students to reflect on their own and on other people's lives continue to be extensive and frequent. In addition, the work of the chaplaincy involves students in the sixth form in mentoring younger students, with the aim of being of service to them in promoting the school's Catholic ethos.
61. Provision for moral development is excellent. The general studies course has frequent planned opportunities for discussion on moral issues, and the A-level religious education course has a significant proportion of time devoted to the study of ethics. In addition, sixth formers increasingly take the lead in organising and delivering practical tasks which demonstrate moral and social commitment, for example, by working in soup kitchens.
62. Provision for social development is excellent. Students in the sixth form have increased opportunities for responsibility, and take leading roles in the life of the college by, for example, chairing the school council. In addition, there are opportunities to attend wider gatherings, such as the Global Young Leaders Conference in New York and Washington, recently attended by two students. The college continues to place great importance on the development of the ability to relate positively to others, and students were praised by visitors following a recent open evening.
63. Provision for cultural development is very good. For sixth form students there are increased opportunities to travel internationally in a gap year, taken up by some half-dozen students each year. There is a strong sense of partnership with the Jesuit community over the world, and the college regularly hosts visiting priests from other ethnic minority backgrounds. This makes a significant contribution to students' understanding of other cultures. A number of subject areas also make significant contributions to cultural development. For example, in sociology lessons students discuss religion and religious beliefs from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. There is also a planned programme of gallery visits in art, and students are keen to learn about both the European heritage and the art of other cultures. However, provision is rather uneven

across different subjects, and not all opportunities to celebrate the richness and diversity of different cultures are developed as well as they could be.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?**

64. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring students' welfare, health and safety are very good. The college has maintained the high standards of care reported in the last inspection. Form tutors are responsible for the day-to-day welfare of the students in their care and the effective use of tutor time each morning ensures that tutors know individual students well. Regular meetings between the form tutors and their respective heads of year allow staff to be well informed about any concerns that may be emerging. The heads of year meet weekly with a member of the senior management team. This ensures that effective monitoring is in place for all students.
65. Procedures for child protection are good. The college follows the local authority guidance and procedures meet requirements. The named person has been on the appropriate training. However, there is no recent history of staff training to increase their awareness of child protection issues. The college has very recently drawn up a draft policy on dealing with the new category of "Looked after children". But procedures and staff training are not yet in place. The college makes very good use of all outside agencies to provide a high level of care for all its students. The college is currently complying with current legislation to ensure there are police checks on all staff and volunteers.
66. The procedures for first aid are very good. Each member of staff has a list of students with medical conditions and allergies. Medication is stored in the general office and is only dispensed when parents give written consent. All first aid incidents are recorded and parents are informed if there are concerns. There are sufficient qualified first aiders and eight members of staff have a life saving qualification. All physical education teachers have attended a one-day first aid and resuscitation course. The college also buys in the services of St John Ambulance on a Saturday when sporting fixtures take place.
67. The procedures for health and safety are very good. There are regular risk assessments of the college premises and the caretaker and his assistant carry out all minor repairs. The local authority health and safety team carry out an annual audit of the premises and the college has implemented all the recommendations in the last report. Legal requirements are met with fire regulations but the college needs to address the issue of sixth form students not signing in and out. Legal requirements are met with portable appliance testing and the test of the internal wiring has been booked.
68. The college's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to college and are keen to attend. The youth counsellor monitors the registers on a daily basis and liaises with heads of year at break times. The college makes first day contact with parents of students who have not arrived at college. This is proving to be effective in improving the attendance of students. Truancy is identified very quickly and parents are fully involved by the college. Parents are informed when students arrive late. The attendance of students has steadily increased since the last report as a result of the very good procedures and the involvement of parents. The college works closely with the educational welfare officer who visits every two weeks. Special packages such as attending a course at college one day per week have been put in place for a few disaffected students. This has proved to be successful in bringing about improvements in their attendance.
69. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. The college has very clear guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour. Good behaviour and effort are rewarded and there are clearly identified sanctions for students who break the rules. All serious incidents are recorded centrally and are monitored by a member of the senior management team. This is very effective.
70. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. In discussions with students, particularly in the Years 7 and 8, there is a very strong message that

bullying is unacceptable. Students report that bullying is not an issue. The college provides a youth counsellor who is available during college time or after college to discuss any problems that a student may have. Sixth form prefects are involved in mentoring younger students and are teamed with vulnerable students who have had problems in the playground. Prefects and college council members are also available for students to talk through any concerns they may have. Form tutors reinforce the anti-bullying policy through tutor time and the personal, social and health education programme and year group assemblies are regularly used to reiterate the college policy on bullying. Students across the year groups report that bullying is not an issue and that staff will always listen and take action.

71. Procedures for monitoring students' personal development are very good. Students' records contain a range of academic and pastoral information. The college has very good monitoring procedures for all pastoral issues. Eighty Year 8 students were invited to attend the college for four weeks in June and July prior to their transfer in September. This ensures a smooth transfer from their middle college. Taster days are provided for other students before they transfer to the college and allow students to meet with their form tutor and head of year before entry to the college.

### ***Assessment***

72. The college's assessment and marking policies provide very clear guidance to departments on formulating their own assessment and practice. There is particularly good practice in ICT where students' strengths and weaknesses are carefully recorded. However, there are still some inconsistencies in how subject areas implement the whole school guidance, as for example, in art and in geography. While there is generally good individual guidance and support for students, with very frequent marking of their work, they are not always clear as to how they can make further progress.
73. Since the last inspection, the college has made good progress in developing its policy and practice in marking. In conjunction with the local education authority, the college has developed its monitoring of the students' achievements by ethnic group. With the planned expansion of the college, there are clear plans to extend its good assessment practice to Years 7 and 8.
74. Annual reviews of statements for students with special needs are carried out efficiently. Teachers, learning support assistants, parents and students are fully involved in the review of these students' progress. The college makes good use of extra help from a variety of outside agencies, notably the support service for hearing impaired students and the careers service. The careers service is efficient in making students aware of opportunities that are available to them when they leave college. The special needs co-ordinator has established clear procedures for identifying students with special educational needs as they enter the college. IEPs are written and reviewed for all students on the special needs register. They provide useful advice to teachers, although some students' targets are not always sufficiently specific to allow their progress to be measured. However, procedures for writing IEPs have improved since the last inspection.
75. The college has recently opened a learning opportunities base from its internal funds to support students with emotional and behaviour difficulties. Students are withdrawn from some lessons in which they have difficulties. Alongside counselling for these students from heads of year, the base is beginning to help some students to manage their own behaviour.

### **Sixth form**

#### ***Assessment***

76. Overall, the procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. At post-16, students benefit from the effective whole college systems, but in addition, the review points include interviews to which parents are invited. Very good links with the partner school contribute well to ensuring that students on both sites are effectively supported and monitored

in their academic work. The college has comprehensive information on individual students' earlier achievements. This is used to set potential targets for attainment grades at the end of the sixth form. However, there have been differences in the calculation of minimum target grades between the college and its partner sixth form institution. This is now being addressed with information from external tests to underpin target setting for individual students. There is also the recognition that overall academic monitoring procedures need to be better supported by more effective use of information technology.

77. Marking in many areas is developmental and formative and teachers prepare students well at the start of their AS and A2 courses. In history, business studies, ICT and mathematics, marking is of high quality and students' work is well annotated with formative guidance. It is less satisfactory in art. Most students are very positive about the guidance they receive from their tutors and teachers and feel that they are clear as to how they can improve their work.

### ***Advice, support and guidance***

78. The school provides very effective guidance and support for students throughout their stay in the sixth form. Pastoral tutors know the students well and the practice of keeping tutor groupings intact from Year 11 also helps sustain a strong group identity. The retention of school uniform and high school expectations about attendance and progress are balanced by the increased responsibilities of sixth form students as prefects, in running the school council and other social and sports activities. Students are very appreciative of the support they receive in the sixth form and show considerable autonomy in running some activities such as sports teams. Even so, some would like to have greater and more formal opportunities to help shape the running of the sixth form.
79. With over 80 per cent of students going into higher education the school organises a number of major events including whole day careers and higher education activities in Years 11 and 12 as well as a higher education evening for the benefit of parents and students. The tutors play an important part in giving general advice and helping students complete personal statements and there is an experienced and well regarded teacher who acts as higher education adviser. Despite this, a large majority of students felt that careers and higher education could be further improved in terms of the day-to-day accessibility of careers advice and resources.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

80. The vast majority of parents have very positive views of the college and are very satisfied with what it provides and achieves. A number of parents raised concerns about homework and the range of activities outside of lessons and would like more information about their child's progress. However, the inspection team judges that the use of homework to extend students' learning is very good. The college is currently reviewing the format of students' annual written reports to provide parents with more detailed information on their child's progress in each subject area. The inspection team judged that there is a very good range of activities outside of lessons and these include residential trips and field trips. The college works very closely with parents when there are concerns about behaviour, attendance or academic progress.
81. The college has very good links with parents, which are effective. The youth counsellor makes home visits when there are concerns about a student's attendance at college. Form tutors and heads of year are regularly in contact with parents when there are pastoral or academic concerns. Parents work in partnership with the college and are very supportive in encouraging their children to succeed. The attendance of parents at parent consultation evenings is very good.
82. The college provides parents with the college handbook. This is well presented and contains very detailed information on all the college routines and policies. Newsletters and the college magazine are very well produced and informative.
83. There is a wide variation in the quality of information on a student's progress in reports. Many reports do not identify what students know, understand and can do and the targets are not

always appropriate. Comments are often pastoral and do not identify academic strengths and weaknesses. There are, however, some very good examples of student annual reports in Year 10, particularly in English and science, which clearly identify strengths, weaknesses and explaining what students know, understand and can do. There is one formal parent-teacher consultation meeting per year for each year group. Some parents would like more opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss their son's progress and the way that setting is arranged.

84. Parental involvement in children's learning is very good. The college routines are explained to parents at an early stage. Parents are supportive of the college rules. The Friends Association raises a considerable amount of amount of money each year and the college always provides information on what the funds have been used for.
85. The special needs department works closely with parents. Parents of students with statements are provided with good information about their child's needs and progress. Teachers listen carefully and respond to parents' views, especially when statements are reviewed each year.

### **HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?**

86. The leadership of the headteacher is a real strength for the college. He provides a clear educational vision which is shared with staff, governors, parents and students. The college's Jesuit mission is at the heart of his vision. The college is making good progress in seeking to build a community in which all follow the person of Jesus through prayer and reflection;
  - there is a high value placed on personal, cultural and sporting development;
  - all are challenged to fulfil their potential;
  - all feel welcome, settled and secure and place their talents at the service of those who need them;
  - everyone's talents and needs are effectively met.
87. Standards are rising and, since the previous inspection, the college has grown by nearly 50 per cent and is now oversubscribed. The headteacher, staff and governors are successfully managing the complex staffing, accommodation and curriculum issues associated with its continuing transition from a 13-18 to an 11-18 school.
88. Clear line management responsibilities have been assigned to senior and middle managers. The senior management team form a cohesive and effective team. It works hard to involve staff and governors in decision-making, consultations, planning and review. There is a good pattern of staff consultation meetings. All senior staff participate with teachers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, standards and other aspects of provision. The college spends considerable time and effort in analysing public examination results to evaluate the comparative performance of subjects. Monitoring and support of teaching and learning has been a high priority for senior staff. There is a comprehensive timetable of lesson observations supported by appropriate in-service training on observation and feedback for heads of department.
89. The college is committed to continuous improvement and the main priorities are clearly articulated in its development plan. The key educational priorities are drawn up following a review of the previous development plan and through discussions with key groups of staff and governors. Priorities take into account national initiatives as well as immediate college priorities. The development plan rightly builds on the success of the rising achievement at Key Stage 4 programme of the previous year. It also sets out an appropriate response to national requirements for a Key Stage 3 strategy for the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and for the introduction of A2 courses in the second year of the sixth form. The major target is properly identified as the successful reorganisation of the school in September 2002 as a school catering for the full range of 11-18 students. Senior managers and staff are aware of the priorities and incorporate them into their departmental and pastoral development plans. The college is coping very well with the disruption to normal routine caused by the extensive new buildings programme associated with reorganisation.

