

INSPECTION REPORT

Sir John Hunt Community College
Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique Reference Number: 113533

Principal: Mr M Larner

Reporting inspector: Mr T Jardine

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708086

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 16 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Box
Date of previous inspection:	November 1995

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Mr G Ellis Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and students' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs M Cureton	Special educational needs	
Dr B Smith	Mathematics	Efficiency of the college
Mr P Nixon	English	Curriculum
Dr M Davis	Science	Staffing
Mr B Carvell	Design and technology Art	Learning resources
Mr R Donne	Modern foreign languages	Accommodation
Mr M Roberts	Information and communication technology History	
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Mr P Harle	Music and drama	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the college does well

- Ability to improve attainment and progress of students is strong
- The quality of teaching is good
- Leadership and management are very good
- Assessment and tracking of students' progress are good
- Staffing, accommodation and resources are good
- Students' progress is good
- Students' attitudes and relationships are very good
- Students' behaviour is good
- The arrangements for the personal development of students are good
- Spiritual, moral and social development are good
- The support, guidance and arrangements for students' welfare are very good
- Partnership with parents and the community are very good
- Resources are well used and the control of finance is excellent
- Provides very good value for money.

Where the college has weaknesses

- I. The proportion of students who attain above the national average is relatively low.

The strengths of the college far outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of students at the college.

How the college has improved since the last inspection

The college has improved extensively since the last inspection in November 1995. The quality of teaching has improved from sound to good and teachers' expectations are now high. The proportion of students gaining Level 5 or above in the tests at the end of Year 9 has risen steeply in English and mathematics. Likewise the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C has risen from 5.8 per cent in 1994 to 30.3 per cent in 1999, a remarkable improvement. The key issues identified in the last inspection concerned with improving standards of achievement, the structure of the timetable, collective worship, time for teaching religious education, registration and students with special educational needs have been fully addressed. Extensive progress has been made in extending teaching and learning strategies, raising teachers' expectations of students and improving students' basic skills and raising their personal confidence. The standard of learning resources is now good and the standard of the accommodation is much improved. This is a very good college that has the capacity and will to sustain its rapid rate of improvement.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14-, 16- and 18-year-olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1999:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	"	Key
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
Key Stage 3 tests	D	B		
GCSE examination	D	B		
A/AS-levels	-	-		

The results in the 1999 Key Stage 3 tests were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The results compared to similar schools were above average for English and science and average for mathematics.

In the 1999 GCSE examinations the performance of below average students was particularly good, the performance of average students good and the performance of above average students less good. This reflects the profile of attainment on entry which contains a below average proportion of students of above average ability. The strongest subjects at GCSE in 1999 were English, art, and business studies the weakest subject was food technology.

At the end of Year 11 the attainment of current students in the majority of subjects is below national expectations.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7 - 9	Good	Mathematics, science, physical education	
Years 10 - 11	Good	Science, history	
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Very good		

All the teaching was at least satisfactory: in 31 per cent of classes it was at least very good and occasionally excellent.

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

Other aspects of the college

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Generally good in class and around the college
Attendance	Satisfactory, unauthorised absence below average, students arrive at classes punctually
Ethos*	Excellent: a climate conducive to learning, very good attitudes to work, very positive relationships between students and between students and staff and a wholehearted commitment to raising standards
Leadership and management	Very good leadership and management has led to the outstanding improvement in the standards of attainment and the quality of education provided
Curriculum	Generally good: broad and balanced but access to options at Key Stage 4 varies depending upon ability. Assessment is fully integrated into all aspects of the college and is well used to help students progress
Students with special educational needs	Good provision: students make good progress throughout the college, they have equal access to the curriculum and are accurately identified, assessed and regularly reviewed
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The college provides a safe and secure environment within which students can develop personally and academically
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is a strength of the college: appointments and induction procedures are rigorous and effective. Well resourced. Accommodation for most subjects is good, apart from the huts used by humanities
Value for money	Very good: Attainment mainly below average, good progress, very good quality education and average expenditure

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

The parents' views of the college

What most parents like about the college	What some parents are not happy about
<p>II. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the college</p> <p>III. Students are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities</p> <p>IV. It is easy to approach the college about problems or suggestions</p> <p>V. Students like college</p> <p>VI. The standard of attainment achieved by students</p> <p>VII. It gives a clear understanding of what is taught.</p>	<p>VIII. The quantity and quality of homework</p> <p>IX. Presence of disruptive students inhibits</p>

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' highly positive views of the college. Homework is appropriately set. There are students with behaviour difficulties in the college but they are very well managed by teachers and effectively supported by senior management. Progress is not significantly inhibited by disruptive behaviour.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to further improve the college: governors, principal, senior management team and staff should:

- . Increase the proportion of students who obtain above the national average in external examinations in line with the college targets.
(Paragraphs: 9, 10, 103, 110, 116, 142, 149, 155, 162, 173, 182, 189, 194)

In addition to the key issue above the following less important weakness should be considered for incorporation in the action plan:

- . Devise a curriculum policy that makes clear governors' intentions for all students.
(Paragraph: 40)
- . Ensure that students, no matter what their ability, have the same degree of choice of option subjects at Key Stage 4 wherever practicable.
(Paragraph: 43)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the college

1. Sir John Hunt Community College is a small mixed comprehensive college with 574 students on roll, 280 boys and 294 girls. The college is LEA controlled. It is situated in the Whitleigh district of Plymouth.
2. The majority of students are drawn from two primary schools on the Whitleigh estate. Since the last inspection the numbers of students have risen slightly and the college is now oversubscribed. The results of the Key Stage 2 tests show that the average level of attainment on entry is well below average. The proportion of more able students is below average due to the selective system of education that operates in Plymouth. There are no students who speak English as an additional language.
3. Most students come from families whose socio-economic circumstances are below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is almost three times the national average. The percentage of students with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.
4. In 1998, the proportion of Year 11 students staying on in full-time education (55 per cent) was slightly higher than at the last inspection.
5. The aims of the college are comprehensive. They refer, amongst other things, to students achieving their potential, developing moral and spiritual awareness and preparation for adult roles in society.
6. The college makes excellent use of standardised tests to ~~de~~ise challenging targets for individual students and for the college to achieve in Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	56	64	120

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	23	26	25
	Girls	46	36	27
	Total	69	62	52
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	College	57.5	51.7	43.3
	National	63	62	55
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	College	20	25.8	15
	National	28	38	23

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	23	25	26
	Girls	48	40	32
	Total	71	65	58
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	College	59.2	54.2	48.3
	National	64	64	60
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	College	24	17	17
	National	31	37	28

Attainment at Key Stage 4

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	56	53	109

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of students achieving standard specified	Boys	18	55	56
	Girls	15	51	52
	Total	33	106	108
Percentage achieving standard specified	College	30.3	97.3	99
	National	46.3	90.7	95.7

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the	Authorised	College	%
			7.9

latest complete reporting year

Absence	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	College	0.0
Absence	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	15
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	31
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE COLLEGE

Attainment and progress

7. Attainment on entry includes the full range of ability but the proportion of more able students is well below average and the proportion of less able students is well above average. Standards of attainment on entry are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 the standard of attainment remains below average.
8. Attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations in just over a third of the lessons seen and above them in about a sixth of lessons. Attainment was below national expectations over a third of lessons and well below in a tenth of them. The profile of attainment in lessons is similar at Key Stages 3 and 4. Other sources of evidence such as discussions with students and examination of written work indicates that attainment overall is below average. The overall level of attainment in subjects is mainly below average. The exceptions are information and communications technology, drama and physical education, which are average.
9. The performance of students in the standardised tests taken in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were below the national average in all three subjects. Taking the results for all three subjects together for the period 1996 to 1999, the results were below the national average. In comparison with similar schools students' performance in the 1999 tests was above average: it was above average for English and science and average for mathematics.
10. In GCSE, the proportion of students obtaining five or more grades A*-C in 1999 was 30.3 per cent, well below the national average of 46.3 per cent but far better than the 5.8 per cent at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining five or more grades A*-G was 97 per cent, well above the national average of 90.7 per cent. Over the period 1996 to 1999 the proportion of students obtaining five or more grades A*-C was well below the national average but the proportion obtaining five or more grades A*-G was close to the national average. The average total GCSE points score per student in 1999 was below the national average but above average compared to similar schools. Over the last five years the average total points score per pupil shows a rising trend at a much faster rate than the national average. In 1999, both boys and girls results were below average.
11. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 3 Standard Attainment Tests were below the national average for English, mathematics and science. The proportion of students who obtained grades A*-C in the 1999 GCSE results was just below average for English but well below average for mathematics and science. Current attainment in English and science is below national expectations at Key Stage 3 but in line with them in mathematics. At Key Stage 4 attainment in English is in line with national expectations but is below them in mathematics and science.

12. Current attainment in most other subjects is below national expectations. The exceptions that are in line with national expectations are mathematics, information and communications technology, drama, physical education and religious education at Key Stage 3 and English, drama and information and communications technology at Key Stage 4.
13. GCSE results for most other subjects in 1999 were well below the national average for the proportion of A*-C grades. The exceptions were the short course in religious education, which was above average and art that was below average.
14. Overall progress is good both by mainstream students and those with special educational needs. It is consistently good during Key Stages 3 and 4. In essence the college recruits students whose average ability is well below the national average and achieves results below the national average at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Comparison of GCSE results with similar schools show that students of average and below average ability have made particularly good progress but there is room to increase the proportion of students achieving above average levels which are reflected in the college targets. Such good progress is due to the ability of teachers to interest and manage students and the positive response of students to teachers who clearly care for them. Progress is at least satisfactory in over nine out of ten lessons. It is at least good in over six out of ten lessons and very good in two out of ten lessons. The rate of progress is similar at Key Stages 3 and 4.
15. Progress is good during Key Stage 3, apart from mathematics where it is very good, and English, drama and music where it is satisfactory. During Key Stage 4 progress is mainly good apart from English, drama, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history and physical education where it is satisfactory.
16. Progress of students with special educational needs is good. Students' targets in their individual education plans relate to a wide range of subjects and include aspects of personal development including behaviour where it is useful and appropriate. Progress in literacy and numeracy is good. Special arrangements for tests and examinations for students with special educational needs are routinely organised on an individual basis.
17. Standards of literacy and numeracy on entry remain well below average, for example over a third of the 1999 intake have a reading age at least two years below average. The college has made a considerable effort to improve students' literacy and numeracy since the last inspection criticised the level of students' basic skills. Policies for language and number have been devised and implemented with some success to get subjects other than English and mathematics to develop literacy and numeracy.
18. Most reading is from textbooks with a slightly wider range used at Key Stage 4. Reading aloud is practised in several subjects other than English, notably drama, French and the humanities. In drama students are encouraged to read with meaning. Students are often called upon to read aloud in assemblies. Science texts are subjected to reading age tests prior to purchase. Dictionaries are readily available in design and technology so that students can look up words they do not understand. Students with special educational needs receive help with reading in class and in withdrawal lessons. Writing is promoted in

geography by placing key words on the board and the use of writing frames to help students of differing abilities. Supportive marking helps students improve their writing in science. French has placed a major emphasis on writing in an attempt to improve standards. There are plenty of opportunities to write in religious education using different styles of writing. Students tend to be better at speaking and listening than writing. In drama, both speaking and listening are effectively developed. In history, students listen well and speak confidently encouraged by the use of teaching methods such as role play and presentations and the good relationships that exist between teachers and students. Students listen well to each other in religious education. Listening skills are under-developed in music.

19. Numeracy is developed in a number of subjects where it plays a significant role. The mathematics department has provided advice and guidance on the teaching of mathematical concepts. In geography, data is presented in graphical form when studying climate and population and basic statistics are well used in GCSE coursework. In science, measuring, graphical and tabulation skills are well developed and more able students use equations appropriately. Design and technology requires students to work to scale, measure, produce patterns, explain graphs and use proportion. Measuring and timing are part of the scheme of work for physical education.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20. Students' attitudes are very good and students' behaviour is good.
21. Students are very well motivated towards their work and form very good relationships. Students' personal development is good. Parents consider that the college is successful in achieving a high standard of behaviour. At both key stages students have very good attitudes to learning. Teachers have good class management skills and are enthusiastic in their approach which together have a major effect on students' attitudes. Teachers maintain the concentration of the minority of less well motivated students by careful monitoring and skilled intervention. Students develop good motivation towards their learning which is enhanced by improving confidence and self-esteem. They are interested in and persevere with their work, consistently retain high levels of concentration, pay attention to their teachers and readily talk about what they are doing. During class discussions they volunteer questions and join in enthusiastically. The majority of students display good self-discipline and work well when not closely monitored.
22. Students with special educational needs want to learn, particularly when they have had some initial success. They behave well and have the same opportunities for personal development as other students. Students are expected to take responsibility to inform their teacher that they will be withdrawn from class to use an interactive computer literacy programme and to take a measure of responsibility for their own learning. Students with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the college. They relate well to others and have no stigma attached to them. Some are able to learn well independently in some subjects such as science at Key Stage 4.
23. Standards of behaviour both in class and around the college are generally good

and sometimes very good. This helps to maintain a directed environment for learning and is a significant factor in the college's success. Students are smart, friendly, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They are considerate to each other, move around the college sensibly and lessons are able to start promptly. Behaviour is generally good in class. A few students become inattentive in some lessons, but are handled effectively with firmness and tact by teachers. Students take good care of equipment and resources and show respect for property and the environment with an obvious pride in their college. In class, they willingly and politely share resources and collect and return equipment, for example in science and physical education.

24. The college's unambiguous approach to behaviour is implemented and reinforced conscientiously and consistently by all staff throughout the college, creating a positive learning environment. Students are therefore fully aware of what is expected of them and respond well. For example, on formal occasions such as assemblies they arrive and conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner. During the inspection one example of aggressive behaviour was seen but was expertly handled by the teacher concerned. Students say that there is low incidence of bullying and that instances are dealt with firmly. There have been no permanent exclusions since 1995 whilst the number of fixed-term exclusions has been declining.
25. The very good relationships are major strengths of the college. Relationships between students and all adults are very good. Students relate very well to teachers and in turn feel valued by them, exemplified by the high level of trust they place in the staff. Students work together harmoniously. They talk enthusiastically, respond well to their activities and speak well of their college. They collaborate well in group and experimental work, learning well from each other. This reflects the good example of teamwork set by the staff. Students are trustworthy, show thoughtfulness and consideration and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They take pleasure in the successes and achievements of others. A pupil making a mistake is rarely a reason for even mild mirth. On commencing in Year 7 some students display relative immaturity and limited social skills. However, within the college's positive ethos and environment most of these students quickly develop improved skills and maturity.
26. Students generally respond well to opportunities to exercise responsibility and independence, and they regularly undertake helpful duties in all classes. There is an active College Council representing all year groups and a developed prefect system. In class, most students demonstrate a good capacity to organise their work in a controlled environment. They respond well to opportunities to undertake personal study and there are good examples of independent learning in humanities.
27. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of students are major strengths contributing to students' attainment and progress and the quality of life in the college. Comments from parents, both in the questionnaires and the meeting prior to the inspection, fully support this view.

Attendance

28. Attendance is around the national average. Unauthorised absences below the

national average. There are no major attendance problems. Students arrive punctually to classes enabling lessons to start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

29. The overall standard of teaching is good at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is always satisfactory and at least good in over eight out of ten lessons. The teaching in over three out of ten lessons is at least very good. The college's impressive success in addressing students' underachievement and enabling many of them to reach their potential at GCSE is mainly due to the high standard of teaching.
30. Most subject teaching is good but there are some exceptions. At Key Stage 3 teaching in mathematics, science and physical education is very good and teaching in English satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 teaching in science and history is very good and teaching in English is satisfactory.
31. Teaching of students with special educational needs in withdrawal groups is at least satisfactory and often better. Support in class for students with special educational needs is arranged so that they are fully integrated into lessons. When there is no support in class, teaching is frequently very successful because departments receive a high standard of advice and support and plan for students with special educational needs well. Occasionally, unsupported students do maintain concentration or cause disruption. Students' individual education plans are clear and practical. They are easy to use. Subject teachers take the trouble to discuss students' targets with them and help them to understand how they might be achieved. All staff pay particular attention to disability needs as they affect learning. Praise is used effectively in all departments and success celebrated, for example when students reach the next level of their computer course they are issued with certificates in a whole-college assembly.
32. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good. The presence of native speakers of French adds authenticity to foreign language teaching and raises the interest level of students. The enthusiasm and expertise of mathematics teaching helps students to concentrate and improves understanding of mathematical concepts. Teachers of information and communications technology use their knowledge of the subject to support the less able and stretch the more able students.
33. Teachers' expectations are very good. Teachers encourage students to reach their mutually agreed targets. High expectations of behaviour and attainment is the norm. In mathematics teachers vary their expectations skilfully to match the ability of the class in order to encourage students to do their best. In information and communications technology high standards of behaviour, presentation, oral and written work are expected, which promotes attainment and progress.
34. The standard of lesson planning is good. Almost all subjects have well devised schemes of work including suggestions for alternative tasks for more and less able students, a criticism in the last inspection report. The good teamwork

evident in science, French and geography helps improve students' understanding by taking a consistent approach to conventions, ideas and concepts. Design and technology lessons are made more purposeful by ensuring students understand the learning objectives at the start of the lesson.

35. The teaching methods used and the organisation of lessons are good. Probing question and answer sessions in physical education help consolidate students' knowledge and understanding and helps them reflect on the topic under consideration. The use of independent learning assignments in history makes students think for themselves and become less dependent upon the teacher. Lessons in science and religious education are presented with enthusiasm which gives rise to a positive attitude to study by students. Clear explanations are a feature of mathematics and geography lessons that fosters students' understanding.
36. The management of students is a strength of the college. Teachers use different techniques to manage students. In history and foreign languages humour is effectively used to capture students' interest and encourage them to learn. A calm manner helps settle students in drama lessons. In some lessons students are not as quiet as they should be because the content is not stimulating, the purpose unclear or explanations are too long.
37. The use of time and resources are good. In English, good use is made of visual aids especially video and the balance of worksheets, books and other resources is satisfactory. Time targets are well used in science to ensure the pace of learning is brisk and time is left at the end of lessons for reinforcement of learning.
38. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is very good. The recent initiative to raise the quality of marking has had a significant effect. In geography, questions are well used to reinforce students' understanding and marking includes diagnostic comments related to students' individual targets. Extensive dialogue between teachers and students about how they can meet their individual targets helps progress in design and technology. In music, effective informal assessment linked to teachers' feedback helps music making.
39. The use of homework is good. Homework is regularly set and marked. In science lack of text books to take home restricts the range of tasks that can be set for homework. In physical education, the tasks set for homework do not promote independent learning sufficiently.

The curriculum and assessment

40. The college aims, published in the prospectus, include several references to the curriculum, for instance that the college provides the National Curriculum and a broad and balanced secular curriculum, with attention to the spiritual and moral well-being of the students. The aims, together with the college curriculum statement and the booklet Key Stage 4 Courses, amount to a curriculum policy, but the governors should set out a policy which states their intentions for all students. The last inspection report recommended a review of the timetable and the college day, which was carried out in 1996. The timetable is now organised into 40 lessons each week, 8 per day, producing a timetabled week of over 25 hours. This meets national recommendations for taught time and provides

sufficient time for all subjects, although that for physical education at Key Stage 3 is restricted. Two of the eight lessons each day are 35 minutes and the rest 40 minutes, which is anomalous.

41. The curriculum for students with special educational needs is a balance of class teaching and withdrawal classes. Subjects make suitable arrangements with the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure students' individual targets are met. Literacy and numeracy are well supported by conventional teaching and an interactive computer program for which students are withdrawn from lessons. Great care is taken to ensure withdrawal does not compromise access to the curriculum.
42. At Key Stage 3, all students study the ten subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education, which includes health and sex education; in Year 7 information and communications technology is taught separately and subsequently it is taught via other subjects. On entry, students are taught in mixed ability groups for the first term. Subsequently they are taught in classes organised by ability, with termly review of the membership of classes. In Years 8 and 9 subject departments have the opportunity to organise their groups within two ability bands. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Students of all abilities have equal access to the full curriculum. Given the wide range of ability in the college and the considerable need for in-class support, the differentiation of groups by ability is sensible and assists teaching and learning.
43. At Key Stage 4 all students study English, mathematics, science, technology, French, physical education, personal and social education and religious education. Optional subjects include art, drama, music and office applications. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 also meets National Curriculum requirements and students with special needs continue to receive helpful support either in class or by withdrawal. Most students continue to undertake a broad and balanced programme and take GCSE qualifications in up to nine subjects. This is a sound policy. The range of the curriculum however is somewhat different in the two ability bands. Students in the upper band take double science and either geography or history. Those in the lower band take single science and word processing (which leads to a Pitman's qualification), but are not obliged to take history or geography. Indeed the latter are not taught currently in the lower band and a minority of students do not study geography, history, art, drama or music at Key Stage 4. All students do not have equal access to the curriculum at this stage. The college might consider some modifications to the option system in the light of its policy for equal opportunity.
44. Since the last inspection the college has expanded its provision for careers education and vocational education, creditably identifying ways in which subjects across the curriculum contribute to the work-related curriculum. Literacy and numeracy have also been given attention across the curriculum with beneficial effects on teaching and learning. Multicultural education, identified as deficient at the last inspection, still requires fuller development. A good range of extra-curricular activities supplements the timetabled curriculum and is well attended. Homework is regularly set and well used. Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable positive development of the curriculum and timetable.

45. The college undertakes a wide range of assessments that enable it to follow students' progress as they move through the college. Assessment procedures meet the current statutory requirements. Students are subject to regular assessment to check their developing level of aptitude; subjects also carefully assess what students know, understand and can do. College records of assessments are scrupulously maintained from baseline data on entry to college to predicted and actual GCSE grades at the end of Year 11. Departments also maintain thorough records of students' attainment: they are permitted a degree of flexibility in the way in which this is done but are regularly monitored by the senior management team to ensure that their practices fit in with the college assessment policy.
46. Baseline testing is secure. Students with special educational needs are reliably identified. The standard of assessment is high and the outcomes are used to inform the procedures for moving students up and down the stages of the Code of Practice. Target setting is relevant and appropriate. All students with statements of special educational need have the level of help prescribed in the statements. Monitoring and reviewing of statements are fully in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Transitional reviews, partly produced by the local education authority, are thorough.
47. The college records data on current levels of attainment and also uses information to predict future attainment, particularly the levels that students should reach at the end of Key Stage 3 and the GCSE grades in order to set targets for students. The way in which targets are set varies from subject to subject; for example, in geography, one or two targets are written in the back of each pupil's exercise book where they are regularly checked and updated. Students usually know their targets, which are invariably manageable, clearly written and pertinent to their current situation. The effect of this method is that both students and teachers are more purposeful in their approach to their learning to the benefit of attainment in the college as a whole. However, in design and technology target setting and sharing assessment with students means that they clearly understand what they need to do to improve. Students at Key Stage 3 have their attainment across subjects recorded and monitored by form teachers who act on this information if students' lack of progress requires intervention. In Years 10 and 11 students are monitored through the senior management team, who intervene to mentor students if their levels of attainment fail to meet predictions. Assessment is becoming more accurate: the difference between teachers' assessments and the test results at the end of Key Stage 3 is much closer in 1999 than in 1998. Many departments hold portfolios to exemplify standards of students' work and moderate their marking, which improves the accuracy of teachers' assessments at Key Stage 3. Assessment data has been used to identify able and gifted students with the aim of improving the number of higher grades in examinations.
48. The quality of marking of work shows increasing consistency across the college; it is usually regular, thorough and tells students clearly how they can improve their work. For example, the marking of mathematics is consistent, accurate and explicit in the written advice it provides. Key Stage 3 marking is starting to include indications of students' National Curriculum level; students' understanding of this system is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of level criteria

in all their exercise books for reference. Most marking contains practical advice and many students respond well to the diagnostic guidance that they are given. Marking is monitored by the senior management team using clear guidelines.