90. Overall, heads of department provide good professional leadership but the quality of leadership and effectiveness vary. Heads of faculty generally provide good leadership and management but there are weaknesses. In art, there is a lack of urgency in the work of the department which is reflected in the weaknesses in teaching. The joint management of the design and technology department is unusual but is effectively raising standards and improving the curriculum provision. In mathematics, good leadership ensures high expectations of student performance and achievement. The pastoral team is very effective in providing good support and care.
91. The recently appointed head of special needs provides good leadership for the department. Good progress has been made during the last two terms in the development of the college's special needs policy. This now meets most of the requirements of the Code of Practice. The head of department has a clear vision for the further development of special needs provision and has identified several appropriate priorities. However, the college development plan makes no reference to special educational needs. The college does not explain how resources are allocated among students with special educational needs, apart from those with statements. As a result, the governing body's annual report to parents does not comment on the effectiveness of its policy and provision. Staffing and other resources are adequate for the needs of students with statements, but insufficient for the requirements of other students with special needs. For example, there are inadequate resources for teaching basic literacy skills in the special needs department. In this respect, there has been no improvement since the last inspection.
92. Governors provide very good support to the headteacher and staff. Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience. The governing body plays an active role in strategic planning, critical support and monitoring and evolution. Positive relations and mutual trust exist between the governing body and the senior management team. Formal links with heads of faculty are well established and enable the governors to have a good understanding of the college.
93. Procedures for financial management and control are effective and efficient. Governors exercise responsible oversight of the college's income and expenditure. They are actively involved in scrutinising and agreeing budget allocations. Governors apply most effectively the principles of compare, challenge, consult and compete to ensure good value for money. Government grants for the National Grid for Learning and Standards Fund are managed efficiently. The college has restructured the site and administration teams in order to manage the complex reorganisation and new building programme. A member of the senior management team carries out a detailed and effective overview of the financial implications of these two major developments. The administrative support from the office is skilful and efficient.
94. The college has sufficient well-qualified staff. The match of staffing levels, qualifications and experience is good across the college. There is a weakness in design and technology at Key Stage 3 where non-specialists are limited in the topics they can teach. The staff development programme is satisfactory. The college's emphasis on preparing for reorganisation and on developing an effective internal monitoring and evaluation procedure has limited the extent to which teachers have had access to good practice elsewhere. There has been good external input from the college's link adviser on value-added approaches and on lesson observation. Teachers new to the college, including newly qualified teachers, receive a good induction programme. Professional development days are well planned. Overall, there is a need for members of staff to have more chance to benefit from appropriate training linked to performance management.
95. The building work currently underway for a new sports hall, computer centre and learning resources centre will be a significant addition to the college's specialist facilities. These are due for completion before September 2002. It significantly improves provision particularly for students' independent learning. However, accommodation is cramped because of the rapid growth in sixth form numbers and the projected increase in Key Stage 3 students because of reorganisation. Many classrooms are too small and generally inadequate for large classes. The specialist drama and music studios are small and inadequate.

96. In most subjects, there is a good range of learning resources available. In mathematics and in science, there are insufficient resources for practical work by students. The library is small; this has been recognised by the college and the new learning resource centre will be a considerable asset in raising the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

97. The sixth form is well led and managed. The senior management team works closely with their head of sixth form and heads of faculty to monitor the growth and development of a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Student performance is monitored closely. Relationships between the college and its sister school are good and enhance the quality of the joint curriculum provision.
98. Induction procedures for sixth form students are good. Transition from Year 11 into Year 12, and for students new to the college, is well managed. As a result of the guidance they receive most students choose combinations of subjects which are relevant to their preferences and aspirations. Few students drop out of their post-16 courses. The quality of sixth form provision is attracting an increasing number of students into the college from other high schools.
99. Financial planning is good. The sixth form is cost effective, gives good value for money and does not draw resources away from Key Stages 3 and 4. The deployment of teaching staff is good across subjects. The range and quality of learning resources are satisfactory. The current library is inadequate but the new learning resource centre under construction will enable sixth form students to pursue research more effectively in college. Existing learning resources are used effectively to support learning in most subjects. Overall, accommodation is inadequate for the increasing numbers of post-16 students.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

100. In order to raise levels of attainment and improve the quality of education in the college, the governors, senior management team and teaching staff need to:
- (1) Improve the application of students' ICT skills in all subjects by:
    - analysing schemes of work in all subjects for appropriate opportunities;
    - timetabling subject use of the rooms to fit in with these opportunities;
    - monitoring the impact of the programme through the evaluation of teaching and learning and performance management.

*(Paragraphs – 7, 26, 28, 39, 113, 123, 136, 150-1, 167, 170, 182)*
  - (2) Improve the provision of design and technology in Years 7-9 and encourage the greater take-up of GCSE courses by:
    - Ensuring there are sufficient specialist and retrained staff;
    - Expanding accommodation and resources;
    - Increasing the amount of overall lesson time in Key Stage 3;
    - Continuing to develop more challenging and interesting schemes of work in years 7-9.

*(Paragraphs – 5, 25, 27, 42, 94, 143, 146)*
  - (3) Raise attainment and achievement in art and design in all years by:
    - improving the quality of teaching and learning by increasing pace and challenge in lessons;
    - providing more opportunities for experimenting with materials;
    - providing more opportunities for students to use ICT;
    - Encouraging students to paint and draw on a larger scale.

*(Paragraphs – 4-6, 11, 25, 72, 77, 90, 135-140)*

- (4) Improve provision for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills by:
- applying a consistent college policy across all departments;
  - improving the partnership between teachers and support teachers in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs.

*(Paragraphs – 7, 30, 53, 91, 117-8, 134)*

- (5) When opportunities arise, improve classroom provision and accommodation.

*(Paragraphs – 95, 99, 116, 184, 192)*

- (6) The college needs also to address the following issue:

- ensure that written reports to parents indicate more clearly what students need to do to improve their work.

*(Paragraph – 83)*

### **Sixth form**

- (1) Build on the good work in the vocational courses by identifying and developing key skills for all students.

*(Paragraphs – 41, 56)*

- (2) Make more effective use of management information systems to support the otherwise good monitoring of attendance and academic progress.

*(Paragraph 76)*

- (3) Provide better access to day-to-day specialist careers guidance and resources.

*(Paragraphs – 57, 79)*

- (4) Improve students' independent learning skills by broadening the range of teaching and learning strategies and providing greater opportunities for resource-based learning.

*(Paragraph 38)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	120
	Sixth form	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		53

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 - 11</b>							
Number	1	20	39	53	7	0	0
Percentage	1	17	33	44	5	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	0	15	25	17	1	0	0
Percentage	0	26	43	29	2	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number observed in either the main school or the sixth form is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for [enter Years [ ] – [ ] and/or the sixth form here] as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100 in both, use only the first sentence.]*

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	895	286
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	82	0

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	190	26

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	175

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	7.7

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	265	n/a	265

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	189	205	192
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	189	205	192
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (73)	79 (76)	72 (68)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	38 (13)	54 (47)	39 (30)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	181	189	199
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	181	189	199
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (74)	71 (53)	75 (59)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (20)	50 (28)	34 (27)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	206	n/a	206

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	96	196	202
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	96	196	202
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	47 (52)	95 (94)	98 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41
	National	38.4

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	n/a

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	85	n/a	85

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.6	n/a	18.6	3.7	n/a	3.7
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	10
	National	80

International Baccalaureate	Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0
	National	76.5

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	23
Black – African heritage	79
Black – other	30
Indian	38
Pakistani	32
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	20
White	869
Any other minority ethnic group	91

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	63
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	1:18

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	339

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76%
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	25.3
Key Stage 4	23.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	36.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	7	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	26	0
Other minority ethnic groups	10	0

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	2,987,116
Total expenditure	3,062,189
Expenditure per student	2,746
Balance brought forward from previous year	122,462
Balance carried forward to next year	47,389

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1181
Number of questionnaires returned	458

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	49	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	38	52	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	47	6	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	12	2	2
The teaching is good.	36	54	4	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	13	3	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	38	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	43	12	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	56	39	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	41	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	10	1	7

### Other issues raised by parents

- Parents were pleased with the college's approach to age of transfer reorganisation.

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Attainment in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average.
- Attainment in English literature GCSE is well above average.
- Teaching is good.
- The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 are enthusiastic about reading.

#### Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of students of all attainment levels.
- Schemes of work include little reference to ICT.

101. Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 3 in National Curriculum tests in 2000 was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar colleges. The percentage of students attaining the higher levels was also above what is found nationally. The test results for 2001 show a rise in both the percentage of students attaining the expected level and those attaining the higher level. There has been a considerable overall improvement in the average points scored by students in these tests since 1996 and these have risen above the national score. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national average.
102. Students make good use of opportunities for discussion, learning by listening to the views of others and comparing them with their own. For example, lower attaining students studying "Of Mice and Men" made progress in their understanding of the theme of prejudice through an examination of this in a whole class discussion. Most students speak clearly and confidently, avoiding the use of colloquialisms.
103. The standard of reading aloud is generally good. All students read accurately and most read fluently and with good expression. Students are enthusiastic about their reading and have developed mature tastes. They respond thoughtfully to their reading in class. Students show that they are able to look beyond basic meaning to consider the way in which the writer uses rhythm and imagery to enhance the theme. Students study poetry from a range of poets and periods and comment confidently on the way that the poets use rhyme. Most students have a clear grasp of at least the basic vocabulary of literary criticism.
104. The spelling, punctuation and grammar of nearly all students is consistently accurate although there is evidence that when students use unusual words, or words that are new to them, they guess their spelling rather than use a dictionary to check them. Most students have a clear, confident written style and a varied vocabulary which they use effectively
105. The percentage of students attaining grades A\*-C and A\*-G in their English GCSE in 2000 was close to the national average. This represents a significant dip in attainment since the previous year when attainment was above the national average, and this was followed by a similar rise in attainment in 2001. Most students did less well in English in 2000 than they did in their other subjects. In English literature, which is taken by approximately two-thirds of students, the percentage who attained grades A\*-C was considerably higher than that attained nationally, as was the percentage who attained the two highest grades, A\* and A. This percentage fell in 2001 but remained high. Most students who take English literature do better in this than in their other subjects. Evidence of attainment seen during the course of the inspection confirms that attainment in English literature is well above what is seen nationally.

106. Students express their ideas clearly and confidently. They use discussion as a valuable learning tool in order to review and extend their knowledge and understanding. A group of students in Year 11 preparing a written assignment on "Twelfth Night" used good discussion skills, listening and responding perceptively to the ideas of others, in order to extend their understanding and clarify their opinions.
107. Students show familiarity with their texts and across the attainment range they have a clear understanding of plot and character. Lower attainers were able to correctly identify prejudice and revenge as two of the major themes in "The Merchant of Venice". They referred in simple terms to incidents in the play despite most of the group finding the language of the play particularly challenging. Higher attainers make clear links between their texts and the contextual background and use this to enhance their understanding.
108. Overall, students' vocabulary is good and is at least adequate to meet the demands of the subject at GCSE level. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally accurate across the attainment range. Students usually vary the structure and length of their sentences in order to make their writing interesting. Most students have a clear style, while higher attainers develop a mature and fluent personal style. Most students can make their own notes, although a minority find this difficult. All students plan what they want to write, with many students making good use of drafting skills.
109. Students achieve well in Key Stage 3, particularly in the use of accurate spelling and punctuation and in their response to literature, where they develop the basic skills and vocabulary of literary criticism. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good. At Key Stage 4, students achieve satisfactorily. They start their GCSE courses with generally above average attainment and make satisfactory progress in developing the knowledge and understanding that is required at that level. They acquire secure knowledge of their texts and develop a written style which enables them to express complex ideas and opinions. This represents in both key stages a maintenance of the standards reported in the previous inspection.
110. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Just under a third of the teaching seen was very good and enabled students to achieve well. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is good. The good teaching supports the progress of students towards meeting the requirements of two demanding examination courses and in gaining, particularly in the case of English literature, a high level of success. Standards of teaching have been maintained since the previous inspection.
111. Teachers' lesson plans are usually brief, and have clear objectives for their lessons. Teachers know what they expect students to achieve during the time available. They share these with the students who work hard to meet these expectations. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this to enrich the learning experience of students. In one lesson on the use of rhyme and rhythm the teacher was able to make interesting and knowledgeable reference to a wide range of poetry, and students made very good progress in their appreciation of the richness of their literary heritage. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when some teachers in the department were not English specialists. Teachers make good use of questioning to maintain students' concentration by probing their thinking and challenging them to extend their understanding. On these occasions, students rise to the challenge by thinking and working hard to meet their teachers' expectations. Teachers' explanations are very clear and so ensure that all students understand complex and elusive ideas. Teachers do not usually plan a range of activities or resources sufficiently to meet the needs of all students across the ability range. Most classes cover a wide ability range and, on occasions, some students are faced with tasks which are too difficult for them or for which they have not received sufficient support. In such lessons, students lose their interest and motivation. Teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of teaching and learning activities and passive activities, such as copying from the board or reading round the class continue for too long. On these occasions, a number of students make little progress.
112. In both key stages teachers have good understanding of the requirements of students with special educational needs and know what is specified on their IEPs. Teachers are aware of students who use English as an additional language. Although teachers do not usually offer a

range of learning tasks to meet the special or language acquisition needs of their students, they do offer additional support to these students in order to ensure that the tasks are made accessible to them.

113. The management of the department is satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and includes regular additional lessons for students who have been identified as needing additional support during the final preparations for their GCSE. There is a good range of departmental policies, which support the college policies. However, the policy on ICT is very brief and gives little guidance on the department's role in this area of the curriculum. Students frequently use word processing skills in the presentation of their written work but schemes of work do not identify when the teaching of ICT skills would be appropriate. Insufficient progress has been made in the use of ICT since the previous inspection report. There are clear and comprehensive policies for marking and the assessment of work and these are consistently carried out in practice. The head of department carries out the monitoring of teaching in the classroom regularly and this is documented very thoroughly. The department has satisfactory resources and is able to offer all students a rich and varied experience of literature. A particular strength is the comprehensive anthology of poetry compiled for use in the college and of which all students have experience.