49. The main issue raised in the last inspection has been addressed fully. As reported above, data from students' assessment is used to assess their learning needs and to set targets for improvement for all students, regardless of their abilities.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

50. The college's overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: the commitment is expressed in the public documentation and manifest in the daily practices. The college provides a secure, supportive and challenging environment in which students are able to develop personally and academically; the focus is upon positive values and responsible attitudes; parents express support for the attitudes and values the college promotes. The governing body, through a practical commitment, provides strong support; the principal and senior management team lead by example and, together with the other adults, provide good role models who contribute significantly to the excellent ethos, where tolerance and respect flourish within a strong moral framework.
51. Provision for students' spiritual development is good, with religious education making a powerful contribution; good support is provided by music and drama, with additional contributions from science, art, design and technology, history and English. Teaching in religious education, with an emphasis upon Christianity, also provides insights into other world faiths – Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism; the work related to the nature of religion, issues of life and death and belief in God, require students to reflect upon themselves and their relationship to the unknown. The ethos, within which students are required to act as thinking human beings and ask fundamental questions on the nature and purpose of life, has a positive effect, which extends beyond the boundaries of the subject into whole college provision.
52. The programme of formal assemblies, based upon upper and lower college gatherings, provides students with collective worship on two occasions each week; on the other three days students participate in tutorial assemblies. The focus of all assemblies is based upon 'the theme for the week', the programme for which is planned at the commencement of term but which is flexible enough to accommodate the unknown. The ambiance of the college hall in which the assemblies are held complements the high quality of planning, preparation and involvement by staff and students and makes a significant contribution to students' spiritual development. The tutor assemblies, monitored regularly by the heads of upper and lower colleges, also make a positive contribution to students' spiritual development. The college, in contrast to the comments contained in the previous inspection report, provides high quality experiences, which fulfil the statutory requirements to provide students with a daily act of corporate worship.
53. Provision for moral education is good; the college, through its daily practices and routines, promotes clear values vigorously and encourages students to develop a care and respect for themselves, for others and for property. Students know

right from wrong. In their daily contact with students all staff play an effective part in implementing the college's moral codes and expectations. A wide range of subjects – science, religious education, art, design and technology, history, music, drama, geography, English, physical education and personal and social education – effectively address a range of moral themes. Sex education is taught within the context of family relationships and enables all students to engage with moral issues, including personal responsibilities. Charitable activities are initiated by staff and students alike, with support for a range of bodies at local (the provision of Christmas lunches for pensioners in the local community), national (Red Nose day) and international levels (the Tanzanian project).

54. Good provision is made for students' social development; the social cohesiveness of the college reflects its aims. Students are trusted by adults and respond positively; tolerance, respect for other people, their views and beliefs, is integral to the college's work. Effective co-operative work in pairs and small groups is a feature of many subjects. Links with the business community are manifest in the Year 11 work experience programme and the Year 9 work-related activities. Work with the University of Plymouth together with an impressive range of activities of both a sporting and non-sporting nature bring many students into useful contact with outside bodies and the world of work. Citizenship is an integral part of the planned personal and social education programme in which all students participate during their time at the College. A range of features, such as the year and college councils, the paired reading support scheme, subject based field trips and a range of social activities, enable students to practice and display their social skills and competencies.
55. The cultural development of students is satisfactory overall: students develop a good understanding of local, regional, national and European cultural traditions through a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular provision including visits to the theatre, art galleries and trips abroad. The use of the college by local groups helps to cement the good working relationships within the community. There is a need to provide a richer and more extensive set of experiences to help students to recognise and understand the challenges and opportunities which living in a multicultural society bring. While religious education makes a significant contribution to the multicultural dimension, not all curriculum areas take advantage of the opportunities available to them; there is a need to ensure a whole curriculum approach to the provision.

Support, guidance and students' welfare

56. The college is a caring community and makes very good provision for students' support, guidance and welfare. There is very good pastoral care and attention to students' welfare. A very caring environment is provided by means of systematic procedures, good teamwork and expert tutors. There are very good procedures for promoting attendance and for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The provision for those with special educational needs is very good. There is good, comprehensive pastoral care provided by all staff, who have a very good knowledge of individual students. Within a very caring and trusting environment they provide good support which is acknowledged and valued by parents. The college's general approach is to use every opportunity to encourage students

and extend them to their capabilities. There is good induction of new students with good liaison with the feeder primary schools. There is very good, comprehensive careers guidance and support provided to students. They are therefore very well prepared for work, training or the next stage of education.

57. The provision for students with special educational needs is very good. They are supported well in all areas of the college. External agencies are used well to the benefit of the students. The college provides very good support and guidance which assist students' progress and their confidence.
58. The college has a comprehensive, positive approach to conduct and behaviour with a code of conduct which is well understood by students. The college's well structured approach, with good supporting procedures, is conscientiously applied by all staff with high levels of consistency and sensitivity. Good behaviour is vigorously promoted and rewarded. This results in an orderly environment which successfully motivates students to act with responsibility and commitment. The few instances of inappropriate behaviour are well handled with expedition and care and are frequently used as effective learning opportunities. The staff provide excellent role models and the college's successful approach to discipline is demonstrated by the very good behaviour of students in and around the college.
59. Attendance is very well monitored with good supporting procedures. Registers are completed promptly and in accordance with regulations. A consistent time for the closure of registers is maintained. Attendance is recorded in all lessons. There is weekly monitoring and good liaison with the education welfare service. Absences are followed up immediately on a daily basis. As part of the broader, caring environment, the college's promotional and caring approach has resulted in an improved awareness among older students of the importance of regular attendance.
60. There is very good monitoring of academic progress which is very thorough in all subjects. The practice of marking related to National Curriculum levels provides feedback which is well understood by students. There is very good monitoring of personal development. The college's pastoral arrangements provided by class tutors and by senior staff in both the upper and lower colleges successfully ensures that students receive very good guidance and support.
61. Students are provided with opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example the prefect system and a wide range of after-college clubs and activities. The frequent meetings of the College Council enable students from all year groups to address issues within a responsible framework which also enhances their self-confidence and social skills. Older students act as learning role models for younger students and Year 8 students are attached as 'guardians' to the Year 7 new arrivals. Bullying is an issue which is well understood by students who are encouraged to report concerns and do so within the college's positive and supportive environment. Bullying is not a problem and the college has effective arrangements for dealing with it. Individual incidents are rigorously investigated and effectively resolved. No oppressive behaviour or bullying was observed during the inspection.
62. The college has a very good, comprehensive child protection policy of its own with good supporting procedures. There is a designated staff co-ordinator who

has been appropriately trained. All staff receive appropriate internal training in the procedures to be followed and there is good liaison with external agencies.

63. The college maintains a healthy and safe environment and has adopted a very good health and safety policy. Except for some matters in science, which the college is addressing, there are no outstanding health and safety issues. There are very good procedures and internal accountabilities are clearly understood. The college receives professional safety advice. Regular, systematic risk assessments are carried out. There are very good arrangements for the care of students who are taken ill at college with a number of members of staff fully qualified in first aid to carry out systematic procedures. There is an appropriately maintained accident book. The arrangements for the supervision of students at break times and lunch periods are very good.

Partnership with parents and the community

64. The college values its partnership with parents and has very good relationships with them. Communication between the two is very good. Overall, there is good involvement of parents in the college and the education of their children. There are very good links with the wider community. The college has recently been awarded a Charter Mark for excellent public service.
65. The college communicates with parents regularly. Overall, the quality of information is very good. There are regular newsletters, an attractively produced prospectus and a good governing body's annual report to parents. Information about the curriculum is good, for example, a number of course booklets and an upper college handbook. There are three opportunities for formal consultation during the year, consisting of short and long reports and a parents' evening. The timing of events varies depending upon and geared to the particular requirements of each year group. They are reasonably well supported and attendance has recently been improving. There are also regular parents' evenings on curriculum topics and meetings for the parents of students at significant periods in their college life such as induction, options for GCSE and work experience. The college works hard to improve and sustain active parental involvement. A home-school agreement has been in place for some years and a survey of parents' views is carried out each year which provides valuable information in order to review and develop the relationship.
66. The annual reports to parents are good. They provide information on students' knowledge, understanding and abilities with targets for the future in all subjects. Parents of students with special educational needs are kept informed of annual reviews and about the stage on the Code of Practice SEN Register at which their child should be placed. They are invited to attend and participate in meetings with college staff and outside agencies.
67. There are systematic class-based homework arrangements which provide parents with valuable involvement in their children's education. The college receives good support from parents, who in turn feel that they are welcomed in the college and that the staff are approachable. Parents support college activities well. There is an active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association which provides regular and effective fundraising enabling valuable support to the college for the purchase of equipment.
68. Links with the community are very good. The college is firmly part of the immediate community exemplified by the strong response when the college was threatened with closure. Adult education classes are held in the college and the sports centre is regularly used by the local community. There are strong relationships with local old peoples' homes. There is a full and wide programme of visits related to all subjects including fieldwork, outdoor education, theatres, museums, lectures and sporting events. There are good links with local businesses which are used for vocational work placements, workshops and visits. Visitors broaden students' horizons. For example, the college was used by the BBC as a location for a television programme and the local police liaison officer is frequently involved in the personal, social and health education tutorial programme. However, there is no formal link with any religious organisation either in the immediate community or beyond which would strengthen students'

appreciation of the wider multicultural society.

68. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE COLLEGE

Leadership and management

69. The governors and senior management give the college a clear educational direction and provide very good leadership.
70. The governors know the college well through their frequent visits and links with subject departments that helps them in their role as a critical friend of the college. They are appropriately involved in such activities as approval of policies, staffing, finance, target setting and oversight of the curriculum. They are highly supportive of the college and work well with the principal and senior management. Their strategic view of the college includes raising academic standards and improved facilities. Most aspects of the college are monitored by the governors but they are somewhat reliant on the senior management for evaluation of the college's performance. Statutory requirements are met.
71. Since the last inspection the key issues concerned with improving standards of achievement, the structure of the timetable, collective worship, time for teaching religious education, registration and students with special educational needs have been fully addressed. Extensive progress has been made in extending teaching and learning strategies, raising teachers' expectations of students and improving students' basic skills and raising their personal confidence.
72. The principal provides positive leadership and a clear direction for the college. The college's outstanding record of improvement is largely due to the inspirational leadership and effective management that he provides. The climate of high expectations, accountability at all levels and a commitment to education and training of all staff are some of the key features that he has used to help the college improve. He has persuaded staff at all levels that his vision is achievable and has spelt out what needs to be done to raise students' attainment. Staff are made aware that much will be asked of them but equally feel rewarded by the success of the students.
73. The two vice-principals and the college administrator work well with the principal and each other. Together they form a team that effectively implements the college aims.
74. Most curriculum areas are very well led and managed. Staff are very hard working and many of them run extra-curricular activities outside college hours. Teachers make it clear that they like the students which gives rise to good relations between teachers and students and an improved climate for learning.
75. All staff have detailed job descriptions that are regularly reviewed. The principal makes his expectations of staff clear and holds them to account on a regular basis after they have been given a thorough induction and where necessary further education and training.
76. A coherent meeting and committee structure ensures regular communication between the different layers of management and between curriculum areas. The two vice-principals are linked to the different curriculum areas and effectively

monitor them. Informal links, easy to forge in a small college, supplement such formal links.

77. The extensive system to monitor teaching carried out by the principal, the vice-principals and curriculum co-ordinators means that the quality of teaching is well known and remedial action taken. In addition governors visit classes and report back to the governing body and some classroom teachers observe each other. Teachers are assessed on criteria drawn from the OFSTED framework and receive oral and written feedback from the assessor. Teachers are encouraged to undertake training to address shortcomings. The information derived from teacher observation contributes to teachers' appraisal.
78. Likewise the curriculum is very well supported, monitored and reviewed. An annual review of the curriculum is held to consider such aspects as the option choices, time allocations and banding arrangements. Handbooks for curriculum areas have been standardised. Language and numeracy policies have been devised and implemented in an attempt to get all teachers to promote students' basic skills. Staff have worked with local primary schools in an attempt to improve curricular continuity in literacy and numeracy between the two phases of education. All staff have had training to help them teach students with special educational needs and each curriculum area has a link teacher who acts as a channel of communication between the special educational needs co-ordinator and the curriculum area. Students' books are monitored by curriculum co-ordinators for literacy, marking, use of information and communications technology as well as subject-specific matters. The introduction of National Curriculum levels and improved marking has helped students to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
79. The college's aims are published in the prospectus and referred to in the college development plan and some policies. They were confirmed by the governors earlier this year after widespread consultation within college.
80. The aims are appropriate and wide ranging. They refer, amongst other things, to providing an environment where students are stretched and can achieve their full potential. Parents' approval of the aims and values of the college was evident in their replies to the parental survey. Students proclaimed their support of the aims and values of the college when interviewed during the inspection.
81. College policies are considered at various levels before being approved by the governors. Policies are reviewed regularly. Most policies are implemented and monitored. The lack of a specific curriculum policy is an omission.
82. The leadership and management of special educational needs is very good. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The governing body is appropriately involved in strategic oversight of provision for special educational needs students and has produced a useful development plan. Due reference to special educational needs is made in the governors' annual report to parents. The senior management support the special educational needs coordinator well and monitor and evaluate the curriculum carefully. Across the college staff display involvement, commitment and understanding in identifying and meeting the needs of students with special educational needs.
83. Health and safety is well managed. There is a college health and safety policy

which includes risk assessment.

84. The college development plan is a useful planning tool that identifies priorities, reviews the past and sets appropriate targets for the future. The plan covers a three-year period and is drawn up in consultation with staff and the governing body. It builds on the achievements of the previous year and is reviewed termly by the senior management team. Evaluation is carried out against the college mission statement and aims. Standards and quality are strongly represented in the various sections of the plan. The success criteria include reference to student outcomes and some costings are included. There are clear links between the departmental development plans and the college development plan: they follow the same format and take account of each others' priorities. Departmental development plans are less well costed than the college development plan.
85. The college ethos is excellent. The outstanding record of rising standards extending over several years shows that the aim to provide an environment where students are stretched and can fulfil their potential is being achieved. The very good relationships among students and between students and staff promote attainment and progress. Students with special educational needs are well cared for and equal opportunities promoted.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

86. The staff and the arrangements for their professional development are strengths of the college. The quality of teaching in many subjects have been improved through the college's rigorous appointment and induction procedures. Arrangements for monitoring and appraising all members of staff, including those in support, administration and maintenance are now fully embedded in the management of the college and are very effective. Learning support assistants are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds and are trained by the college, through its induction procedures, to provide good support for students with learning difficulties. This provision has improved since the last inspection.
87. The number, qualifications and experience of staff throughout the college is good. The teaching staff now comprises 32 teachers, with an almost equal number of men and women. Almost all hold appropriate qualifications for their responsibilities. In history there have been recent staffing problems and an experienced teacher without an appropriate history qualification is temporarily managing the department. The thorough induction and training programme for learning support assistants ensures their suitability and effectiveness whatever their prior experience. Overall class sizes are average and teachers are given adequate time in the college day for their administrative work. Those with non-teaching roles are well deployed, experienced and appropriate in number, making a significant contribution to the success of the college. Since the last inspection there has been a healthy turnover of teaching staff mainly to take up posts of higher responsibility in other colleges.
88. The arrangements for induction, appraisal and professional development of all staff are very good. Since the last inspection the college has been awarded Investor in People status for the quality of its staff development programme. This is applied to every person on the college staff with the aims of enhancing the

quality of their work, improving the management of the college, responding effectively to their professional needs and improving the quality of learning and use of resources. The programme is having a marked effect on raising standards in the college. Staff appraisal is well established and is an integral part of the college's monitoring and support arrangements. Staff development needs are quickly identified. A committee continues to set priorities to ensure that staff training also serves the college development plan effectively. Most staff have benefited from in-service training sessions since the last report.

89. The college is situated on an attractive, elevated site and consists, in the main, of good quality accommodation that provide an environment conducive to learning. Its permanent buildings are maintained in good condition. The college employs its own cleaning and maintenance staff who take pride in upholding a high standard of tidiness and cleanliness. There is no trace of graffiti inside or outside the buildings. Standards of maintenance and refurbishment are high.
90. Four major projects have been completed since the previous inspection. A new sports hall, including a health suite, has remedied the lack of specialist accommodation in physical education. The new purpose-built music block is an enviable facility and which provides many benefits including much needed practice rooms. The quadrangle has been converted into a very attractive learning resource centre with an adjoining information technology room. Science now has two new laboratories which offer enhanced opportunities for experimental and investigative work. Most subjects enjoy suited accommodation.
91. The main weaknesses in the accommodation concern the old huts used by humanities and the limited access for disabled students. One hut used by geography is unsatisfactory and affects standards. Other problems include overcrowding in art and access to resources in drama.
92. Overall, the adequacy of resources for the effective delivery of the curriculum is good.
93. The shortages of books in several subjects noted in the last inspection report have been remedied and the majority of subjects now have sufficient books. The only subjects where there are deficiencies in the supply of books are history, where students in almost every class have to share texts, geography where atlases have to be shared and science where students cannot take books home.
94. Since the last inspection the college has built an excellent learning resources centre. It consists of books, magazines and CD-Roms. A computer room equipped with a class set of modern computers with access to the Internet adjoins the learning resource centre. The learning resource centre is well managed and heavily used by students both in class time and out of college hours.
95. The college has an above average number of computers for the size of the college. Some subject areas have difficulty in teaching aspects of information and communications technology due to lack of equipment, for example data logging in science.
96. The shortage of good quality musical instruments, noted in the last inspection report, is no longer a problem, and the quality of instruments is now excellent. Lack of specialist resources for sound and lighting in the drama room restricts

the teaching, especially for GCSE.

97. The college makes very good use of the local community as a learning resource. Experience of the world of work is given to Year 9 students during their industrial visits and placements with local businesses provides Year 11 students with valuable work experience.
98. Good use is made of outside resources to provide sporting, educational and cultural activities. These include visits to museums, galleries, zoo, a planetarium and field trips and visits to other colleges.

The efficiency of the college

99. This college has an average basic income that is inflated by its funding for special needs and by specific grants. The college manages its finances very well. It has a three-year development plan including all departments and aspects of the college. Development costs are all included. There is a separate three year set of financial projections which allow for expected income and all planned and anticipated costs. Thus there is good prioritisation and targeting of resources. The college sets clear targets for students' attainment and other outcomes and these are carefully reviewed. Financial planning is of a very high order involving all departments, senior management and governors. Governors are very supportive of the college observing much of the day-to-day work. Their contribution to budget preparation and monitoring of expenditure is relatively limited. However, because of the high standards of financial planning and control in this college their existing oversight has been adequate.
100. All staff, including teachers, support, administrative and caretaking are deployed very effectively and efficiently to match needs across the college. Support for students with special educational needs is well targeted, a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Learning resources are now generally good with few exceptions and they are used effectively and carefully. The accommodation is used effectively, even the sub-standard huts. The new information and communications technology room is very heavily used, well beyond the normal college day. Buildings are well maintained and cared for and provide an attractive environment for the excellent ethos in this college.
101. Financial administrative systems are detailed, efficient and accurate. There are appropriate levels of control to ensure no untoward expenditure. Recent audits have confirmed the accuracy of all accounts and procedures.
102. Since the previous OFSTED inspection this college has rectified the identified weaknesses and improved attainment very significantly. Students enter the college with well below average attainment and make significant progress. Students' attitudes are very good as is the quality of education provided. With average basic unit costs this college provides very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

103. Students' overall attainment in English remains below the national average, but has improved significantly since the last inspection. At Key Stage 3 in 1999 the proportion of students reaching Level 5 or above in standard attainment tests was below the national average, but it was above the average in similar schools. At Key Stage 4 in 1999, 50 per cent of candidates taking GCSE English language gained A*-C grades, just below the national average and far better than in 1998. In GCSE English literature in 1999 the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades was 32 per cent, well below the national average and less well than in 1998. Since the last inspection the entry policy has changed and almost all students now take examinations in both language and literature.
104. In the lessons seen at Key Stage 3, about half the students were attaining below average and half were average or above. At Key Stage 4 the proportion reaching above average attainment was slightly higher. Students' oral work and reading are generally better than their writing. At Key Stage 3 they work well in small groups, and through discussion, students in Year 7 have already gained considerable knowledge of the Dewey catalogue system. Many have difficulty with concepts such as surnames and forenames of authors. Students in Year 8 can discuss pictorial material productively in pairs, but find difficulty in translating their conclusions into writing. The ablest students can read and understand broadsheet newspapers and summarise their content. Many of the average and below average students need clear guidance in short stages. The many students with special educational needs receive good individual support and generally achieve according to their ability. By the end of Key Stage 3 the ablest students are confident in oral work and they articulate their reading clearly.
105. At Key Stage 4 the ablest students can understand the language and purposes of their reading in the GCSE courses, for instance the poetry of Simon Armitage. They read aloud fluently and with understanding. Even the average attainers can argue a case and produce evidence from their reading. When their interest is captured they can maintain concentration and listen carefully. Many students however have a short attention span and limited vocabulary. They are inaccurate in writing. The quality of their writing is assisted by the use of word processors. Boys and girls produce work of comparable standards.
106. On entry to the college, students' attainment in English is below average. They profit from clear instructions and assignments and progress well in Year 7, particularly in oral work. Much of their writing remains inaccurate in Years 7 and 8, with widely differing standards of presentation. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There is a large proportion of students with weaknesses in language and this reduces the overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 students profit from understanding the goals of the GCSE courses. The majority, particularly those of average and just below average attainment, make satisfactory progress. The ablest attain well,

especially in reading and oral work, but very few are able to attain the highest grades.