### **Drama**

114. The attainment of students who take drama as a GCSE subject is very low. This is largely because they have very limited experience of drama during Key Stage 3 and therefore have few drama skills on which to build at the start of Key Stage 4. The lack of experience of drama in Key Stage 3 was commented on in the previous inspection report. Additionally, students who do not start a formal drama course until the age of 14 have natural reticence and self-consciousness to overcome before they are able to take advantage of the course.
115. The teaching of drama is good. The teacher uses a wide range of techniques and activities to build self-confidence and understanding of the basic techniques. Students are enthusiastic and work hard, making good progress. However, the late start which students make in the subject means that they have too much lost ground to make up before their examination.
116. The accommodation and resources available for drama are unsatisfactory. The drama studio is very cramped and is also used for storing other equipment. There are few facilities for lighting or sound and this is a barrier to students' achievement.

### **Literacy**

117. Strategies for the teaching of literacy skills are satisfactory. The college has no co-ordinator or college policy for literacy, although all staff have received a small amount of in-service training on literacy strategies. Departments do not consistently offer to students a bank of vocabulary and spellings which are specific to each subject.
118. The lack of an overall college policy on the teaching of literacy means that there is some inconsistency of practice between departments. Despite this, the skills of literacy and oracy are used effectively in a range of the subjects of the curriculum. For example, in history students write well in response to a variety of assignments and have very good opportunities to develop their writing skills. In physical education, students use good spelling, punctuation and grammar when making well-presented notes. In art, students write both short notes and longer pieces of art criticism on, for example, the work of Salvador Dali. In many departments, good emphasis is placed on the correct use and spelling of technical terms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths
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- The students' results in the national tests at the end of Year 9, and in GCSE mathematics, are above average.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive influence on teaching and learning in Years 7 and 8.
- There is a good match of teachers to the needs of the mathematics curriculum.
- Teachers manage students' behaviour well so that they are able to apply themselves conscientiously to their work in mathematics.
- Students take pride in the presentation of their mathematics.

#### Areas for improvement

- In some lessons, students have too few opportunities to learn through a broad range of activities, including oral work.
- There are insufficient practical resources, including ICT, to widen students' experiences and understanding of mathematics.
- As yet, there is no planned college programme to enhance and use students' numeracy skills across the whole curriculum.

119. On entry to the college, students' attainment in mathematics is above average. By the age of 14, students' attainment is well above average overall. There has been an improving trend in the standards reached in the national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 9. Given their starting points, this represents above average achievement for most students. There were no significant variations in the results of students from different minority ethnic groups. Provisional mathematics test results for 2001 indicate a further rise in the proportion of the college's students achieving Level 5 or better. Mathematics results in the national tests were better than those of English and science. They were well above those of similar colleges.
120. In the 2000 GCSE mathematics results, the proportion of the college's students achieving grades A\*-C was above average. The percentage of students achieving the higher A and A\* grades was double that nationally. Based on the students' achievements at the end of Year 9, the results were close to those found in similar colleges. Mathematics results were again above those of English and science. There were no significant variations in the results of students from different ethnic minority groups. The 2001 GCSE mathematics results were higher than those of the previous year, continuing the upward trend in mathematics.
121. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment by the end of Year 9 is well above average. Higher attainers have very good numerical skills and are confident in using a range of mental methods in their calculations. Their manipulative algebra skills are strong. They recognise, for example, equivalent expressions in a variety of forms. They can work systematically and identify patterns in their investigative tasks. However, they are not always able to explain their generalisations as fully as they should. Average attaining students have good number and other mechanical mathematical skills. They are sometimes uncertain as to how to apply these skills in non-routine questions which test their deeper conceptual understanding. They do not always interpret information accurately; in scatter graphs, for example, and in more complex angle work, they sometimes fail to see the underlying patterns. Some lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, show confusion when choosing which operation to use to solve a problem. Nevertheless, they are competent in working with simple bearings and compass directions as well as with data collection tasks and calculations.
122. By the end of Year 11, the standards the students achieve in their work are above average. Able students have very good problem-solving strategies and are able to use their algebraic skills well in finding generalisations. They sometimes lack experience of explaining how their solutions relate to the physical problem. Some higher order algebraic skills, such as algebraic fractions, are not clearly understood by some of these students. Some average attainers can adopt an algebraic approach early in their investigative tasks but their notation is sometimes inaccurate and limits the quality of their work. Nevertheless, they have good numerical and data handling skills. Students ask very perceptive questions, as in the Year 10 lessons involving more complex estimating skills. They benefit greatly from the careful presentation of their work. Lower attainers, as well as those with special educational needs, work systematically, breaking down their work into simpler steps, and tabulating their results. They

make sensible predictions as to possible patterns, and to test their results. Although their basic number work is sound, they do not always fully understand the order in which to perform some calculations, and some still confuse area and perimeter.

123. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good, though there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within the department. There were a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. The best lessons are carefully structured and provide good differentiated activities for students, as in the Year 7 lessons observed. These lessons were positively influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy initiative. As a result, the students were well motivated, actively involved in the lessons, and persevered with challenging work. In other good lessons teachers' secure mathematical knowledge, as well as their very good management of students' behaviour, combined to create a scholarly ethos in which students concentrated well. Most teachers plan the content of their lessons carefully, but less often consider a range of activities to help students' mathematical understanding. There is little emphasis on language skills in mathematics, and almost no use of ICT and other practical resources. As a result, some students have a very restricted experience of mathematics and achieve less in GCSE examinations than might be expected, given their achievement in Year 9. In some lessons, teaching objectives and learning outcomes are not clearly distinguished so that there are missed opportunities to assess and record students' strengths and weaknesses. Homework is set regularly and well used to consolidate or extend students' work in college. The marking of students' work is conscientious and very frequent, but does not always guide students on how to make further progress.
124. Since the last inspection, progress within the mathematics department is satisfactory. The students' attainment has improved at the end of both Years 9 and 11. The good leadership of the department has ensured the maintenance of high expectations of both students and teachers, while at the same time initiating recent positive changes in teaching through the National Numeracy initiative. However, the department still lacks practical resources, including ICT, to widen the range of learning opportunities offered to the students in mathematics. This, combined with too few external training opportunities, has hindered the consistency of improvements in teaching.

### **Numeracy**

125. There is good provision within mathematics to develop students' numeracy skills. The department is making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to develop existing number skills in Years 7 and 8. Other than within mathematics, however, there is limited planned use and support for numeracy. As yet, there is no policy or co-ordinated programme across the curriculum to enhance and use students' skills.
126. Students' standards of attainment in numeracy are above average. Year 7 have benefited from their experience of the National Numeracy Strategy in primary schools, and overall they show good facility in their calculations. Two groups observed showed confidence in dealing with fractions and their equivalent forms. In other year groups, including those at post-16, students' numeracy skills support their work well in all subjects. They use calculators efficiently and sensibly.
127. Students use their numerical skills effectively in art. Their geometric designs are carefully drawn and measured. They make sensible estimates of proportions in drawing plant forms and animal skulls. Data-handling skills are well used by students in developing their personal fitness programmes in physical education and to enhance their coursework in geography. In science, students gather and read experimental data accurately, and analyse their results with care. Their algebraic skills facilitate their use of formulae in physics and chemistry. Basic numeracy skills are well taught in ICT to assist students' work in database design.

### **SCIENCE**

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Standards are improving in both key stages.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject.
- Teachers' classroom management skills are good and have a positive influence on students' learning.
- Higher attainers achieve well.

#### Areas for improvement

- A greater range of teaching and learning styles in lessons.
- The use of assessment data to support the learning of individual students.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy in science.
- The use of ICT in the curriculum.

128. Students enter the college with above average attainment levels. Their attainment in science compares favourably with that of other subjects in the college, but overall is below that in mathematics. Students attain above average results in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations by the end of Key Stage 4. Year 7 students have a good understanding of the solar system and produce good quality imaginative designs for "planetary rovers". Year 8 students show a good understanding of gut structure and discuss their work with confidence. Year 9 students understand cells, genes and inheritance. A number of Year 9 students lack the basic understanding in some aspects of science, such as electrical circuits, because they arrive at college with varied experiences of primary and middle school science programmes of study.
129. Key Stage 3 results over the last three years have been above the average and well above average for similar schools. The rising trend in standards is in line with the rising trend nationally. The local education authority's analysis for the Key Stage 3 test results in 2001 shows that most students achieved well when compared with their Key Stage 2 test scores in Year 6.
130. GCSE results in 2000 were below average and, overall, students' achievement was unsatisfactory. In 2001, there was a significant improvement both in physics and chemistry with all students entered achieving A\*-C grades. Biology results were also above national averages. Double award science results were close to the average. However, in the 2001 GCSE examinations, students made good progress when compared with their average point scores in the Key Stage 3 tests two years earlier. Higher attainers are entered for the all three separate sciences and achieved well above average grades. Students entered for the GCSE double award science make satisfactory progress. Low attainers entered for GCSE single science generally make satisfactory progress when compared with their attainment levels on entry to the college.
131. In Key Stage 4, the work of higher attainers is well above average and they achieve well. Students discuss their work clearly as, for example, in their work on enzymes and in calculating bond energies. They explain well the role and types of electrical safety devices. Students' understanding of the components of the blood system is good and they contribute well to class discussion on this topic. Lower attainers show a lack of conceptual understanding as, for example, in a lesson on enzymes where students were unsure what amylase actually was and where it was found. Students have a limited understanding of how their learning in science relates to the real world. For example, students working in a lesson on propane combustion energies did not know what propane was; students understood the role of the earth connection in electrical safety but did not know where the earth wire was attached inside apparatus.
132. Teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Overall, students show very good attitudes to learning. Teachers have a secure understanding of their subject. Good lessons start with questions and answers that probe students' understanding and remind them of earlier work. New work is challenging and is delivered with a good pace. Explanations are clear and logical; for example in a lesson on calculating bond energies where students were led expertly through from basic chemical formulae to fully balanced equations and then shown how to work out the

reaction energy balance. In good lessons, students are involved in their learning as, for example, when they prepare displays and explain their findings to the class. A range of teaching and learning methods further enhances lessons that are good or very good. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the teacher talks for too long and this slows the pace of learning. In such lessons there is also a lack of interesting stimulus material and students' practical work is weak.

133. The department reflects the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural lead evident in the college. It contributes its membership of the college Ethnic Awareness Group to the wider curriculum. Basic skills are taught satisfactorily in science lessons although the skills and strategies used were not consistent between teachers. All teachers use the departmental marking scheme and work is marked up to date. Marking of students' work is not always sufficiently clear on what students need to do to improve their work.
134. Leadership and management of the department are good. Monitoring of teachers by senior staff is supportive and has enabled teachers to take a consistent line on a number of college policies including rewards and sanctions. The departmental development plan is sensible, straightforward and manageable. There is a need to work on making better use of assessment data, on developing schemes of work further and on the departmental approaches to literacy and numeracy. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and standards have improved significantly in the last two years. New learning resources enable teachers to set work that is more closely matched to students' needs. Computer resources have been recently increased but their use in the department is not widespread. Technical support is of good quality.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Students draw confidently from observation.
- Lessons are well prepared.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards are lower than they should be, and students' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- There is not enough use of ICT.
- There is not enough experimentation with materials.

135. By the age of 14, standards are below national expectations. Teacher assessments for 2000 and 2001 confirm this, and similar standards are seen in the work in the college. In GCSE examinations, attainment is well below the average for boys. Results in 2000 show standards below the national average for boys, with two-fifths of students gaining grades at A\*-C against a national average for boys of one-half. Inspection evidence shows standards to be well below average, and 2001 results show similar standards, having fallen since the previous year.
136. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Students come to the college in Years 7, 8 and 9, which means that less time is available to teach some of the groups before they reach the end of Year 9. However, in their time studying art and design they do not make enough progress. They do not improve their skills in using materials enough, and at the age of 14 standards are below average. Students can produce work in two and three dimensions, using, for example, pencil, chalk, pastel, card and relief prints. As a result, some bright prints are seen, based on the study of natural forms, which show a carefully considered use of warm and cool colours. However, they lack confidence in painting, and there is very little evidence of its use in their folders of work. Average and below average attainers show a crude use of line in their drawing and their three-dimensional work is sparse. In addition, there is very little use of ICT to support and extend their work.

137. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory, when the work of students at the age of 16 is compared to their work at the age of 14. They gain confidence in working in pencil, and some competent observation drawings based on the study of bones and animal skulls are seen as a result. However, they lack confidence in experimenting with materials, and they do not use their sketchbooks to do this. Too much of their work is not ambitious enough, and is on too small a scale. In addition, their research skills are weak, and their investigations of the work of other artists do not have sufficient impact on their own work. Students with special educational needs achieve at an unsatisfactory level due to the weaknesses in the teaching.
138. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11. In the best lessons there is a good match of materials and methods to the attainment and interest level of students. For example, in a lesson on printing, students showed real enjoyment and good levels of engagement, and were keen to begin using the rollers and brightly coloured inks. Learning was good as a result. Lessons are also well prepared, and teachers are very encouraging. However, there are very limited opportunities for experimenting with materials. Too much of the work set is on too small a scale and is not challenging enough. In addition, the pace in too many lessons is slow, and students talk off-task, without trying as hard as they should. These factors produce an unsatisfactory level of learning.
139. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards in Years 7 to 9 have fallen, and are now below average. Results at GCSE are also falling, and the work in the college is well below average. In addition, achievement in Years 7 to 11 is now unsatisfactory.
140. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Policies and procedures for the management of the subject are thorough, and new members of staff feel supported and valued. However, there is a lack of a sense of urgency in the work of the department, reflected in the weaknesses in the teaching. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, and standards and achievement are falling.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The recently appointed specialists provide committed and effective teaching.
- The structured learning in GCSE courses has contributed to the rising standards.
- There have been improvements in the workshop environment and the development of ICT resources.