107. The attitude of students to their work is generally satisfactory. Classroom relationships are good. Students arrive promptly; they are orderly and are prepared to work. Many students, particularly the less able, find it difficult to sustain their concentration. Some classes (of various abilities) are given to incidental talk and unrelated chatter which affects progress. The length of double lessons causes some difficulty in this respect. At both key stages students work well in small groups and such discussion or writing is productive. The Year 7 groups seen working in the study centre in this way were purposeful and behaved very well. Given enterprising material, most students show good commitment and interest, particularly at Key Stage 4. The best lessons are completed with a corporate sense of enjoyment. But because of weaknesses in their writing, many average and below average students lack confidence in their English. They benefit from the commendation system and the praise given to them.
108. The quality of teaching is at least sound and in about one third of lessons it is good. It has improved since the last inspection. No teaching is unsatisfactory. The teachers' specialist knowledge and understanding provide a sound base. Supported by a practical scheme of work, teachers' planning of lessons is good; most include a variety of activities which helps to maintain students' interest and attention at both key stages. The attainment targets of listening, speaking, reading and writing are included in most lessons and statutory requirements are met. Teachers' expectations of students are largely appropriate: the setting arrangements assist differentiation of demand and students with special educational needs are well supported. Students are generally well managed, but some weaker groups who find concentration difficult are not. Explanations for instance are too long for them, purposes are not clear and the lesson's content is insufficiently stimulating. Most lessons make good use of resources, particularly video recordings. The balance of worksheets, books and other resources is satisfactory. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and the activities are enterprising and enjoyable, as in a translation of characters from Romeo and Juliet to a television chat show in Year 9. The teacher and students entered into this activity with commitment and zest and took from it serious reflections and a deeper understanding, to which all had contributed. The teachers know their students well and relations are invariably good. Homework is regularly set and assessment is appropriate and helpful. The teachers can feel satisfied with the progress made since the last inspection. Although some shortcomings remain here and there in pace and clarity, students' achievements have been raised substantially.
109. The head of department provides active professional leadership and co-ordinates the department well. The staff have appropriate specialist qualifications and work well as a team.

Mathematics

110. Students enter the college with well below average attainment in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 3 their standard attainment test results for 1999 in mathematics were below average, continuing the improving trend over the last

four years. GCSE examination results in 1999 were well below the national average for the proportion gaining grades A*-C but above average for the percentage gaining A*-G, a little better than in 1998. There has been a very considerable improvement in examination results since the time of the previous inspection.

111. The work seen showed attainment in class of current students to be overall at the national average in the latter part of Key Stage 3 after a well below average start on entry to the college. Attainment is below average at Key Stage 4. There is a weakness in mental arithmetic and students often rely too much on the use of calculators. It is most evident at Key Stage 4; for example a pupil in an upper set in Year 10 used a calculator to find -3×7 . There were examples in some lower sets at Key Stage 3 of very poor numeracy. For example in Year 9 four-fifths was written by some students as 4.5 for the decimal equivalent, and they could not multiply 58 by 10. However, the college is fully aware of this weakness. It has a numeracy policy for the whole college and is raising standards, with the result that equivalent sets of students are often more fluent with number in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. The quantity of work done by many students this term is considerable. Many have already completed a whole exercise book, very neatly set out. Attainment is clearly rising and there is an increasing security of knowledge and understanding across all attainment targets particularly by the more able students. For example, in a lesson on the solution of simple algebraic equations students quickly understood the concept of 'balance' and worked rapidly, gaining skills in solving a range of problems.
112. Progress is very good during Key Stage 3 and satisfactory during Key Stage 4. The slower progress in lessons at Key Stage 4 is largely accounted for by weakness in numeracy. Many classes during the inspection week were doing investigative work which required a fluency with number to make more rapid progress. In two-fifths of the lessons seen progress was very good or outstanding, a direct result of the high standard of teaching and exceptional pupil motivation and concentration. Good planning, clear presentation of concepts with explicit statements of National Curriculum levels attained all helped. Regular homework, detailed marking and high standards of presentation contributed.
113. The attitude of students to mathematics is overall very good. Only one lesson was seen where a few students did not concentrate, wasting their own time and disturbing some near to them. In a third of classes students' response was exemplary with a total concentration on their work throughout the lesson normally lasting 80 minutes. Behaviour is usually exemplary and students are interested in the subject with many professing a new-found enjoyment. Many students are developing a confidence in the subject well above that which they had at entry to the college. Ability at independent study is not yet a strength; the students' response is largely engendered by the enthusiasm of teachers and their clear enjoyment in teaching.
114. Teaching is very good at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Just over a quarter of the teaching is outstanding. It is never unsatisfactory. Teachers not only have good knowledge of their subject but know precisely the level at which to present new concepts to extend students without confusion. Their expectations are clearly higher than those by students at entry to the college but are being increasingly realised. Planning is very thorough, both the overall

curriculum and for each lesson and homework. Class teaching methods and organisation may be described as 'traditional' and are extremely effective. In one class of over forty, students concentrated closely on the work being done, responding in an orderly but enthusiastic manner to whole-class oral questioning and later working hard at written work. Teachers' explanations of new concepts are accurate and clear. For example, in a lesson on solving simple algebraic equations the clarity of presentation enabled students to progress fast. Students are almost always very well managed and time is used well. Day-to-day assessment is very good and exercise books are very well marked and demonstrate high expectations in the quantity of work and the quality of presentation. Homework is set and marked regularly. Students are encouraged with praise both in lessons and by written comments in exercise books.

115. Mathematics has adequate time at both key stages. Setting from Christmas in Year 7 is a positive benefit providing differentiation and helping all students progress as quickly as possible. Students are generally well challenged in each set. Subject leadership is outstanding and there is a very thorough attention to development planning, target setting and review. The quality of leadership and teaching has unquestionably been the cause of the rapid improvement in students' attainment since the last inspection. It has the capacity to maintain this improving trend.

Science

116. Attainment in science is below average overall. In the 1999 Key Stage 3 standard assessment tests a below average proportion of students reached Level 5 or above, but it was above the average in similar schools. The 1999 results continued the improving pattern of recent years. Apart from in 1998 the policy has been to enter some students for either the double or single award at GCSE. In 1999, 29 per cent of candidates obtained grades A*-C and almost all obtained a grade A*-G. Since 1993, when only 3 per cent gained grades A*-C, attainment has risen steeply. More students are gaining grades A*-G reflecting good attainment by many students some of whom have special educational needs. In public examinations at the end of both key stages boys have outperformed girls by a small but persistent margin.
117. This pattern of rising attainment towards the end of both key stages is evident in science lessons. Attainment is similar in biology, chemistry and physics-based topics. Although the proportion of students working towards the higher GCSE grades is below average, many students produce work of an equally high standard. This is particularly true in scientific investigations, where students plan their investigations carefully and thoroughly, basing predictions on scientific ideas learned earlier. In most written work there is good attention to detail. Most more able students learn to evaluate their results carefully and scientifically. The accounts of middle and lower attaining students contain many similar features but at lower and usually satisfactory levels. Most students understand how a simple experimental test can be made fair, but many lower attaining students have difficulty explaining their understanding clearly. The quality of investigation work is a strength because science is taught mainly through experimentation and problem-solving, challenging students to think about and apply simple scientific ideas.

118. Progress in science is good. The proportion of students with above average attainment at the start of Year 7 is low. Science teachers successfully stimulate students' enthusiasm for science from the start in thoroughly planned lessons. They manage classes very effectively. These features enable students' interests and motivation to grow and develop, as in a Year 9 class who made good progress, using role-play to predict how particle size will affect the speed of reaction in an acid. By the end of Key Stage 3 good progress has raised students' average attainment above that usually found in similar colleges. In Key Stage 4, where students are directed to study single or, for higher attaining students, dual award science, progress continues to be good. Teachers are all aware of the targets for students with special educational needs. There is good collaboration with support assistants who are informed in advance of lesson topics. The support for special needs students is effective and their progress, good.
119. Students' attitudes to science are good due to the concerted efforts of teachers to stimulate their interest. In most lessons behaviour is very good. Students know and understand what is expected of them and, with very few exceptions, respond well. On those rare occasions when a few students misbehave or import playground disputes into the laboratory, teachers are very effective in minimising the effects of disruption. In both key stages many boys and girls are keen to share their ideas in lessons and are encouraged to do so by teachers. In practical classes students work well, usually in pairs, and talk is about the work. Middle and higher attaining students usually sustain concentration well, while in less able groups, teachers and support assistants adopt successful strategies to keep attention on work.
120. The quality of teaching in both key stages is very good. From the start of Year 7, students often learn by investigating and problem-solving, stimulating interest and curiosity. This was evident in a Year 7 class using scientific techniques to identify a 'criminal' in a forensic science lesson. Throughout both key stages all four teachers combine their very good subject knowledge with well-planned teaching methods, using, for example, a wide range of human senses – touching, hearing, seeing – to very good effect with a lower attaining Year 10 group studying reversible and non-reversible chemical changes. Teachers' expectations are almost always very high, but achievable, for example a Year 10 top set made good use of their prior knowledge to investigate the factors affecting electrical resistance. In only a very few lessons involving higher attaining students, does work fall short of the desired level of challenge. Most lessons in both key stages provide students with good opportunities to consolidate learning through experimentation. Equipment is well used and teachers manage the pace of lessons effectively to give time to reinforce what has been taught. They assess students work regularly and thoroughly, gaining a good knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses. This is used sensitively to support and encourage progress. Regular homework contributes to students' learning but the lack of textbooks for home use limits the range of tasks that are set. Teachers have good support for their work from well-prepared schemes of work and constructive monitoring arrangements.
121. The curriculum is broad and balanced at each key stage. Students have good access to the Key Stage 3 curriculum, but at Key Stage 4 students in the higher

and lower bands are obliged to take dual and single award science respectively. As a result some students' science course may not be the most appropriate for their career choice. The department is well equipped, making a significant contribution to students' progress in all but two respects: insufficient textbooks for home use and insufficient computer hardware to meet the requirements of data-logging in experiments. Good use is made of the college's computer network to teach the processing of data using spreadsheets. Laboratory provision has improved since the last inspection: there are now four sufficiently large fully equipped laboratories. This has increased students' opportunities for experimental work and is enhancing their progress. There is now a good large preparation room for the two hard working technicians but the science laboratories are still divided between two well-separated areas in the college. Duplication of some basic laboratory apparatus has reduced the need to move equipment between the sites, but some problems remain, particularly with the movement of heavier items.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information and communications technology (ICT)

122. At Key Stage 4 in 1998, 68 per cent of candidates taking GCSE keyboarding gained A*-C grades and all a grade A*-G, well above the national average. There were no entries in 1999 because the course was changed to office applications.
123. Attainment for students on entry is well below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment by the majority is in line with national expectations. For a minority it is above. Discrete teaching in Year 7 enables all students to establish a foundation of competence in using standard software that is in everyday commercial use. Students take to the subject enthusiastically and develop competence and confidence fairly rapidly so that by the end of Year 7 they are able to use several applications quite readily. That is reinforced very effectively in subsequent years within other subjects of the curriculum. The quick assimilation of such skills was seen in an introductory lesson on databases, where students set up a simple database of local shops and learned the correct terminology. In science students enter data accurately into a spreadsheet, make calculations using formula commands, sort it and choose suitable graphical representation. Not only were they not 'thrown' by a problem of accessing the spreadsheet but one of them resolved it by finding another route through the system. In mathematics, spreadsheets are used to develop investigative work and in design and technology computer-aided design software improves design skills and exemplifies commercial usage. In music, students use a good range of technology including computers, mixers and synthesisers effectively to develop their notation and compositions and to experiment creatively with sound. The use of the main networked system more generally is underdeveloped in French, geography, history and religious education. By the end of the key stage in most subjects, students communicate and retrieve information effectively. They type well and compose text at the keyboard. They can create a well composed document and very skilfully import illustrations and add graphically illustrated

numerical data.

124. Attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations. For a substantial minority it is above. Students can use more complex procedures to manipulate text and this was a feature of their work in office applications, in which they demonstrated their multi-tasking skills in composing a booklet for beginners learning how to use the college's networked system. They use CD-Roms and the Internet regularly and very effectively as resources for their research to support enquiry work and personal studies for GCSE. Certification in information and communications technology is available through GCSE office applications and a word-processing qualification. ICT work is supported dynamically by computer clubs that operate on most days.
125. Progress is good for the majority of students. They build up their skills rapidly and at the end of Key Stage 3 most are autonomous users of ICT. To ensure that appropriate progress is being made, a very effective assessment procedure charts the progress of students in their use of skills across the curriculum. The progress of students with learning difficulties is effectively assessed and developed by the use of a computerised learning scheme.
126. Students behave well, readily accepting the discipline of a computer room and responding well to teachers' management skills to make good progress. Parental consent is obtained before students may use the Internet and the college's chosen system filters out unsuitable material.
127. The quality of teaching is good. In two thirds of lessons it is good or better. Class management is generally good and teachers' subject competence is such that they are able to support the weaker students but extend the stronger. Lessons are well prepared in relation to the level of students' abilities and in close collaboration with support assistants, all of whom like the majority of the teachers have benefited from ICT training, particularly in the use of a computerised learning scheme. Exercises are skilfully set to reflect either the reinforcement of old skills or the addressing of new ones. The tasks set are challenging and reflect teachers' high expectations, to which the students respond positively. Assessment procedures are very good and are used effectively to monitor performance and progress and to help individual students set targets. It is used to evaluate and where necessary to tailor the schemes of work in individual subject areas and to improve assignments.
128. The system is relatively new and has some teething problems, which may be resolved shortly. The technician is an important support resource for the system and assists teachers who are less secure with its operation. Although the delivery of the curriculum is well organised and the assessment arrangements are very good, it is still in its infancy and some subjects have not yet invested in subject-specific software, although in some cases this is because of the high expense of site licences.
129. Competent leadership has created an efficient organisation with a clear vision of the future of ICT in the college and its development planning is very well structured to that end. Monitoring of teaching is very thorough as is the assessment of students' work but the delivery of all the strands of ICT is not effectively monitored yet. Training for teachers is well organised and fairly comprehensive and induction training for learning support assistants is unusual

and helpful. It contributes to the rigour of teaching, to driving up students' standards and to the integration of ICT as a regularly used tool to support teaching and learning.

Religious education

130. The results of the GCSE short course taken in 1999 were above the national average for grades A*-C and all candidates obtained at least a grade D. Similar results were achieved in 1998. In respect of their prior attainment the results were significantly above that which might have been expected.
131. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is in line with national expectations of students following the local agreed syllabus: in terms of attainment based upon their ability upon entry to the college it is well above that which might have been expected. While the attainment at Key Stage 4 still remains below the national expectations it is getting very close to it and certainly exceeds expectations relative to identified prior attainment.
132. At the end of Key Stage 3 students have a knowledge of Christianity and five other major world religions – Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism; they can use technical language appropriately to describe religious teachings, practices and beliefs of the faiths studied and are beginning to develop the ability to reflect upon the difficult questions of the meaning of life.
133. By the end of Key Stage 4 students have a detailed knowledge of Christianity and Islam, together with the attendant standpoints of both faiths in respect of a range of contemporary social and moral issues, including the role of women, racism, issues of life and death, marriage and the family, religion and the media and belief in God. Attention to the 'learning from religion' component of the agreed syllabus enables students to have opportunities to practice and portray a range of new skills which include analysis, the drawing of conclusions and making inferences/deductions. It is the continued development of these skills which will enable the quality and number of students attaining well to rise.
134. Literacy skills are encouraged but there remains much to be done to make up the deficiencies, which many students bring with them upon entry to the college. Information and communications technology is encouraged; the limitations of staff expertise mean that its use is restricted to students' own personal research rather than it being integral to the experiences provided within the classroom.
135. Progress overall at Key Stage 3 is good and in the higher ability groups it is sometimes very good: the establishment of a baseline at entry to the college, resulting from a departmental initiative, enables the teaching programme to be more closely matched to students' requirements, taking into account their prior learning and experiences. At Key Stage 4 students of all abilities continue to make good progress. This consistency across both key stages is largely due to the high quality of teaching and the positive attitude of students. The progress of students with special educational needs is commensurate with that of their peers.
136. The behaviour of the students across both key stages is very good; they are keen to learn, willing to help one another and express a liking for the subject; many have begun to recognise a utility value in respect of their prospective

career path. The increased numbers of students who want to take GCSE reflects the increasing popularity of the subject.

137. The quality of the teaching is at least good and over a quarter is very good; the strategies deployed are designed to meet the needs of the students and create an ethos of achievement. Lessons are characterised by an obvious enthusiasm for the subject, good planning, good relationships, a detailed knowledge of the students and high expectations, both of behaviour and the presentation of written and oral work. Lesson content is drawn from a scheme of work which, at Key Stage 3, is based upon the requirements of the local agreed syllabus and at Key Stage 4 upon the requirements of the examination syllabus; adequate time at both key stages is made available for the teaching of the subject. The programme is effectively planned and provides continuity and progression from Key Stage 2 into and through Key Stages 3 and 4: students with special educational needs are well provided for.
138. At Key Stage 3, the department is currently trying out assessment procedures based upon recently developed national levels of attainment; students are aware of these and work is assessed against the criteria. The monitoring of marking focuses upon consistency of interpretation among staff. At Key Stage 4 the assessment procedures are closely allied to the requirements of the examination board and are carried out effectively. Assessment is integral to curriculum planning for both individual students on a day-to-day basis and at departmental level as part of a continuous programme of curriculum review. Books are marked regularly: attention needs to be paid to the completion of work and to spelling corrections. Diagnostic commentary is a feature of both key stages: homework at Key Stage 3 is integral to the teaching programme and is set regularly but the colleges' policy exempts religious education from such provision at Key Stage 4.
139. The department benefits from very good leadership and management; monitoring of work takes place both formally and informally; curriculum planning for continuity and progression across the key stages is very good; forward planning, building upon the considerable progress made since the previous inspection, is already in draft form. The ethos of the department reflects the college's aims and promotes mutual respect; it is enabling students to test out ideas and be reflective, so making a significant contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The requirements of the local agreed syllabus are being met. Only three of the taught periods are taken by non-subject specialist staff; the team of four reflects a balance of youth, experience and status within the college's overall staffing provision. Opportunities for professional development are planned within the constraints of available resources.
140. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory; the designated base room is situated in the main building and provides a bright and stimulating environment. Almost a fifth of the teaching, takes place in temporary classrooms of an unsatisfactory standard. The size of the hut, together with its distance from the base room, have an adverse effect upon the standards the department is striving to promote. Book resources and the range of artefacts are both adequate and appropriate; these are supplemented by a good selection of modern texts and CD-Roms available in the college library together with materials available from the local authority library service. The base room, lacking in television and video

recording, has blackout facilities. The college recognises the need to extend the range of resources and upgrade the accommodation in order to continue to support the development of the subject. There is very little use made of resources, both human and physical, external to the college.

141. Since the previous inspection the department has worked hard to rectify the inadequacies identified: it currently provides a high quality educational experience for students at both key stages, where students make progress beyond that which might be expected relative to their prior attainment. The department gives good value for money and is well placed to continue to develop.

Art

142. Students' overall attainment in art is below average but has improved since the last inspection and at GCSE in 1998 was better than in most other subjects. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. At Key Stage 4 in 1999, 44 per cent of candidates taking GCSE gained grades A*-C, below the national average. Results in 1998 were rather better. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of GCSE candidates gaining A*-C grades since the last inspection when it was criticised as too low.
143. Attainment of current students is below national expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4.
144. By the end of Key Stage 3 students are able to use a wide range of art materials to a satisfactory standard. They become skilful in using materials to obtain a desired effect. They can use materials experimentally and some students can innovate and are prepared to take risks. By the end of the key stage the majority of students can work with some independence in class and can abstract complex ideas and designs from their observed drawings. Three-dimensional work is now very strong, an improvement since the last inspection. However, students' ability to research and to work independently at home is underdeveloped. Development of knowledge and understanding is slow. Most students can emulate the work of artists and their particular styles and use those styles in their own art making. Students become adept at using a wide range of media and mark-making tools. The performance of girls is marginally better than that of boys at both key stages. At both key stages students' understanding of art techniques and knowledge of artists and their work is very limited. In their own art making, students apply a moderate level of thought and show a fair understanding of art.
145. Rates of progress during both key stages are good due to the motivation of the students, their enjoyment of the subject and to good teaching. From a low ability on entry to the college, students make rapid progress. They are introduced to an analytical way of drawing from observation and come to rely less on imagination or invention. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress initially and most progress well especially when receiving in-class support. Good initial teaching compensates for the varied experiences that students have had of art in primary school. Students are appropriately challenged both in skill development and mentally.
146. Students behave well and work with application. They collect their own materials and equipment sensibly and responsibly. Relationships are good both between

students and between teacher and students. Students co-operate and collaborate to good effect. Students still lack confidence. Students are slow to take the initiative and to develop independent study skills. Enjoyment of art is evident and it is a popular choice of option at Key Stage 4 that results in over large classes.

147. The quality of teaching at both key stages and the use of marking and assessment are good. The teaching is appropriately challenging and interesting and includes a wide range and variety of art experiences. The good teaching has increased students' attainment very significantly since the last report. Teachers work hard and have high expectations of students, which in turn help improve students' attainment and progress. Teachers explain learning objectives and assessment criteria to students and agree targets with them to good effect.
148. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. There are insufficient opportunities to use information and communications technology. The curriculum area is well led and managed. In particular, the importance of art to the development of young people is recognised and the plans for development of the subject show vision. The specialist accommodation consisting of one art room meets present requirements but lacks an area where ceramics or sculptural work can be undertaken and restricts the growth of the subject.

Design and technology

149. Students' overall attainment in design and technology is below average. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are below average; the majority of students fail to achieve Level 5 or above. The percentage of students gaining A*-C grades in 1999 was well below the national average in resistant materials and graphic products and very low in food technology. Results in 1998 were better.
150. Current attainment is below average at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Students are more able when using tools and making objects than they are when designing, drawing and planning. Their standards of graphical skills are generally weak and their ability to put their ideas onto paper is below average. Students have a good understanding of the working characteristics of a range of materials. By the end of Key Stage 3 students demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of the design process. They are beginning to understand several drawing systems and the need to present graphical work neatly. They know how to use tools and equipment safely and accurately. By the end of Key Stage 4 the quality of some finished products shows careful attention to detail and an above average standard of finish. Good quality clocks are made in resistant materials. In food technology, students have a good understanding of the properties of the constituents of food and can prepare a variety of meals. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
151. Rates of progress at both key stages are good. Students enter Year 7 with levels of attainment that are significantly below average. Excellent schemes of assessment that involve teachers and students agreeing individual targets help students make rapid progress. Teachers ensure that all students thoroughly understand what they need to do to improve at each stage of their design projects. Students still lack confidence in their own ability, noted in the last inspection report, but are gradually shown that they are capable of producing

very creditable results. Students' knowledge of materials and their understanding of processes increases gradually during both key stages. Designing skills remain less well developed than making skills but the teaching gradually encourages a sense of independence and self-worth. Standards of research improve gradually. Qualities of finished products, and of presentation, are well developed by the end of Key Stage 4. At both key stages, students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress when in receipt of classroom support.