#### Areas for improvement

- There is a lack of sufficient curriculum time to deliver the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum programme of study.
- Too few Year 10 students benefit from a worthwhile design and technology experience.
- There are insufficient specialist teachers to deliver the prescribed curriculum and there is a lack of staff training and development for the technician and non-specialist staff teaching in Key Stage 3.
- There is a lack of consumable resources to support student learning and insufficient accommodation for the size of the college although the latter will be resolved in the next year with the additional lower college site.

141. In the last inspection report there were a number of weaknesses in provision leading to low standards. There has been considerable recent improvement in the subject's teaching and management that has raised standards for the minority who take the subject at GCSE and has begun to improve the Key Stage 3 curriculum, but there are still considerable weaknesses to be addressed.
142. The college provided a mix of full and short courses in 2000 and in that year standards were very low with 18 per cent of students gaining GCSE grades A\*-C. In 2001, as a result of new staff appointments, standards in the full courses improved to be close to the national average with 48 per cent of students gaining grades A\*-C. Results in the short course continued to be low.
143. In lessons and work seen, standards in Year 9 are well below national average. Students have some knowledge of mechanisms and structures and, when given the opportunity, demonstrate competent graphical skills. However, design awareness is lacking and practical making skills are limited. Achievement in terms of students reaching standards in line with expectations is unsatisfactory. Many students enter the college as late as the start of Year 9 with little or no experience of design and technology and the lack of specialist staff and insufficient curriculum time results in too few reaching national standards.
144. Standards in Year 11 are close to national average within the two courses of graphic products and resistant materials. Students have strengths in graphical drawing and presentation that enhance a less secure grasp of design. In the major projects, the design outcomes are modest though higher attaining students have stronger research skills and make effective use of ICT in folder work. With structured support, most students demonstrate sound skills in modelling and construction. This support ensures achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good in terms of the progress students make compared to their standards at the start of those courses. However, over half of Year 10 students are allowed to pursue other GCSE and GNVQ courses and so make no further progress in this area of the curriculum.
145. Historically the subject has not been highly valued in the college and this has affected GCSE recruitment although there is evidence of improving student attitudes. In lessons most students enjoy their work and many use the lunch break and after college opportunities to complete their project work.
146. Two specialist and two non-specialist teachers teach design and technology. Teaching in the GCSE courses is by specialists and is good or better. The main strengths are the specialist knowledge that assists in developing students' understanding of the design process, the development of skills, particularly in graphics where staff have considerable strengths, and high expectations and effective class management that ensure students usually work well and show care in presentation. Much of the teaching in Years 7 to 9 is by non-specialists and is satisfactory in terms of its organisation and class management. However, much of the learning is unsatisfactory, hampered by the lack of time and resources as well the need to limit activities to those that can be taught by non-specialists. Those activities are often not challenging enough, particularly for the higher attaining students.
147. The joint management of the subject is unusual but effective in the way it has improved curriculum organisation and raised standards. However, the college is not providing sufficient time to ensure delivery of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Particular weaknesses

include the absence of electrical and electronic systems and a lack of opportunities to develop practical making skills.

148. Furthermore, by enabling a large proportion of Year 10 students to opt for other courses, too few benefit from a design and make experience. The creation of a separate lower college site will ensure more accommodation and additional specialist staff. However, the subject has low levels of financial support so limiting the range of practical activities and resulting in a lack of staff development for the new technician and non-specialist teachers.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Students have very positive attitudes.

### Areas for improvement

- Developing research and analytical skills by broadening the range of techniques through practical work and ICT.
- Developing assessment at Key Stage 3.

149. Standards in GCSE geography have fluctuated in the last three years. They peaked in 1999 to above average. In 2000, they were broadly in line with the average for boys but below when compared to all schools. Students' performance was about average compared with their performance in other subjects. In 2001, results rose slightly but lower attainers underachieved. This was partly due to staff illness that caused discontinuity in teaching. This issue is resolved. A careful review of examination performance has led to more emphasis on coursework and to changes in grouping arrangements. Inspection evidence shows that students are motivated and achieving well.
150. Students enter the college at different times between Years 7 and 9 having had different levels of experience in geography. By the end of Year 9, standards are average and students have made good progress from their starting point. This is due in part to teachers starting to use improved work plans with more emphasis on enquiry work, and to students' positive attitudes. They soon acquire a satisfactory range of skills developed through mapwork, data handling and decision-making exercises. Their numeracy skills adequately underpin this work. However, there are insufficient opportunities, especially for higher attainers, to develop their research skills and techniques through practical work. Fieldwork and ICT are not used enough for this purpose. Most use geographical vocabulary well. Their understanding of geographical processes and environmental matters is satisfactory. Higher attainers have a good understanding of how volcanoes are formed and of the impact of an eruption. Most make good factual notes and write well at length in a variety of styles. For example, in an enquiry exercise about building a dam they evaluated different points of view and reached sound conclusions.
151. By the end of Year 11, standards are at least average and students make satisfactory progress. Most remember information well and have a satisfactory range of skills. Most understand the link between geographical patterns and process in population studies, as in case studies of the Alps and Andes when students identified the main effects of human activities in mountain areas. Low attainers understand how population is growing but have more difficulty in linking this with resources and the rate of development. Coursework, reflecting the lack of practical work done earlier in the college, shows limited opportunities for statistical testing to extend students' analytical and numerical skills. Throughout limited use is made of ICT because of restricted access to computers. The one computer in the department is used well for researching the Internet.

152. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress against their individual targets. There is little difference in the progress of different ethnic groups. Gifted and talented students are identified and make good progress.
153. Overall, attitudes to learning are very good. Most students enjoy the subject and are keen to succeed. Their commitment is evident in their well-presented homework. Geography is a popular subject at GCSE. Behaviour is good. Most students show initiative in their work, for example, when engaged in decision-making exercises in Year 9 and in their coursework in Key Stage 4.
154. Teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and have a very good knowledge of their subject. Students respond well and generally work well in their lessons. A good range of learning resources is used well. While exploring the impact of volcanoes on people, for example, a demonstration using volcanic ash, combined with an up-to-date video, was used effectively to create the atmosphere of an eruption. Teachers explain ideas clearly and ask questions that build on students' answers thus extending their knowledge and understanding. Developing students' ideas through discussion is less successful. Lessons have well-established routines and teachers make sure that students are clear about what they have to do. Their expectations are generally appropriate and most lessons are pitched at the right level. Occasionally, as in a Year 9 lesson, higher attainers underachieve because they are set work that is too easy. Homework supports students' learning well.
155. The department, jointly managed at present, has a good development plan. Teachers work well together and are keen to share their expertise in order to improve standards. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Key Stage 3 students make good improvement in learning because teachers use challenging work plans. Teachers are gradually developing a wider range of techniques, including ICT skills, to improve students' enquiry skills. Procedures for assessing students' progress are satisfactory although methods of standardising students' work in Key Stage 3 need refining. Assessment is not used sufficiently at this stage to help with planning or to improve individual performance. This is recognised by the department as an area for attention.

## HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

### Strengths

- GCSE results show a marked improvement in 2001.
- Teaching is good.
- Students are enthusiastic learners.
- History makes a very strong contribution towards students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work are insufficiently focused around key historical questions and learning objectives.

156. By the end of Year 9, in assessments carried out by teachers, students aged 14 achieved above average standards in 2000. Inspection of students' work in their classes, discussions with boys and the standards of their written work seen during the inspection all confirm that standards in the present Year 9 remain above average.
157. Students have secure recall of the history they study and use their knowledge and understanding to narrate and explain events and situations. They develop a good range of historical skills. For example, students in Year 7 understand some of the ways in which ancient Rome was governed. Students in Year 9 are beginning to understand the implications of studying events like the slave trade. The quality of writing of higher attaining students is noteworthy; by the end of Year 9 they write accurately and at length. The department has



worked hard to improve the writing skills of average and lower attaining boys so that their work is accurately written and well presented. All students use a very effective range of methods of recording their knowledge and understanding, including both more formal extended writing and clear diagrams.

158. Students make good progress from Year 7 to 9. This is evident from the way in which students increasingly show independence in following lines of enquiry and use their knowledge to analyse and explain events and changes. Written work is increasingly structured and sustained. It shows increasing attention to detail. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, make similar rates of progress as those of their peers.
159. The percentage of students attaining grades A\*-C in the GCSE examination taken at the end of Year 11 in 2000 was below the national average. The proportion of those attaining grades A\*-G was in line with the average. However, in 2001 there was a substantial increase in the number of boys achieving A\*-C grades. Evidence from scrutiny of work and observations of lessons indicates that current overall standards are above average. The department has worked hard to improve students' skills, particularly in the analysis and evaluation of historical sources, identified in recent examination analysis as an area of relative weakness for many students. Teachers are now providing students with more systematic opportunities to use documentary and pictorial sources in Year 10 as well as in Year 11. This was evident in a Year 10 lesson where boys interpreted a cartoon from the time of the Berlin Blockade. Students have a good understanding of a range of historical facts, situations and characters and are able to use their knowledge and understanding to form opinions and evaluations of the periods and topics they study. Most students make good use of note making and planning skills when preparing written tasks, although students are less confident when using higher order source work skills than when using their knowledge and understanding to narrate or explain historical events. Progress is good overall although achievement in the skills required in Paper 2 of the GCSE examination is not yet as systematic as that in Paper 1 and in coursework. The department, however, is addressing this imbalance effectively.
160. Students enjoy their history lessons. They settle quickly to their tasks, present their work with care and are prepared to work hard. They are developing a lively sense of historical curiosity, evident for example, in a Year 9 lesson on the slave trade. Behaviour in lessons is very good.
161. Teaching seen during the course of the inspection was good overall with some very good features. Students learn well as a result. There was no evidence of any unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching has improved since the last inspection with a wider range of teaching strategies in regular use. However, in a very small number of lessons, objectives were not always sufficiently clear and students were given too long to complete tasks so that higher attaining boys were not sufficiently stretched. In order to further raise standards, the department needs to ensure that schemes of work have a clearer emphasis on key historical questions and objectives so that students in all lessons and of all abilities understand exactly what they are going to do and why. There are many strengths in the teaching which enable students to learn effectively. Teachers are enthusiastic, committed and work well as a team. In some of the best lessons seen, questions were used effectively to motivate and to enable students to share ideas and become more confident learners. In one lesson, for example, boys showed enormous enthusiasm and almost every hand went up to answer a question. Teachers have high expectations of their students, expecting them to think hard without being spoon-fed with ideas; students respond well to these expectations, forming and justifying their own ideas.
162. This is a very well managed department. Specialist history rooms have been developed as effective learning environments with impressive displays of posters, students' work and other materials. However, many of the rooms are cramped and over-crowded, making it difficult to cope with some kinds of group work. There are good procedures in place for the assessment of students' work. Departmental documentation is very thorough and effective. Resources are used well, although there is, as yet, insufficient use made of information technology. History makes a very good contribution towards students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. The department has made good progress in all the issues identified in the last inspection report.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Standards are above average.
- Specialist ICT teaching is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Developing the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- The application of control technology.

163. Standards in GCSE in 2000, as in the previous year, were above average for all schools and well above average for boys' schools. In 2000, over two-thirds of students achieved A\*-C grades, with a third gaining A and A\* grades which was well above the average. Their performance was better than in all other subjects except mathematics. In 2001, for the first time, the whole year group was entered for the examination and over half achieved A\*-C grades.
164. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Students enter the college with varying degrees of competency. They make good progress, benefiting from revised work plans, with a strong emphasis on applying skills, good teaching and their own very positive attitudes. Most use technical vocabulary confidently and have good skills in communicating information, using text and incorporating images. Teachers place good emphasis on improving literacy and students' work shows good evidence of refining. Presentation by above average students is accurate and of high quality. In work about designing logos, they effectively assess the weak and strong points of their design. Their attainment in modelling work, using spreadsheets, is satisfactory although below average students have difficulty in understanding some of the basic ideas. Most can create a simple spreadsheet, input simple formulae and apply what they have learnt to a relevant example like a fund raising event. They are well aware of some of the social and moral issues of using ICT showing good understanding of the need for data protection.
165. At end of Year 11, standards are above average and students are achieving very well. They use an increasing range of technical vocabulary well although low attainers have difficulty in understanding some terms. Most can select the right hardware and software for particular purposes. Work in their portfolios shows a good balance between learning skills and applying them in a relevant context. Desktop publishing and spreadsheets are commonplace in projects. Although at present they lack the practise in control work, they show good understanding of how to use data loggers to monitor conditions such as temperature and humidity.
166. Practical work using control equipment such as sensors, is under-developed throughout because new software was only installed on network during inspection week.
167. Currently ICT is under-used in other subjects especially for research purposes, the main use being for word processing and graphics. It is used effectively in vocational subjects, by design technology for design purposes and by the special educational needs department to help students with learning difficulties. The geography department is using the Internet for finding information. Gifted and talented students and students with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers set work appropriate for their needs. There is little difference in achievement between different ethnic groups.
168. Specialist ICT teaching is very good. Teachers are hard working and students benefit from being able to develop their skills in daily clubs before and after college. They are well

organised, expect high standards, and so students behave very well and move safely and sensibly around the room. They use their expertise well to prepare students for examinations and plan challenging and interesting tasks. Students respond enthusiastically and work hard. There is an interested “buzz” in lessons especially in practical activities where they have the chance to practise and extend their skills for a particular purpose. Time and resources are generally used well. Occasionally, Year 9 students lose concentration when too long is spent doing theory at the expense of practical work or because they are copying notes, sometimes without understanding. Teachers give very good support and guidance to students working on computers, encouraging them not only to develop their own ideas and but also to work together to discuss their work. Consequently their work shows good initiative. Their systems for assessing students’ attainment are exemplary. Students are involved in the process and have a clear idea of their progress and how to improve. Homework is set and marked regularly.