152. Students behave well in lessons and show an interest in their work. They respect property and the opinions of fellow students. They behave sensibly and safely and collect and return their own materials and tools responsibly. Lack of self-confidence means that they are slow to show initiative and to develop the capacity for independent study, which limits their progress in spite of the good teaching they receive. They are keen to do well and are responsive to the help given by teachers. They form constructive relationships in lessons with teachers and other students and can work collaboratively when required to do so.
153. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers introduce their lessons well and outline what students are required to do in the lesson. They describe and demonstrate well, stressing specialist words and terms. They contribute well to the college's initiative of developing the students' literary skills in subject contexts. Students are encouraged to use dictionaries, even in workshops, for a better understanding of words. Teachers stretch students fully. They put considerable energy, thought and effort into their planning and use of resources to make lessons interesting and informative. The teaching is well structured and linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum. In the majority of lessons work is matched to students' differing abilities. The better lessons have a good balance of teacher input and pupil activity with the teacher inputs being made in small, easily assimilated units.
154. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. Textile technology is no longer taught which reduces the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

Geography

155. Students' attainment in geography is below the national average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 was below the national average. At Key Stage 4 in 1999 32 per cent of GCSE candidates gained A*-C grades, well below the national average. Results in 1998 were less good. There are no significant differences between the results of boys and girls.
156. Attainment of current students at Key Stage 3 is below the national average. Many students enter the college lacking key skills such as map reading. They have below average levels of literacy and this has a negative impact on attainment. They also tend to have a weak knowledge of place. However, by the end of Year 9, students have good map skills and one set showed a sound understanding of the factors that define underdevelopment. Attainment in Years 10 and 11 is below expectations; Year 11 students have a variable recall of work undertaken in Year 10; Year 10 students show weaknesses in their knowledge of place. However, in a Year 11 lesson on the site and situation of Plymouth students showed a good knowledge of local geographical factors and were able

to relate these to develop a wider understanding of settlement. Standards of literacy are below what would be expected of students of this age.

157. Progress in Key Stage 3 is good; this is helped by the consistency in teaching. Students depend on teachers to move them forwards. Teachers are aware of the key areas to address in lessons; they have a strong and appropriate regard for literacy - the development of these skills through the subject enables students to develop their geographical skills. In a very good Year 9 lesson on child bonded labour in developing countries, students made rapid progress; they showed a strong interest and the teacher's alertness and insistence on high standards were positive factors in moving the whole class forwards. Work is usually carefully matched to pupils' aptitudes so progress for the whole class is usually consistent. The policy of providing clear and achievable targets for all students, which are regularly reviewed for each individual, is having a positive impact on progress. For Years 10 and 11 students' progress is also good. Work is carefully consolidated so that new learning builds on what is known. With the good pace of lessons students' response is usually positive and the good focus on the requirements of the GCSE examination means that they all tend to move forwards. A Year 10 group made very good progress in group evaluation of a recent assessment, reinforcing their geographical knowledge and developing an understanding of the factors which determine the quality of examination answers. The session concluded with students, after careful guidance, setting their own targets for their future work.
158. Students' response to geography is good; they are firmly but courteously managed by teachers and this has a beneficial effect. They are usually interested in the subject and follow lessons with good concentration on their tasks. A minority of students misbehave but good classroom management overcomes these disturbances. The quality of teaching is a strong factor in response of students; most Year 7 students lack skills as independent learners but, encouraged by teachers they rapidly acquire a good range of research skills which are evident in completed assessment and homework tasks. Students work well in pairs and small groups and relate well to one another. Key Stage 4 students also respond well to geography showing a keen interest and maintaining a focus on the demands of the GCSE examination. Many contribute well orally but students in lower ability sets can be too talkative and can be slow to settle at the start of the lesson.
159. Teaching of geography at Key Stage 3 is good with a strong consistency between the two teachers. Expectations of students' behaviour and academic performance are always high and they are carefully questioned to check and reinforce understanding. Books are thoroughly marked with helpful diagnostic comments; marking frequently relates to students' personal targets for improvements, which are in the back of all exercise books. Students are well managed to maintain their concentration. Work is well adapted to meet the learning needs of students' wide range of abilities. A very good Year 8 lesson on the development of winter sports in Italy's Aosta Valley typified many of the strengths of teaching; it was carefully planned to include an interesting range of activities, students were well handled with praise and support given to help propel progress. The very good marking of books further encourages students to develop their skills and understanding. Teaching of Key Stage 4 students is also

good and follows a similar pattern; teachers show good subject knowledge and maintain strong focus on the demands of the GCSE examination. Their teaching again shows considerable consistency. Good and very good teaching displays subtlety in pupil management and clarity of exposition but, occasionally, teaching can lack sufficient strategies to quieten classes completely. Lessons at both key stages show strong focus on the development of literacy; given the weaknesses in literacy that many students show, this is appropriate and encourages progress in the subject.

160. Students of geography undertake fieldwork in most years; this has a positive effect on attainment. Assessment of geography is very good. Accurate assessment procedures are in place; pupil attainment is tracked and recorded from their entry to the college until the end of Year 11. The thoroughness of this process enables predicted grades to be given, students' performance is then checked against these predictions and personal targets are set for all students. These are written in exercise books and folders and regularly updated in discussion. Good marking of exercise books, to GCSE or National Curriculum criteria, also encourages students to improve their standards. The subject is very well managed. Teaching, planning and marking are all effectively monitored to the benefit of both consistency across the department and students' progress. Geography is taught in huts, one of which is cold, damp and has very poor acoustics. These buildings are isolated and lack security so that there can be no computers installed within the department, this is having a negative effect on attainment.
161. Since the last inspection attainment has seen continuous improvements in both key stages, particularly in mapping skills. There have also been improvements in teaching, which is now consistently good. However, poor accommodation continues to impose limitations on the teaching of geography.

History

162. Students' overall attainment in history is below the national average. Forty-six per cent of GCSE candidates gained A*-C grades in 1998, which was well below the national average. The proportion of A*-G grades was also below average. There were no GCSE candidates in 1999. Prior to 1998, history results were well below the national average.
163. Attainment by students on entry is well below national expectations and the level of competence in history is even weaker. Attainment by the majority of students at the end of Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. For a growing minority it is in line with national expectations. Students are starting to develop competence in key elements. Students are able to contrast the level of continuity and change over time by comparing factory conditions in the eighteenth with nineteenth centuries and the transition from an agrarian way of life to an industrial one. In comparing the pattern of change in a house in Wales students interpret relevant detail identified from photographs and compare the changes. Higher attaining students identify much detail and can see how one source will support or contradict the evidence of another. They are beginning to recognise bias and to understand why evidence may be biased. Lower attaining students are less competent in these skills. They pick out a lot of detail but their analysis lacks depth. Students undertake independent learning through enquiry work,

some of which is set for homework. These activities require research using the CD-Rom and Internet facilities of the library and that work extends students' higher learning skills.

164. Attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average, although there is a minority that is at the average. All students now have a competent grasp of chronology but not of cause and consequence. They can evaluate sources but with varying and limited levels of competence, and only the higher attaining students do it reasonably well. Lower and middle attaining students tend to be more descriptive and less analytical. The effective development of independent learning continues through personal studies and presentations.
165. At both key stages a substantial majority of the students have literacy problems. Through reading aloud and discussion they learn to speak confidently to each other and to teachers. They participate well but so many of the lower attainers are far better at speaking than writing. Written work is generally poor. Too many make elementary grammatical and spelling errors and use inappropriate colloquial language. They have substantial weaknesses in the key skills. They can tell a story and examine evidence for appropriate detail but their interpretation and evaluation of sources is underdeveloped. Similarly their extended writing skills have not been adequately developed. Marking, although thorough and supported by diagnostic comment, is not sufficiently rigorous.
166. Progress in Key Stage 3 is good by the substantial majority of students but by a third it is very good. Progress by lower attaining students is satisfactory and by those with special needs it is generally good. Progress by the majority of students in Key Stage 4 is good.
167. Progress is good because teaching and the students' attitudes are good. For students with special needs, the well organised help of support staff is a key factor in their good progress, which is reported on every half term. The high level of enquiry-based work also effectively assists the learning process. Higher attaining students understand their class work and are able to learn it and recall it some time later. Lower attainers remember the oral components of classwork reasonably well but their powers of recall are short term and they write slowly and less coherently.
168. Attitudes to learning are mainly very good, reflecting the impact of good class management. Teachers set high standards, which is evident in good class behaviour. Less well motivated students require continual monitoring and encouragement to keep them working.
169. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Lessons are organised effectively to take account of students' abilities and the role of support teachers, with whom there is a co-ordinated approach to the planning of lessons. Relationships are very good and classes are managed effectively and with good humour. Lessons are delivered in language that is clear and appropriate to the abilities of the students. Teachers have high expectations of the students, who are challenged rigorously to meet their targets, realistically derived from a very effective assessment procedure. Independent learning assignments have a positive impact on the development of students' higher learning skills. Extended writing and key history skills have been neglected in the

past, although they are now being addressed positively. Teachers are innovative and use a variety of teaching methods. Many of those innovations work successfully and it is the team's good practice to share those ideas.

170. There is one specialist teacher of history with thorough subject knowledge and an interest in history that is often conveyed to the students. Non-specialist teachers are less secure but their interest is no less strong and their teaching no less effective.
171. There are insufficient textbooks, computers and networked software to support teaching at both key stages. The accommodation is mostly good. There are insufficient television and video sets which means they have to be carried from one hut to another, which is potentially damaging and dangerous.
172. Leadership within the faculty of which history is a part is excellent. It is very effective in establishing an environment of collaborative teamwork with well organised procedures that have an impact on teaching, attitudes and learning.

Modern foreign languages

173. Students' overall attainment in French is below the national average. The proportion of candidates who gained A*-C grades in GCSE in 1999 was 29 per cent, well below the national average; however all candidates gained an A*-G grade, above the national average. GCSE results have improved steadily since the last inspection when standards were criticised. Boys, in particular, perform better in French than in most of their other subjects at GCSE.
174. Attainment near the end of Year 9 by the majority of students is below average although a sizeable minority attain the national average. Many students in Year 7 have poor handwriting and presentation skills and their spelling in English is very weak. This clearly handicaps their early attainment in French. However, virtually all beginners learn to accept French as the language of the classroom and develop their listening and comprehension skills to an acceptable standard. Speaking for many is less assured with a tendency to rely on single word answers. Reading is practised both independently and aloud and leads to decent standards in pronunciation. Teachers also strive to improve students' intonation. Concerted efforts to improve writing skills are beginning to bear fruit but there is still considerable variation. One Year 8 class, even after a thorough introduction and several practice exercises, was still having problems finding the correct French form for 'my'. On the other hand, a Year 8 class of higher attainers coped very well with using all forms of a regular French verb in the present tense to make statements and construct questions. A Year 9 class showed considerable dexterity in handling the complexities of the present perfect.
175. Attainment near the end of Year 11 by the majority of students is below average, although an increasing number, presently about a third, achieve the national average. Some lower attainers have hardly progressed beyond the single word stage and have major gaps in their basic vocabulary. In listening exercises, they miss too many points of detail. In speaking, even some higher attainers do not venture beyond the minimal safe answer. More practice in giving as full answers as possible is needed to increase confidence in speaking. A Year 11 class demonstrated good competence in speaking when practising for their GCSE speaking module. Writing improves steadily in range, variety and in grammatical

accuracy. Teachers often add helpful comments to marked work. One Year 10 pupil produced a beautifully illustrated story in ambitious French. Pronunciation and intonation is satisfactory and sometimes good.

176. Progress is good in more than half the lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. Students of all ability levels make at least appropriate progress. Teachers use homework skilfully to facilitate progress by providing good continuity from lesson to lesson. Good teaching produces good progress in lessons but this progress is slowed when students forget some of their recent learning and require considerable repetition before proceeding further. Students with special educational needs make good progress in oral skills, in particular, and when classroom support is available.
177. Behaviour is good. The vast majority of students stay focused on their work and concentrate well, they try hard to complete classwork to their best standard and they participate quite actively in oral work. They work well together in pairs and groups. A small minority can become distracted and need reminders to stop chattering.
178. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. One highly memorable lesson was seen in Year 9 where a class of students of very low ability made good gains in learning the parts of the body in French thanks to a wide variety of exercises and learning games. Students participated very actively and thoroughly enjoyed practising their new words at the front of the class. The lesson proceeded in a warm, friendly atmosphere with much laughter and enjoyment but never to the detriment of serious learning.
179. Lesson planning is thorough and time is utilised to the full. Learning is effectively reinforced at the end of lessons by going over the main points and practising spellings.
180. Teachers are very competent linguists. The department has no foreign language assistants but enjoys the benefits of having a French native speaker on its staff. It is also not slow to avail itself of the valuable services of French trainee teachers and of a French classroom support assistant to add a new and interesting dimension to classroom teaching. A good variety of tasks, exercises and activities ensures ample practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing where one activity dovetails systematically with the next. Teachers work very hard. They monitor students constantly and spend much time marking homework with care and accuracy. They give generously of their free time for a variety of activities outside lesson time to support the classroom work in the subject. A good example of team teaching was seen in which the basic content of the lesson was jointly introduced and demonstrated. The class was then split for the latter half of the lesson to enable each of the two groups to work at their own pace and with the appropriate but slightly different materials. Good discipline is maintained with a light touch. More insistence on students replying in full sentences is needed at times. Links with France and French life need systematic strengthening so that students see the relevance of their French studies more clearly. Further development of such things as the use of video, computer-assisted language learning, satellite television along with French teletext, e-mails to French partner colleges and the Internet would contribute greatly to this aim. They would also offer a rich source of authentic materials to complement the text

books.