169. The department is very well led and managed and there are clear plans for improvement. Good support is given to teachers new to the profession and those new to the college. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Every student now studies ICT as a separate subject and the numbers taking examination courses have increased considerably. A GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) Intermediate is offered this term for the first time in Year 10 and allows greater flexibility for meeting student needs and attainment levels. Considerable investment has been made to improve the facilities. As a result standards and achievement have improved.
170. The use of ICT has improved in some subjects but varies considerably between subjects. There are two major constraints. First, ICT rooms are fully timetabled for discrete ICT lessons. The opening of the new ICT centre early next year will include designated access for subject areas. Second, although some subject staff have undergone training to improve their basic skills, many have found it difficult to find the necessary time to make substantial progress. The new facilities require a review of how ICT is co-ordinated through the school.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Lessons are well planned.
- The department has good schemes of work.
- There is a strong commitment in the department to raising standards.

### Areas for improvement

- Raise the level of expectation and challenge in most lessons.
- Develop assessment procedures at Key Stage 3, so that students and teachers have a clearer appreciation of progress.
- Match work more closely to students’ levels of attainment at Key Stage 4.

171. Standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations nationally. Standards of written French are above average. Higher attainers write imaginatively and use complex structures with a good level of accuracy. Teacher assessments have remained in line with the national average over the past few years.
172. GCSE results are below average. In 2000, results in both French and Spanish were below average. Results in French in 2001 show a considerable improvement but it is difficult to make a comparison with previous years because the percentage of students entered for the examination was much lower. There was, however, an improvement in performance in 2001 although students’ performance remained below the average for the college.
173. Standards of writing in French and Spanish are again above average. Higher attainers use a variety of tenses, including the conditional and the imperfect, with a good degree of accuracy. Lower attainers manipulate language effectively to change, for example, from the first to the

third person of the verb. Oral standards are satisfactory but variable. Many students lack confidence when speaking.

174. Students make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Students make good progress in developing writing skills, some progress in speaking but there is little formal development of listening and reading skills.
175. Teaching is satisfactory overall and includes good and very good teaching. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject. They use the target language effectively in almost all lessons. Lessons are well planned. All teachers ensure a firm basis of vocabulary before using this knowledge to practise skills. Introduction of new vocabulary is always done in a lively manner which guarantees that students concentrate in this key part of the lesson. Management of students is good. In most classes there is a good relationship between students and teachers. In the occasional lesson where behaviour is unacceptable problems are dealt with calmly but firmly.
176. In some lessons in which students make satisfactory progress, opportunities are missed to raise the level of challenge for the students. Sometimes the pace of the lesson is slow; at other times students are set routine tasks for part of the lesson which do not involve them in creative effort. Teachers' expectations about what students should be achieving are sometimes too low, particularly at Key Stage 3, where formative assessment based on National Curriculum levels is not yet part of departmental practice. There are some excellent examples of teachers showing students how they can improve the quality of their work but overall the quality of marking is inconsistent.
177. Curriculum arrangements at Key Stage 4 are affecting student performance. The introduction of the second language to students for the first time in Year 10 makes it difficult for students to achieve well when teaching groups have a wide ability range. Mixed ability option groups for French vary considerably in size and have different time allocations in Year 11 and work is not sufficiently matched to individual needs.
178. Leadership and management are good. All the staff are recent appointments to the college and work well together. Good strategies are identified in the development plan for raising student performance. Departmental documentation is clear and helpful. There is a comprehensive scheme of work and the handbook contains a good range of policies which are gradually becoming more consistently applied in practice. Monitoring of the work of the department is effective. The marking of students' homework is conscientious. Assessment data is used to monitor individual students' progress. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is no resource base and one classroom is unsuitable. Storage space is limited.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons.
- The regular setting of homework to extend students' learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Raise students' attainment in keyboard skills in Key Stage 3.
- Extend the provision for ICT in Key Stage 3.
- Improve the accommodation.
- Ensure that the college prospectus gives information about the provision for music.

179. Teacher assessments for students age 14 in 2000 were in line with national expectations. Results in 2001 were lower with a less musically able cohort of students. In 2000, the proportion of students gaining GCSE grades A\*-C was above the national average. The 2001 GCSE results show a slight fall in the number of students achieving the higher grades, although overall results are still in line with those normally expected.
180. By the age of 14 years, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. However, there is some weakness in practical keyboard skills. Many students show secure listening skills and an understanding of the different musical elements. They accurately describe what they hear in music and make appropriate use of musical vocabulary. Students show some knowledge of different instrumental sounds. They create short compositions well to describe a scene and perform these to each other. However, there are a number of students who cannot perform with confidence on the keyboard. They find problems in reading simple notation and in accurately locating the notes. There are other students, however, who demonstrate better skills and can perform several simple melodies well. The achievement of students in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Students enter Year 9 with variable musical ability. However, they achieve as well as can be expected in relation to their prior attainment. In a Year 9 lesson students successfully identified some of the key features in short extracts of music. They made satisfactory progress in understanding the composer's contrasting textures and timbres. There has been some improvement in the attainment of students in Key Stage 3 since the previous inspection.
181. By the age of 16 years, attainment is above national expectations. Although only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 4, scrutiny of work and attendance at extra-curricular activities confirms this judgement. Standards in Key Stage 4 have been successfully maintained. By the end of Key Stage 4, students show good performing and composing skills. They listen to and appraise short extracts of music with some accuracy. They write music for different instruments and show a good understanding of basic chord structures and musical styles. They use ICT well to devise and refine their compositions. In Key Stage 4 achievement is good. In a Year 11 lesson, students discussed the way Dvorak had created different effects in his music. They composed their own short piece and made good progress in using a range of appropriate musical ideas. Students with special educational needs, English as an additional language and the more musically able make good progress in lessons. Students who take part in extra-curricular activities achieve high standards of instrumental and vocal performance.
182. Teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 3. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning in Key Stage 4. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use their own musical skills to enhance learning. There is good class management and effective support is provided for individual students. Good links are made between composing and listening tasks. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, students composed their own short piece to represent the horrific events in America. They then listened to part of Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings. This enabled them to appreciate the way Barber had skilfully used the different music elements, as well as silence, to convey intense emotion in his

music. As a result, students made good gains in their learning. The use of ICT is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. This provision has improved since the previous inspection. However, the use of ICT in Key Stage 3 is under-developed. There is satisfactory provision for developing students' literacy skills in lessons. The time allocation for Key Stage 3 lessons has improved since the previous inspection. Homework is set and marked well in both key stages. This has a positive impact on students' learning. A range of extra-curricular activities provides further opportunities for students to develop performing skills. The number of students involved in these activities has increased since the previous inspection. There are good liaison arrangements with its partner consortium school. Some of these students join rehearsals and take part in concerts. There are a number of different instrumental groups as well as a college choir. Concerts are held regularly. A St. Cecilia's Day concert is planned for November. Students have also taken part in concerts out of college, including one at Westminster Cathedral.

183. Students have good attitudes towards the subject. In Key Stage 3 they are well behaved and make a good contribution to lessons. The previous inspection found that there was some immature student behaviour in Key Stage 3. None was seen during the inspection. Students in both key stages are very responsive to extra-curricular activities. They show a committed approach to rehearsals.
184. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is ably supported by a part-time colleague. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place. These are being further developed in order to more closely monitor students' attainment in Key Stage 3. Over 80 students receive instrumental lessons from peripatetic teachers. Many students are successful in external music examinations. However, there is no information in the current college prospectus about the provision for extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons. The resources are adequate, but there is a shortage of tuned percussion instruments. The accommodation is poor. The main teaching room is too small. There is no direct access to practise rooms and as a result, the amount of group work that can be undertaken is limited.
185. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The previous report stated that there was scope to improve the contribution music made to the liturgical life of the college. This has now been successfully addressed. The choir regularly sings at whole college masses.
186. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The college has addressed the weaknesses highlighted in the previous report.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching is good and results in effective learning for all students.
- The majority of students attain as expected for their age.
- Students are enthusiastic in their learning and are making good progress in lessons.
- There is very good extra-curricular provision, particularly in competitive team games.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards in GCSE physical education.
- Schemes of work do not yet fully meet the requirements of National Curriculum 2000.
- More opportunities for students to be involved in planning and assessing their progress.

187. The proportion of students achieving GCSE A\* to C grade passes has fallen since the last inspection. In 2000, the proportion of students achieving A\* to C grade passes was well below the national average. However, students' average points score shows that they performed better in physical education than in their other subjects – this represents satisfactory achievement.
188. In lessons, standards at the end of Year 9 are average, with most students achieving appropriate levels for their age. In the course that all students take in Years 10 and 11, standards are typical for their age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
189. At the end of Year 9, achievement is as expected for all groups of students in relation to their physical capabilities. For example, in association football lessons, students are developing individual skills such as heading as well as their tactical awareness in small-sided games. By the end of Year 11, students have continued to refine and improve their skills and techniques in both association football and rugby union. In the former, students are developing their tactical awareness of possession play techniques. In rugby union, lower attainers are developing their individual and team skills for the line-out and the higher attainers are working as backs and forwards to develop their positional play and tactical awareness in full-sided games.
190. Across all years students have a secure grasp of the principles and procedures of warm-up and of stretching-off after physical exercise. For example, they suggest appropriate stretches and name the muscle groups being used. Students identified as having special educational needs are well supported, integrated and make good progress. Teachers organise their classes well, therefore all students make good progress in lessons.
191. Students are making good progress in their GCSE lessons. In Year 11 theory lessons, students are developing their knowledge and understanding of behaviour in support by, for example, comparing and contrasting sportsmanship, gamesmanship and cheating. In their practical lessons, Year 10 students are successfully improving their coaching and evaluation skills through small-group work in association football.
192. Throughout the inspection teachers had to work in difficult circumstances. Because of a re-building programme there was no indoor accommodation available, the swimming pool was out of use, students had to change in the tuck shop and only a small grass area on site was available for the majority of lessons. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching overall is good. This results in effective learning and is having a positive impact on students' achievement. There are no significant differences between the key stages and it has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
193. Teachers have very high expectations in terms of discipline and behaviour and in the ability of students to work to their best. They manage their classes very well. Students' response to this is good, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons and enables all to make good progress. For example, they work well as pairs and small groups and show clear respect for the capabilities of one another. This was clearly evident in a Year 10 GCSE association football lesson where students were leading small-group warm-up and coaching sessions that they were developing themselves. There are far too many non-participants in some lessons and progress for these students is not as good as it could be. This is because they are not always involved as they should be, for example, being part of the group to watch skills' demonstrations or being part of whole group summative sessions. In all lessons, clear instructions, together with effective breakdown and demonstration of skills, ensure students are aware of what is expected of them and what they have to do to make progress. A good variety of structured activities in lessons helps ensure students stay motivated. In a Year 9 association football lesson, for example, students were involved in planning tactics and in a Year 8 rugby union lesson, they were consolidating their handling skills as well as learning how to improve team techniques as 'backs' and 'forwards'. Students are made aware of their capabilities because teachers circulate well and offer praise and constructive criticism. In some lessons, though, there are not enough opportunities for students to be involved in evaluation of one another. This means they are not always adapting and improving their skills and techniques as effectively as they could be. In a Year 10 association football lesson, for

example, opportunities for observation of each other's passing techniques would have enabled them to refine and improve their own practice. Sometimes, at the end of lessons, there is a tendency for the teacher to provide all the evaluation rather than to also ask students for their responses as to what they feel they have achieved.

194. A very good range of extra-curricular activities throughout the year, particularly inter-school competitive fixtures, enriches students' learning experience. As a result of the continuing dedication and enthusiasm of teachers, some of whom are from other departments, there have been some notable successes. During the last year the college won the borough athletics championships in every age group entered and sixteen students represent the borough athletics team. Individuals have achieved county representative honours in association football and rugby union, two individuals have achieved national representative honours and another two have moved on to professional level in their particular sports.
195. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced at Key Stage 4 with the GCSE physical education course. Schemes of work need refinement to ensure they reflect fully the demands of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4 it is not clear which two in-depth activities students have chosen to follow. In all years, in the course that all follow, students are not yet being made fully aware as to how they are being assessed since the introduction of the new physical education National Curriculum levels. There are opportunities for students to use ICT in GCSE physical education lessons, for example, in the presentation of their course work. There is a programme for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the head of department is aware of areas for development within the department – his leadership and management are sound. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.



## PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2000.

### ***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	1	-	6	100	93	1	1
Business Studies	2	-	16	50	78	1	2
General Studies	29	10	18	59	72	1.3	1.9
Mathematics	4	-	17	75	63	1.8	1.6
Music	1	-	30	-	87	-	2.4
Physics	2	50	8	100	53	3	1
Religious Studies	21	48	19	100	76	3.2	2
Business VQ	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	10.8
Information Technology VQ	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	9.8

### ***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	8	25	45	63	96	3.5	6.4
Biology	8	25	34	100	88	5	.3
Business Studies	21	43	30	100	91	6.5	5.3
Chemistry	10	40	42	90	89	5.8	5.9
Classical Studies	11	18	46	73	94	4.2	6.4
Communication Studies	5	20	30	80	93	4	5.4
Computer Studies	1	-	23	100	85	4	4.6
English Literature	26	19	36	100	96	5.5	5.9
French	6	67	39	100	91	7.3	5.7
Full Design and Technology	1	-	29	100	92	4	5.4
Geography	6	67	37	100	92	7.7	5.7
History	9	44	34	78	89	5.1	5.4
Mathematics	24	54	45	96	89	6.7	6
Music	3	100	35	100	94	8.7	5.7
Other Languages	1	100	59	100	94	8	7.1

Other Social Studies	17	24	35	88	88	5.3	5.3
Physics	7	29	41	100	88	5.7	5.7
Religious Studies	3	-	35	100	91	5.3	5.7
Sociology	9	56	37	100	88	6.9	5.5
Spanish	3	33	40	100	90	6.7	5.8
Sports/PE Studies	7	-	25	100	91	4.9	5

***Intermediate vocational qualifications***

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Intermediate Business	29	76	73	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

#### Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

##### Strengths

- Results in A-level mathematics have improved over a period of three years and are now above average.
- There are good opportunities for gifted students to extend their study through the further mathematics options.
- There is a very good match of teachers to the needs of the mathematics curriculum.
- The relationships between teachers and students are good. Students have confidence in their teachers.

##### Areas for improvement

- Many students re-taking GCSE mathematics fail to make progress.
- There are insufficient resources to support students' wider reading and independent study of mathematics.
- Some A-level students would benefit from more opportunities to make extended oral contributions in lessons.

196. The inspection covered the A/AS examination courses offered by the college: pure mathematics, mechanics, and statistics modules. In addition, the re-sit mathematics GCSE course for those who did not gain grade C in Year 11 was also inspected. The teaching of application of number leading to the key skills qualification is at an early stage of development.
197. Over three years, A-level results in mathematics have risen. The 2000 results were above the national average, as were the provisional A-level results in 2001. This represents good achievement for all students given their starting points. Students' results in the 2001 AS mathematics examinations were very good and reflected well their expected achievement. The take-up rate for mathematics is consistently high, and is appropriately representative of the range of ethnic groups within the school.
198. Of those students re-sitting GCSE mathematics in 2001, less than half improved their mathematics results by one grade, or obtained a grade C or better. This is partly the result of the low entry criteria to the course, but also of the irregular attendance of some students.
199. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' files in the current Years 12 and 13 confirms above average achievement. The overall quality of the students' written work, including statistical projects, is good. Students' work in each area of mathematics is well underpinned by their manipulative algebra and numerical skills. Students studying further mathematics were very competent in applying calculus to complex problems in kinematics. They were interested in a scholarly discussion of wider mathematical issues as a result of their enrichment residential experience. Other students studying a statistics module were able to make informed choices in their work on the poisson and binomial distributions. High attaining students in Year 12 have very good recall of GCSE skills. Some were readily able to recognise factor types to facilitate their work on summing series. When working from written questions, they interpret the information given with precision.
200. Currently, a small number of students are working towards re-taking GCSE mathematics. The few students observed were well motivated and well organised. They were keen to remedy previous uncertainties, as in their work on using Pythagoras' theorem. Those students observed in the key skills lesson had below average numeracy skills, particularly in relation to fractions and their equivalents.
201. Teaching is good overall. There is a small proportion of very good teaching. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and understand clearly the requirements of the examination

system. The best lessons are very carefully structured conceptually and give careful thought to the development of the students' thinking skills, as for example, in a lesson on arithmetic progressions. Some of the teaching, however, is over-directed so that students rely heavily on their teachers and become passive learners.

202. The mathematics department's provision for the post-16 mathematics is well-managed. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to improving their students' attainment. The department makes good use of the college review and target setting process with those students studying A-level mathematics. This process could be usefully extended to the GCSE re-sit course.
203. Results in A-level mathematics are above average and improving. Students benefit from good teaching and learn to adopt a scholarly approach to their work.

## Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **good**.

### Strengths

- The introduction of a new resource book.
- The rising popularity of the subject both in the numbers following the AS and the A2 courses.
- The teachers' high expectations of the students shown by the good depth of knowledge to which topics are studied.

### Areas for improvement

- Share good practice of teaching and learning styles, especially in developing questioning techniques that involve a greater level of student participation.
- Devise a way of checking students' notes and assisting weaker students with their note-taking and organisational skills.

204. The GCE advanced level examination results over the last three years have generally been in line with the national average, although the small numbers taking the examination make statistical comparison difficult. All students who took the examination in 2000 and 2001 gained a pass grade, although in 2001 the number attaining the highest grades of A and B dropped significantly. The numbers taking the AS course show a great increase in interest in biology. Although there are no national comparisons yet available for those examinations the number obtaining the higher grades are in line with the A-level percentages but there are also a relatively high number who are unclassified. Progress measured by the proportion that reaches their target grade is satisfactory.
205. The standard of work of the current students is average; Year 12 students were seen coming to terms with the complicated working and structural details of cells, cell division and cell membranes. Year 13 students can recall that information and apply it to a practical experiment on the working of the kidneys. Students use knowledge gained on an ecological field course in a simulated experiment concerning the sampling methods of populations. All students are confident in handling apparatus analysing results to explain differences in results and making comments as to how the experiment could be improved alongside explaining why some groups gained results closer to the actual figures than others.
206. Teaching is good overall. The main strengths in teaching are the teacher-student relationships, the factual detail included and the expectations made of the students that work will be completed and consolidated. Teachers show good subject knowledge and are able to develop comments and answer questions clearly. Staff make many references to previous work covered and link the theory and practical work. Homework is used well to consolidate new learning and in preparation for the next session. The main weakness in teaching is the high proportion of the lesson taken by the teacher talking rather than drawing out ideas from the students. This was seen in telling students what a graph represented rather than asking them to deduce the information and by filling in answers rather than asking the students to develop

them. The students work steadily and complete all that is asked of them although at times they lack a dynamic interest in the subject.

207. Much of the written work demanded of the students is in the form of personal note-taking and structured questions as follow up for consolidation. The teachers do not mark the general notes made by students, the written answers to questions may be marked either by the teacher or the students. Regular use is made of past test papers and these are marked carefully, the marks indicating the GCE grade standard attained. Students, especially the higher attaining students, use these papers well, annotating them and including them in their file as a resource base for future use. The weaker students do not include them in their files.
208. The department is well led with a new resource book being introduced this year. Examination results are analysed by topics and strategies for improvement are being worked out. However, currently, boys following the course at the partner consortium school are not monitored and tracked by the biology department at Wimbledon College and so targeted strategies for improving their results do not happen. Good use is made of assessment procedures and this was seen following a test when students who did not reach their target grade had to resit. The department has a good base from which to move forward.

## Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is **good**.

### Strengths

- New, and developing, more appropriate schemes of work.
- Careful marking and use of assessment.

### Areas for improvement

- Limited range of teaching approaches to encourage independent learning.
- Limited use of ICT across the subject.

209. This is a good department which marks its success by building on a foundation of good GCSE results. These results, well above the national average, with a high proportion of high grades, feed into A-level classes with increasing numbers and an improving trend in results which are only just below the national average.
210. Standards seen in lessons demonstrate good teaching with mainly teacher directed activities. This leads to good learning, and good attainment levels, with high motivation of students. The standards of the sixth form work in books and folders is good, showing a real depth of knowledge and understanding in the subject. Year 13 work is better than Year 12 work sampled.
211. The marking policy is being applied well with homework set regularly and effectively monitored. There is a good use of assessment and predicted grades in monitoring standards of work students are producing. Teacher expectations are high and demands are made of students to reach the required standards.
212. Learning outcomes for the students are satisfactory and they appear to enjoy chemistry. Although some of the concepts are challenging, particularly in Year 12, they rise to that challenge and produce good outcomes. There is an over-reliance on teacher direction and little opportunity for students to develop learning skills independently. Teaching staff are well qualified, knowledgeable and competent and, with increased experience, will develop new strategies to create better opportunities for students.
213. Chemistry is a well managed department where the teachers work successfully as a team complementing each other's strengths. The head of department has re-designed the schemes of work and they are already making an impact on learning outcomes, with the organisation of coursework much improved. Target setting is being used successfully and students react well to this as a motivational tool for improved performance.

214. There is good evidence of numerical skills being developed in a range of contexts and applied to new situations. Support is given to those with weaker mathematical backgrounds. Communications skills are used in a limited sense, and ICT is little used. This is a priority area for development for the department.

## Physics

Overall, the quality of provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching overall is good.
- Subject specific content is well taught.
- Relationships are good.
- Marking and feedback on homework.

### Areas for improvement

- Results are just below the national average for boys' schools and all schools.
- A wider range of teaching strategies should be employed.
- Students should be encouraged and given greater opportunity to develop independent learning skills.
- There should be more opportunity for students to explain concepts and principles in the written word as well as by means of equations and formulae.
- There should be opportunity to include work relating real life situations to lesson content. Content is heavily biased towards theoretical physics.
- Reports should be more accurately targeted towards specific aspects of physics as well as student approaches to the subject.
- Management of the department needs strengthening.

215. Attainment is just below the average for all schools and also for boys' schools. Learning is satisfactory but would benefit from more stimulating approaches. In 2000, the six AS candidates achieved above college target grades but below national averages.
216. The GCE A-level results in 2001 showed a fall in the percentage of A and B grades compared with 2000; 2000 A/B results were, however, lower than those achieved in 1999. A to E grade achievement has shown a rising trend in recent years and is now 100 per cent. The average point score per student has varied over the last three years, showing no consistent trend. Although analysis has not been carried out in detail by the head of the physics department, college data confirms that these grades for 2001 - based on GCSE results – were marginally above expectations but below national figures.
217. The standard of work of current students in Year 13 is targeted towards the subject specification and relies heavily on calculations and worked examples. Files are organised and show subject specification content to date. Students show good recall. Work was of an appropriate standard and the standard and quantity of practical work is appropriate. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. Their work shows progression from GCSE. Students show a good understanding of velocity/time graphs and are able to apply their understanding to different situations.
218. Teaching is good overall. Teaching was, however, over-reliant on worked examples and theoretical argument. There was little evidence of physics in applied situations relating knowledge to the real world. Where teaching was good, pace was appropriate and the lesson planned so that early parts of the lesson, based on straightforward examples and concepts, were used as a foundation for later more challenging work. Board work and explanations were clear and concise, as seen in a lesson examining graphs of motion. Where teaching was less strong, teacher knowledge was good and content accurate and appropriate for the topic but there was, however, a slowed pace, a lack of flair and inspiration in delivery and a need to give greater thought to student activity.

219. Written work demanded of students consists of writing notes in class and carrying out worked examples. This is supported by worked examples from texts and examination questions. The issue of subject specification details for each topic enables students to track progress and ensure file content is appropriate. End-of-topic tests are set and homework consisting of past short answer questions are also issued and marked. The department makes regular use of registers, recording homework and test marks. Attendance registers are taken each lesson.
220. Students learn well. They are attentive and show a will to learn, seeking clarification of their understanding by asking thoughtful questions, for example, about distance time graphs or software to be used in experimental work. Relationships in the classrooms are good. The learning environment is relaxed and supportive.
221. There is little evidence of independent work or individual research, for example, in the form of presentation notes or extended writing. There is a need to encourage students to become more responsible for their own learning, to make greater contributions to the learning of the group and to investigate a wider range of sources of information. The curriculum, whilst covering the requirements of the specification, is not enhanced by visits or other interesting extra-curricular opportunities. Teaching, monitoring and logging of key skills are not securely established in the department.
222. The overall standard of teaching and learning in the department reflects the work of experienced teachers and student effort. The subject specification forms the basis of the scheme of work. The management of the department needs strengthening. There is a need for departmental planning to be better developed. Greater attention should be given to the monitoring and analysis of student and departmental performance currently and over time. There is a need to develop a more complete overview of physics on each site and overall. Subject reports identify short and long-term targets but are general in nature and make minimal reference to aspects of physics. The teacher's comments are completed with an emphasis on attitudes to work and effort and make little reference to actual subject information. There is little reference to what it is that students do or do not know and exactly what it is that they should do to improve.

## **BUSINESS**

This area forms a substantial part of sixth form provision and, in addition to the GCE and Vocational Advanced level courses, there is a more recently introduced economics course at both GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary levels. This provision was sampled and standards and quality of teaching reflected those of the business courses. This section also includes judgements about the overall management of vocational education across the joint sixth form.

### **Business Studies**

The combined sixth forms run AS level and Advanced (A2) courses and both were observed during the inspection on the Wimbledon College site.

Overall, the quality of provision in business education is **good**.

#### Strengths

- The courses are popular.
- Teaching is well informed and supportive.

#### Areas for improvement

- The lack of varied resources and an emphasis on textbooks limit the broadening of teaching methods.
- Assessment practice provides insufficient guidance for some students who would benefit from more explicit use of criteria similar to that used in vocational courses.
- More careful guidance of students to AS level and Advanced level Vocational is needed to further improve standards.