181. Departmental leadership is good. Departmental business is meticulously recorded, schemes of work are thoroughly detailed and a series of classroom observations has forged a strong team spirit as well as raising teaching standards. Assessment is strong. Teachers set targets and track progress closely in the main language skills. Students are aware of National Curriculum levels and they know what they have to do to improve. The library is a bright and welcoming environment and contains a reasonable selection of dictionaries but lacks a range of French readers. Teaching accommodation is clustered and contains very good storage facilities. Some of the audio cassette players produce rather distorted sound which can at times cause frustration in students.

Music

182. Students' overall attainment in music is below the national average. GCSE results in music, averaged over four years to take account of the low numbers, are below the national average for grades A*-C, but almost all candidates gained grades A*-G. They are among the better results in the college.
183. Current attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national average. Prior expertise in music is weak, and performance, composition and ensemble skills are underdeveloped. Students need very clear criteria, and find working independently difficult. In this context, there is some attainment at the national average, and the work this term at Key Stage 3 is already paying dividends. Some Year 7 percussion work was generally unsophisticated, but two groups of girls were working together to refine their work effectively. Year 8 students could play the melody accurately on the keyboard but standards of composition were weak. The standard of singing improves with the age of the students. Singing was underdeveloped in a Year 7 class where timing was variable and only some had good tone. However, a Year 8 group sang well with good tone and tuning to a pre-recorded tape and a Year 9 class sang a limited range of songs accurately.
184. Current attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. In a Year 10 class students displayed a basic standard of guitar playing and percussion skills and the standard of keyboard playing was underdeveloped, although students could play a chord sequence accurately. A Year 11 group showed appropriate analytical ability, they could identify the instruments, style, period, time signature and tempo from a range of pieces including jazz and Chinese music. In contrast, another class could not recognise the period from which a Palestrina Mass came. The choir is learning to sing in simple parts. Attainment of boys and girls is similar.
185. Students' progress during Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. This is true of students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. Occasionally, as in one Year 7 class, inability to concentrate and co-operate inhibited the progress of the boys. In effect, progress has started from September 1999 due to staffing changes, apart from some developments of listening skills with the current Year 11 group when they were in Year 10. Progress in class is enhanced by the presence of students who receive instrumental lessons but the proportion involved is relatively low.
186. Students' response is satisfactory at both key stages – and even good in some

lessons. Students are keen to succeed, even though many basic musical skills are currently beyond them. Concentration is not well developed and listening skills are weak. In some lessons, students in groups were seen to be working in company rather than collaboratively; girls were more competent in group work. Relationships in lessons were generally good. An increasing number of students take part in the rapidly developing extra-curricular work in music.

187. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. Expectations are realistic, taking account of experiences earlier in the term where the lack of skills and experience severely limited participation and attainment. Management of students is very good, and time, space and the very good resources are well used. The excellent new music accommodation is used to the full. The formal aspects of assessment are in embryo, but there is very effective informal assessment linked to teacher feedback which has direct consequences on student music making. There is as yet no formal music curriculum, but the record of coverage this term and planned for next term shows a well balanced provision, including appropriate world music content.

Drama

188. GCSE results in drama, taken over a four-year period to take account of low numbers, have been below the national average for grades A*-C but above average for the proportion of grades A*-G. The 1999 results were close to the national average. Results in drama compare well with those in other subjects.
189. Attainment by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 is at the national average. Students are able to work effectively in groups, and collaborate well. A low ability Year 9 group were able to use the 'hot-seating' technique with teacher support to help develop a character in the work in progress. Three girls in a Year 11 GCSE group starting from a poetry stimulus, showed sensitivity in their corporate response thus effectively developing the topic in hand. Around 13 per cent of students take part in extra-curricular activities and the annual production is an important part of the college's public image.
190. The progress of students during Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Students at all ability levels make progress appropriately due to the effective teaching. A particular strength is the foundation work in Year 7 that builds awareness and self-confidence through collaborative group work, which effectively underwrites progress. By Year 9 students are willing to take risks in drama and even cope well without detailed instructions about what to do.
191. Response at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. Concentration is good, with the teacher playing an important role in keeping students on task. Although individual response is good, it is at its best in a group context. Students behave responsibly, are mutually supportive and take initiatives as appropriate.
192. Teaching is good at both key stages. The teacher's very calm manner has a positive impact on student response and attainment. This was particularly effective with a low set in Year 9, where the response of students showed real commitment. Expectations are high, but realistic. Planning is very good and methods appropriate. Class management is excellent. The new assessment scheme is at an early stage of its development and if it is to be fully effective both self-assessment and peer-assessment need to be built in. Teacher

feedback in lessons is very effective. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson the teacher worked inside the drama, helping students to play a full part in the process at all levels. The accommodation is just adequate but lacks specialist resources such as lighting and sound. This restricts the teaching, especially for GCSE. The role of drama in education for a multicultural society is underdeveloped.

Physical education

193. GCSE results for grades A*-C in 1999 were well below the national average for grades A*-C but above average for grades A*-G. There were no entries for GCSE in 1998. Results in 1997 were similar.
194. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation. A few attain above or below the expected level. Games are a strength. The teachers' depth of knowledge ensures that the students have a solid grasp of the basic skills in football and hockey. A few are able to adapt their own performance in response to the limitations of others. A few boys have above average football skills. They anticipate well and can control the game with good timing of moves and passes. A significant minority of girls are able to use the reversed stick when dribbling and stopping the ball in hockey. The majority of students understand rules and basic tactics and can apply them in competitive situations. They understand the importance of exercise for a healthy lifestyle and, when required, are able to conduct their own activity related warm-up. There is little difference in the attainment levels of boys and girls in their respective activities. Those attaining below the expected targets have ball and co-ordination skills that are less refined.
195. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national expectations but a significant minority of students are in line with them. These students show increasingly refined techniques and strategies in activities such as basketball and badminton. Their officiating and coaching skills are less well developed. Those students not reaching the expected targets have poor spatial awareness and are slow to anticipate the responses from others in a game situation. They understand strategies and tactics but lack the precision of skill to successfully play the appropriate shot. Attainment by the majority studying GCSE is below average relative to examination requirements. Students mostly have a satisfactory depth of knowledge in the short-term but lack the self-discipline to study to the depth that is required. They are generally not confident in the use of technical language. A few higher attaining students present written work that is well structured with careful analysis. The majority of students have average practical skills.
196. Progress is good by the majority of students at Key Stage 3. A significant minority make very good progress. The teachers devise challenging tasks and set realistic targets to allow students to progress at their own level. A good example of this was seen in a lower set hockey lesson where accurate, ongoing assessment of all of the students ensured that they were continually stretched and as a result made very good progress. The majority of the students are quick to consolidate and learn new skills. This is because they are well motivated and determined to refine skills through practice. The students with special educational needs are carefully monitored and make good and often very good progress. Support staff are well prepared and work closely with the teachers.

Progress by the majority at Key Stage 4 is good. A significant minority make satisfactory progress. Progress is less good when planning does not include challenges for all ranges of ability within the class or include tasks to develop coaching and officiating skills. Students who are physically unable to take part make unsatisfactory progress because they are not involved in the learning process of the lesson at this key stage. Progress by students studying GCSE is satisfactory. A few make unsatisfactory progress in theoretical aspects because they are slow to consolidate former knowledge and they are not confident in the use of technical language when speaking or writing.

197. Attitudes to learning are mainly good and contribute strongly to the students' progress. Attitudes are often very good at Key Stage 3, some students' response at Key Stage 4 is only satisfactory. The students are mostly enthusiastic and comply willingly with the established code of conduct. They work well together, mostly demonstrate good sporting behaviour and readily adhere to rules of games. They answer and ask questions with increasing confidence. They respect their teachers and enjoy the challenges set for them. They do not have sufficient opportunities to take on positions of responsibility. A minority of the girls at Key Stage 4 lack enthusiasm and often do not participate in lessons. The take-up rate for the GCSE course is satisfactory. The response to the varied extra-curricular programme is good, especially by the boys. It allows all students to further their interests and take part in competitions. The fixture list has been substantially increased this year and the boys have enjoyed success, particularly in the newly introduced sport of rugby.
198. About a quarter of the teaching is satisfactory, but the majority is at least good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Almost all lessons are reinforced with probing question and answer sessions to consolidate knowledge and provoke thought. An increased range of teaching methods is used, which encourages valuable responses but does not give the students sufficient opportunities to develop their planning and evaluative skills. Demonstrations are effective in illustrating correct techniques and there is nearly always sufficient time in the lessons to transfer new and consolidated skills into the final activity. On-going assessment in lessons is constructive, ensuring individual and group progress. However, the students are not informed in the written reports to parents of how they can improve their performance. The teachers mostly have high expectations of all students and continually encourage them to strive for better performance, appropriately related to their ability. Marking of GCSE theoretical work is mostly constructive. Homework assignments are not sufficiently varied to encourage a greater independence in learning. Outstanding features of the teaching are the excellent management of the students and the mutual respect that exists, creating an effective learning environment.
199. The curriculum co-ordinator provides clear direction and positive leadership. Many policies have been updated and have improved students' attainment and response, especially at Key Stage 3. The development plan is focused clearly on raising standards and recognises the need to adapt the existing assessment procedure to meet the new national requirements. The developing schemes of work provide continuity in the curriculum within and between the key stages. The range of activities offered is restricted due to the relatively low amount of curricular time allocated at Key Stage 3. The accommodation has improved with

the addition of a new sports hall, but the long jump pit is in a poor state of repair.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

200. A team of 13 inspectors, who spent a total of 43 inspector days in college, carried out the inspection. Activities and students' work were observed (including lessons, registration, assemblies and extra-curricular activities). Formal meetings and informal discussions were held with students, members of staff and governors. Samples of students' work from all years and representing all abilities were scrutinised. The college documentation was examined both before and during the inspection week. The views of parents were gathered through a special meeting held before the inspection and from their responses to a questionnaire sent to all parents.

200. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of students on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of students with statements of SEN	Number of students on college's register of SEN	Number of full-time students eligible for free college meals
200. Y7 - Y11	574	16	252	145

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	32
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.90

Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	150

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	73.1
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	27
	KS4	21

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
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	£
Total Income	1,258,899
Total Expenditure	1,254,406
Expenditure per pupil	2,224
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,964
Balance carried forward to next year	7,457

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	575
Number of questionnaires returned:	122

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the college encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	29	66	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the college with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	50	5	1	2
The college handles complaints from parents well	24	59	16	2	0
The college gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	29	58	11	2	0
The college keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	32	55	10	2	0
The college enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	37	55	8	0	0
The college encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	66	7	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26	62	9	2	0
The college's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	58	16	2	0
The college achieves high standards of good behaviour	28	56	14	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) college	40	51	7	2	0

Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, excluding nil replies.