223. Standards in the GCE Advanced level have been close to national average in recent years. In the new AS level course, Year 12 students performed in line with their average for all AS level courses. Even so, there was considerable variation in outcomes with a third of students achieving well with grades A or B, while a further quarter of students were unsuccessful.
224. In lessons and work seen standards are in line with national average. The higher attaining students have a good understanding of business models and concepts and are able to use these well in their case studies. Understanding and use of economic theory is less secure and all students make limited use of graphical analysis. The majority of students have sound literacy and are able to make effective use of ICT in presenting their coursework. Even so, they make less use of technical language in their work and have variable analytical and evaluative skills. Students are generally achieving in line with expectations with a number in a Year 12 class contributing well to a discussion on public sector funding with extended answers that showed an awareness of actions and consequences.
225. Students like business studies and opt for it in increasing numbers. The male students tend to be more active in discussion though most students are absorbed in the lessons.
226. Teaching is mostly good, particularly in the use of whole class exposition and discussion, and is based on positive rapport with the students who respond well to questions and take an active interest in the different topics and issues. Teachers make less use of resource-based learning and on occasion, when lessons are based on individual student investigation, the teacher is less clear about the required lesson outcomes. As a result those sessions are less well paced. Marking and assessment is regular and teachers provide constructive although brief comment. While this gives students a general idea of their progress it is less helpful for those students who need clearer guidance for improvement.
227. The subject is effectively managed and staff work well together. The subject has benefited from the development of a newly created business and ICT area and the courses are well supported with recently published textbooks. Less developed are wider resources including outside links, and staff development is mostly focused on new teachers. With closely related vocational courses the college has the opportunity to ensure that business students are following the appropriate qualification and mix of learning and assessment which are important to ensure all are successful.

### Vocational Education (Business)

The combined sixth form runs a number of successful vocational courses including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (Vocational A-level) as well as the General National Vocational Qualification at Intermediate and Foundation levels. At the time of the inspection this included business, ICT, leisure and recreation, science, art and design and health and social care. ICT at Vocational Advanced level was sampled with the main inspection focus on the large provision for business at all three vocational levels. The judgements below relate to business although they broadly reflect the quality of vocational education provision as a whole. Overall, the quality of provision in vocational education is **very good**.

#### Strengths

- Almost all students are successful and most achieve well in relation to prior attainment.



- Teaching is good in the way it provides positive and constructive support including that for students with special educational needs.
- Assessment systems are well organised and assessment practice enables students to understand their progress and identify areas for improvement.
- The joint college provision is well co-ordinated.

Areas for improvement

- The main business classrooms lack the range of resources to support the more varied approaches to teaching and learning used in the courses.

228. In 2000, standards in GNVQ Intermediate courses were at least in line with national average with 76 per cent of students being successful compared with 73 per cent nationally. Results in the GNVQ Advanced courses (now Vocational Advanced level) were above average with students gaining an average points score of 12 points compared with 10.2 points nationally. In 2001, the standards were sustained, with 88 per cent of students gaining passes in GNVQ Advanced in business and over 80 per cent being successful in the Intermediate courses. In the first year of the new Vocational Advanced level, 96 per cent of students were successful in the business and ICT courses. On average, Vocational Advanced level students performed slightly better in terms of average points score compared with those taking GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary levels.
229. In lessons and work seen, standards are at least in line with national average. The GNVQ Foundation in business enables students with limited GCSE qualifications and those with special educational needs, to continue their education in the sixth form. The higher attaining students in the group understand the main business terms and could use this knowledge effectively in completing work on financial documents. A significant minority of special educational needs students are working below the expected Foundation level but are making good progress in their social development as well as improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Standards in the Intermediate business course are in line with national average with most students, including some with special educational needs, achieving well in their written work when compared with their literacy standards on entry. Standards in Vocational Advanced level business are broadly in line with national average. All Year 13 students have successfully completed a half of the necessary coursework and examination units. In the coursework students demonstrate a clear understanding of the main models and theories with the higher attaining students able to use that understanding to analyse and evaluate business problems and strategies. Most of the students are achieving well in relation to their expected grades base on their GCSE performance and are making good progress in terms of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This is evident in much of the assessed coursework that is well presented with a mix of word-processed and graphical data.
230. Teaching is uniformly good across all three levels of the vocational business courses. In the Intermediate and Foundation courses the lessons are well planned with carefully planned worksheets that help students improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Special educational needs students usually benefit from additional classroom support that helps them keep up with the often fast lesson pace. In the Vocational Advanced level lessons the teaching is more focused on whole class presentation and discussion to cover the background theory in, for example, management styles, in preparation for the external examinations. That teaching is well informed and effective use is made of questioning to confirm and consolidate student understanding. On occasion, Advanced level lessons devoted to student planning and research are less well structured and lack accessible classroom resources and this slows the pace of learning. However, there are good examples of case study activities, such as the development of a staff training programme, that enable students to make use of real work contexts.
231. Marking and assessment practice is strong in most of the vocational courses and the teachers have successfully adopted the contextualised grading schemes reducing the amount of administration and enabling students to better understand the assessment system. The coursework assignments include clear and constructive interim assessments that enable students to improve their work.

232. The co-ordination of vocational education across the combined sixth form is very good in terms of encouraging a shared approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Staff development is good in the way it provides a mix of external training for the new qualifications and internal shared development to induct new staff and develop materials. The head of vocational education works closely with the respective heads of sixth form to ensure that the academic progress of vocational students is effectively monitored. The accommodation for the vocational courses in business and ICT has been improved through the creation of a new suite and this will be further enhanced as a result of an additional government grant. There are a number of industry links and European residential visits although these are less developed in some of the vocational courses. Most courses are well supported in terms of textbooks and access to ICT is steadily improving. However, the range of accessible learning resources in both classrooms and library is comparatively limited.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Standards in ICT compare favourably with national figures and students achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Year 13 students work with interest and produce work of a high standard.
- The subject is strongly led and managed and teachers work well as a team.

### Areas for improvement

- Some theory lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms lacking the facilities for demonstrations.
- Staffing: because the uptake for Year 12 courses was larger than anticipated, some groups have to be taught after college until a new teacher is appointed.

233. The overall provision is very good. Present courses are attracting large numbers demonstrating the growing popularity of the courses. In Year 12, 55 students, including 14 girls from the consortium, take AS level. A further 17, including 6 girls, take AS AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education). In Year 13, 27 students including 2 girls take A-level and 9, including two girls, take AVCE. The retention rate overall is good. Students, including those new to the college, feel that they had been given good advice, ensuring a smooth transition into the sixth form. Those in Year 13 feel that they are receiving good advice for the future. This includes participation in the yearly "Your future in Information and Communications Technology Conference".
234. In 2000, standards in the GNVQ Advanced Information Technology course compared favourably with national figures although no students achieved distinctions. This year for the first time, 36 Year 12 students took AS Information Technology. All achieved a pass, half achieving A-C grades and a quarter achieving A grades. Thirteen students took the AS AVCE examination. Of the 13 students, nine completed the course, all obtaining pass grades. Some who had not taken ICT as an examination subject had been encouraged to study another subject at this level. Two left before completing the course, two did not achieve grades and have since left and one has rejoined Year 12 to repeat the course. This year, more care has been taken at enrolment to establish students' suitability for entry to the courses. As a result, in the lessons seen, teachers were able to pitch their lessons at the right level and students were making good progress in relation to their potential.
235. In the lessons and work seen, standards achieved by students in Years 12 and 13 are above average. Year 12 students make a good start because teachers build well on planned work done in the main college. They have very good practical skills and apply them well in projects. They communicate information well through word-processed or desktop published text and standards of presentation are high. Their analytical skills are well developed through challenging assignments. Year 12, for example, effectively applies what they know about spreadsheets and complex functions in a business report about searching for employees' details. Similarly Year 13 students devised and tested a spreadsheet for managing a small

business. They show good understanding of the conflict between the need for managing security and personal liberties. They apply this well to devising a strategy for disaster recovery, presenting their findings in the form of a multi-media presentation. Above average students evaluate their own work thoroughly and offer good suggestions for improvement. This is done, but less effectively, by below average students.

236. Overall, teaching is very good and students learn very well. The latter have good personal and learning skills and are supportive of each during practical work. No differences were seen in groups from different ethnic backgrounds. Teachers' expertise, including in some cases experience in industry, and knowledge of examination requirements enables them to plan thoroughly to help students to become increasingly independent and apply their skills in relevant contexts. On one occasion the teacher took too long to realise that students were struggling and needed help. On another, because all the equipment had not been checked before the lesson, students were unable to test their success in installing a CD-ROM hard drive. However, good discussion was generated between the teacher and students as to the causes of the problem. Well-designed tasks with a good balance of theory, skills and application support students with increasingly difficult ideas and skills. Assessment is used very well to enable students to move forward with their learning. It helps them to refine and evaluate design processes as well as the end result. Their portfolios effectively demonstrate their high level of commitment and independence in following through projects. Their mature attitudes are shown by the sensible way they work throughout lessons.
237. The department is strongly led and managed. The head of department has clear ideas for improvement. This includes planned visits to other organisations to look at their use of ICT. Teachers work very hard as a team and give freely of their time in clubs before and after college. Because the uptake for Year 12 courses was larger than anticipated, teachers are teaching some groups after college until an appointment of a new teacher. They are all involved in planning and training. Good support is given to teachers new to the college. Systems for assessing, monitoring and recording students' progress are exemplary.
238. Facilities are much improved since the last inspection and the college has long-term plans for further improvements. At present, because of the number of ICT courses in the college, there are insufficient specialist rooms. Some theory lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms lacking facilities for demonstrations. However, with the opening of the new ICT centre early next year, this problem should be solved.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

### **Physical Education**

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**

#### **Strengths**

- The provision of practical physical education for all students in the sixth form.
- The close working relations between the two linked institutions makes good use of staff strengths.
- Good achievement of the students in that virtually all reach, or exceed, their target grade.

#### Areas for improvement

- Analyse the examination results by topic in order to target improvement strategies.
- Involve the students in more active learning techniques.
- Develop the organisational and note-taking skills of the weaker students.

239. In the last three years the advanced level physical education results have been in line with the national average although the small numbers of entry for the examination make statistical comparison impossible. The proportion of higher grades has generally been below the national average. In 2001, the proportion of higher grades in the AS examination was higher and, although no national statistics are yet available, the number is close to the national average of the advanced level examination. The advanced course has been established since the last inspection and the number of students has been steady, with approximately seven per year, although in Year 12 there is a slightly larger group of students. The majority of students reach, or exceed, their target grade and this represents good progress.
240. The inspection evidence shows that students currently in Year 12 and Year 13 are producing work that is in line with the average standards. Year 13 are able to make a presentation regarding the inclusion of a new sporting activity and also role-play those arguing against its inclusion and in so doing recognise the changing feelings and views held. They also make constructive comments whilst planning a questionnaire on students' attitudes to physical education, being careful to eliminate any information that may influence the students into responding in a particular view. The expectation is that students will use the correct technical terminology, and they do. A group of Year 12 students studying the anatomy and physiology of joints, muscles and their attachments showed the greater degree of knowledge required than the GCSE course that they had recently completed. Students are able to apply the knowledge that they gain as seen when answering questions on the history of sport and in giving examples when considering play and games. A variety of resources is used and made available to the students although they do not always use them. Students respond positively to the work, completing all that is required although at times they are rather quiet and need to be drawn out. All students following the course also participate in college teams. Due to renovations and building work causing a lack of physical education facilities during the inspection period, practical lessons were not taking place and so no practical skills were seen.
241. Overall the teaching of physical education is good. The most effective teaching involves high expectations, links the work to the examination requirements and uses a variety of active methods. Teachers also ensure that the students clearly understand the aim of the lesson. Weaker aspects are those lessons that are teacher dominated, such as when a student answers one part of the question and the teacher completes all the rest, or when the note-taking is directed. The marking of the work varied. In some cases a covering assessment sheet gives careful marking with constructive comments and marked homework clearly states what is needed to raise the work to the next level. However, the general notes made by the students are not currently checked or marked. The depth to which the written work was completed varied, but it showed improvement when attention was drawn to the depth required. Not all students organise their folders efficiently and, as much of the written work demanded of the students is in the form of directed notes on the topic under consideration, a consequence of not checking the notes is that the weaker students have less effective work for answering questions and revision purposes.
242. The leadership and management structure of the department is unusual with a separate head of the examination course, but it is successful due to good communication. Good communication and working relationships with the linked college means that the best use is made of staff expertise. The accommodation is suitable for the theory work but limited for practical work. However, again, the college makes the best provision for the students in allowing them to specialise in practical activities carried on outside of college. Assessment procedures are satisfactory; students are given an individual target grade based on standardised tests and their GCSE results. They are asked to consider grades given for pieces of work against their target grade. Although a general analysis of examination results is carried out, little emphasis has so far been placed on the performance in the different units and so there is a lack of targeted improvement.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

### Art and Design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- Three-dimensional work is well made and ambitious in scale.
- The subject makes a good contribution to students' cultural development.

#### Areas for improvement

- Standards are lower than they should be, and students do not make enough progress.
- There is a lack of a sense of urgency in the teaching and learning, which are unsatisfactory overall.
- Work in drawing and painting is not ambitious enough to promote higher levels of interest and engagement.
- Insufficient demands are made on students.

243. The overall standard of work in art and design is below average and has not improved on the standards reported at the last inspection. Over the last three years, standards have varied from average to well below average, and this reflects varying attainment levels in the small numbers who take the examination. However, the GCE A-level results in 2000 showed standards to be well below average, and similar standards are reflected in the 2001 results.
244. In the work seen in the college, standards are below average. Students' achievement is unsatisfactory, and few show sufficient gains in comparison with their previous attainment. Sketchbooks are thorough, and show good research skills. Three-dimensional work is well made and ambitious in scale, and some impressive figures made from steel rod and wire are seen as a result. However, although research is thorough, it does not have sufficient impact on students' own work. This is because ideas are not fully developed into ambitious pieces. Students' painting is unadventurous in its use of the materials, and there is a lack of larger-scale work.
245. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, and their quality has fallen since the previous inspection. As a result, achievement is unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and give good advice to students on an individual basis. However, in too many lessons there is a lack of pace and insufficient demands are made on students. This was seen in a lesson where students were drawing and researching the work of other artists. This lesson was slow to get started, and the students continued to work at their own pace, which was slower than it should be. Students made very little progress in the lesson, and learning was unsatisfactory as a result. Because of these weaknesses, levels of engagement are low, students work too slowly, and time is wasted. This is a major reason why achievement is unsatisfactory.
246. Visits to galleries have extended students' knowledge of art and design, and a good proportion of students have undertaken research on family holidays abroad, for example, to Paris and Venice. Students are also encouraged to study a wide range of work, including architecture, sculpture, and the art of other cultures. They can also celebrate their own interests and personal history, and use this as a basis for their work. As a result, the subject makes a good contribution to developing students' cultural awareness.
247. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen and achievement is now unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. While subject documentation is very thorough, not enough has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is a lack of urgency in the work of the department, which is reflected in the lack of pace in lessons. This is a major weakness in the teaching, and as a result, standards and achievement are lower than they should be.

## HUMANITIES

### History

Overall, the quality of provision is **good**.

#### Strengths

- There has been a significant improvement in examination results since the last inspection.
- The teaching of history is very good overall: it is well planned and reflects strength of subject knowledge and high expectations of students.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the subject; they are becoming confident historians.

#### Areas for improvement

- The department needs to identify any underlying reasons which may account for fluctuations in A-level results between 2000 and 2001.
- Accommodation is over-crowded and makes it difficult for students to work in small groups or for teachers and students to move freely round some rooms.

248. Students' performances in GCE A-level examinations in both 1999 and in 2000 were well above the national average, both for the percentage achieving A-B grades and the proportion achieving A grades. This represents a substantial improvement compared with examination results in history at the time of the last inspection, when results were below average. Although examination results at A-level in 2001 fell to average in terms of A-B grades, AS results in 2001 suggest that standards are again above average with well over 50 per cent of students achieving A or B grades. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of students' work confirm that standards are above average and achievement is good. Attainment is above what might be expected at this early stage in the Year 12 AS-level course. The performance of the current Year 13 GCE A-level group is above average.
249. Students' written work is carefully organised and structured to support coherent conclusions based on valid historical evidence. Most students have developed comprehensive notes, annotated information sheets, outline plans and diagrammatic information to enable them to produce appropriately detailed written essays. Students make good use of opportunities to discuss their opinions in both formal and informal debate and also use their own knowledge and understanding to offer positive criticisms of the work of fellow students. This was evident, for example, in a Year 13 lesson where students made effective use of historical evidence to show why Catholic emancipation was important to Pitt. Similarly, in Year 12 students presented their ideas to the class on what constitutes an ideal democracy. This was done confidently and the ensuing discussion involved a great deal of constructive criticism as well as praise.
250. Students learn well in their courses in sixth form history, and they show good levels of progress in both thinking and in writing. Progression from GCSE to A-level is smoothly achieved. By the age of 18, students are producing high quality written work. Oral contributions are knowledgeable and confident. This good learning results both from the methodical and experienced teaching in the department and from the students' own committed attitudes to study. Teachers' confident subject expertise and high expectations of what students can achieve allow them to prepare students well for the demands of the higher order skills in the subject.
251. Sixth form students are articulate, purposeful and confident. The relationships between teachers and students are positive and students show considerable levels of enthusiasm for their history lessons.
252. The quality of teaching is very good. There are many significant strengths in the teaching which have a positive impact on both students' attitudes and the quality of their learning. Abstract historical concepts are taught in a very effective manner which enables students, for example, to develop a good understanding of what historians mean by concepts such as the

failure of democracy. The content of lessons is challenging and students are encouraged to develop their own historical viewpoints. Marking of students' written work is thorough and comments clearly show what has been done well and where students need to direct further effort. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed towards raising standards in the subject and in maintaining its popularity as an option choice.

253. The subject is very well managed by an experienced head of department. He has a clear view of the priorities for the subject, shared by a committed and able team. Students have access to a good range of textbooks and other resources, although there is, as yet, insufficient use of information technology. Accommodation is over-crowded although teachers are adept in making the best use of cramped conditions. Departmental documentation is thorough and effective. This can be seen, for example, in detailed analysis of recent examination results. The department has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last inspection report. History makes a strong contribution towards students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## Sociology

Overall, the quality of provision in sociology is **very good**.

### Strengths

- GCE Advanced-level results in 2000 were well above national averages.
- In Year 13, standards of work are above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good which results in very effective learning.
- Students are enthusiastic in their learning and are making very good progress.

### Areas for improvement

- Time management - some lessons a little rushed at the end.

254. In 2000, the proportion of students achieving A and B grade passes was well above the national average. In 2001, approximately 50 per cent of students achieved higher-grade passes at GCE Advanced-level thus maintaining high standards. Advanced-subsidary sociology was the third most popular subject taken in Year 12 in 2001 and approximately 75 per cent of students achieved A to C grade passes. Most of these students have continued to follow the GCE Advanced-level course this academic year.

255. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average and students' achievement since the start of Year 12 is very good – none have studied GCSE sociology prior to taking the AS examination in Year 12. They are, for example, developing a good grasp of the principles of belief systems in the sociology of religion module and have a secure grasp of a range of theoretical perspectives such as Malinowski's functionalist approach. In one very good Year 13 lesson, for example, they were successfully developing their knowledge and understanding of the structure and beliefs of religious cults through a very effective group work exercise. Students consider arguments from different theoretical perspectives and make their own considered judgements. Their knowledge and understanding of religion in contemporary society have been enhanced by visits to a local Sikh temple and a Muslim mosque where they have been able to talk with the religious leaders. Students' research skills are well developed and include use of the world wide web to access relevant information

256. Year 12 students have made a good start to the Advanced-subsiary course and are coming to grips with the various theoretical sociological perspectives as applied to the study of the family. In one lesson, for example, they were developing their knowledge and understanding of social constructivist theories and perspectives of childhood.
257. Overall, the teaching of sociology is very good and results in very effective learning. Very good quality schemes of work guide teachers' work in order that the demands of the syllabus are fully met. The teachers' enthusiasm, experience and excellent understanding of the subject matter successfully motivate students in lessons. Very good use is made of relevant and contemporary, as well as more established, sociological evidence and research. Teachers are also adept at using anecdotal evidence, some of which is related to students' own experiences. This enlivens lessons and keeps students interested. Teachers employ a range of structured activities in lessons, which is also useful in this respect. As well as traditional teacher delivery, students are involved in pair work, brainstorming and small group work – this was particularly effective in a Year 13 lesson when groups of students were 'designing' their own religious cults. Teachers value students' oral contributions that are sometimes based on their own experiences and perspectives. Teachers are also skilful in directing questions to students, thus ensuring they all have input into the lesson. On the odd occasion, the end of the lesson is rushed. This means there is insufficient time to consolidate in students' minds the major themes and perspectives that have been covered.
258. As a result of the very good quality teaching, students show interest and enthusiasm for the subject. The majority reads around the subject and uses available resources with confidence. Students show insight in lesson discussions, they express their own ideas confidently as well as listening and respecting the beliefs and views of others.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

#### Strengths

- There is good curriculum provision, offering students good choices of course. Good provision for students needing to re-sit their GCSE.
- For the past three years all students have attained at least a grade E at A-level.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to offer a wide range of literary experiences.

#### Areas for improvement

- The use of a wider range of learning activities which engage the active participation of all students.
- More thorough analysis of examination statistics and assessment information in order to assist in the planning of teaching strategies.

259. Attainment in English Literature at A-level in 2000 was in line with the national average. The percentage of students attaining the two highest grades in 2000 was below the national average. This percentage fluctuates from year to year and experienced a dip in 2000, rising again in 2001, but to a level which remained below the national average. For the past three years all students who took the examination attained within the range A-E grades, which is better than is seen nationally. In the AS-level examinations in 2001 almost half of the students who took the examination attained one of the two higher grades and a high percentage attained a pass grade. Evidence of attainment seen during the course of the inspection indicates that it is inline with the national average. The standards of attainment reported on after the previous inspection have been sustained. The attainment of students who re-take their English GCSE in the sixth form compares favourably with what is seen nationally, with about one third of students attaining a grade C or above.



260. The achievement during the sixth form of students who took their A-level examination in 2001, based on comparison of the results of individual students in their GCSE examination with their result at A-level, is unsatisfactory overall.
261. All teaching seen in the sixth form was at least satisfactory while most was good. Teachers share with their classes their objectives for the lessons and their plans for future lessons, involving students in taking appropriate responsibility for ensuring that their tasks and assignments are prepared in good time. Teachers' explanations are very clear and, when it is apparent that there are students who are experiencing difficulty with understanding their texts, teachers make good attempts to further clarify the points which are causing difficulty. On these occasions students make good progress in understanding challenging concepts. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to provide extensive background information, which is much appreciated by students, who make good progress in understanding that all literary works are a product of a distinctive context. Students preparing to study the work of Tennessee Williams had spent some time studying a range of other drama and were well informed on the similarities and differences between these. Teachers make good use of humour to make texts more accessible and treat sensitive issues carefully, showing understanding of the difficulties which some students might experience. Students discussing a particularly difficult and sensitive passage were well supported by their teacher, who recognised their reticence and made every effort to put them at ease with the topic. Students responded well to this sensitive approach and made good progress. Teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of learning activities in order to meet the needs of all students across the attainment range. In most lessons, time is spent in more passive activities, such as reading the text aloud or in listening to extended explanations by teachers. While they are imparting valuable information, teachers do not always take steps to ascertain or ensure that all students are following this; it is assumed, incorrectly at times, that all students are concentrating and understanding. Little use is made of targeted questions and it is possible for students to take very little active part in such lessons. Teachers make frequent use of discussion as a learning tool, but the discussion is often limited to a small number of students, with others taking little or no part. On such occasions some students make insufficient progress and this is not always recognised by their teachers, who take few steps to ensure that all students are sufficiently involved in class activities.
262. The management of English in the sixth form is satisfactory. The sixth form curriculum for English is good. The arrangements made through the partnership with the other school in the consortium mean that students have a choice of both syllabus and learning style. There are good facilities for those who need to re-sit their GCSE in English. In order to make it easy to combine this re-sit with other courses which are being followed, there are three re-sit groups and, although this means that some of the groups are small, students have good access to this important course. Insufficient use is made of the statistical information which is available on the examination performance of every student in order to analyse how much progress is made by students on the A-level course and there is little awareness of the fact that individual students have not made the progress of which they are capable.

## French

*French was the focus of the inspection, though Spanish lessons were also sampled. Very few students have been entered for A-level Spanish over the past few years so it is difficult to draw conclusions about standards in Spanish.*

Overall, the quality of provision in French is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is at least good, and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations of students.
- Teachers use the target language effectively.

Areas for improvement

- There are considerable variations in the standard of written work in Years 12 and 13.

263. Standards at A-level are above national averages. In 2000 the majority of students achieved the higher grades in A-level examinations and students' achievement in French was better than in other subjects. This confirms a trend of previous years when results have been consistently above the national and school average. In 2001 results for both A and AS level were above average although the numbers of students for A-level declined significantly.
264. Standards of work seen in the sixth form are above expectations. Most students in Year 13 are now able to use language orally to put forward and defend a point of view and often cope well in unfamiliar situations. Most students are able to use written language effectively in a variety of contexts such as debating issues, descriptions and paraphrasing texts. They use a good range of vocabulary with a good level of accuracy. Some written work, however, is below average, showing a poor level of accuracy and a poor understanding of structure. Year 12 students display a wide variety of attainment in writing although they have good listening and oral skills.
265. Overall, students make good progress. Year 12 students are already able to use language to express opinions and discuss issues. Most Year 13 students use language effectively, both orally and in writing, to undertake complex language tasks.
266. Teaching is always good, sometimes very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the target language extensively in lessons. They have high expectations and insist, for example, that French is used as the normal means of communication in the classroom by all students. Teachers work hard to ensure full participation by all students in the lesson. Good knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses allows them to set appropriate tasks for individuals.
267. Wimbledon College is part of a consortium sixth form in conjunction with its partner school. All sixth form French teaching now takes place at the Girls' School. This has caused difficulties for some of the Year 13 boys who studied their Year 12 at Wimbledon College but have had to transfer to the Girls' School for Year 13. Problems of communication about student numbers have led to a large group of 26 students in Year 12. There are plans to rectify the situation in the near future. In general, however, procedures for communication between the two schools and for monitoring students' progress are good. Students are appreciative of the support given to them by their teachers.