

INSPECTION REPORT

UPPINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Uppingham, Rutland

LEA area: 857 Rutland

Unique reference number: 120312

Headteacher: Mr Malcolm England

Reporting inspector: Mr Chris Warn
4293

Dates of inspection: 26 February – 1 March 2001

Inspection number: 187864

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	London Road Uppingham Rutland
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ann Kanter
Date of previous inspection:	22 April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Uppingham Community College is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school. It became Grant Maintained in April 1993 and is now a Foundation School. It has been a specialist Technology College since April 1995. Students are drawn from a predominantly rural catchment area, although some choose to attend from the neighbouring towns of Oakham and Corby. Overall the area that the school serves has a moderately favourable social and economic profile.

There are 794 students on roll, which is smaller than the average size for secondary schools nationally. This number has risen steadily from 628 when the school was last inspected in 1996. The overall standard of students' attainment on entry into Year 7 is just above the national average. A smaller than average proportion of students (5.2%) is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students speaking English as an additional language is low (0.4%). The proportion of students with identified special educational needs (18.2%) is broadly in line with the average for secondary schools. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need (3.6%) is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that is achieving standards that are above the national average at Key Stage 3 and well above the national average at Key Stage 4. It has particular strengths in design and technology, creative and performing arts and sport. Staff, governors and senior managers work well as a team to ensure continuous improvement. The overall quality of teaching is good, with many cases of very good and sometimes excellent teaching. More students wish to come here than there are spaces for. It was an effective school at the time of the last inspection and it has improved still further. Good value for money is provided.

What the school does well

- GCSE examination results are rising rapidly and are now well above the national average.
- The high quality of teaching is a key factor in raising standards and improving students' progress.
- The Technology College initiative has had a valuable impact on standards of attainment and upon the quality of provision.
- Students with special educational needs are extremely well supported and make very good progress.
- Students' standards of behaviour are high, their attitudes to learning are very positive and there are very good arrangements to support their personal development.
- The curriculum provision has improved since 1996 and there are plans for additional improvements.
- Very good leadership and management have created a very effective school.

What could be improved

- Students are not given a sufficiently clear picture of their personal learning targets and how to reach them in every subject, and this information is not as accessible to parents as they would wish.
- The key skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are not being taught and used consistently from subject to subject.
- More able students are not being given sufficient opportunity to reach Levels 7 and 8 by the end of Year 9.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. None of these aspects are currently unsatisfactory, but they are not yet as good as most of the other aspects of the work of the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been substantial improvement since the last inspection in 1996, when the school already had many important strengths. Standards achieved at the end of Year 9 have risen from an above average baseline at a similar rate to the national trend. GCSE results have risen at a far greater rate than nationally. The quality of teaching has increased significantly to become a key strength of the school. Increased opportunities for more able students to take part in challenging learning opportunities are now provided, although more still needs to be done. There is a greatly improved consistency of subject management, especially in monitoring and evaluation. More effective use is now made of assessment information for curriculum planning and setting targets for individual achievement. Opportunities for independent learning have been greatly increased. Inadequacies in the provision for art and design and religious education have been addressed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE (and equivalent) examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were above the national average. These students made the expected rate of progress given that their attainment on entry into Year 7 was also above average. In the last two years boys have out performed girls in mathematics and science and in English boys' performance is improving at a faster rate than for girls. Standards of work seen in lessons indicate that students are working to higher levels of attainment than last year, especially in Years 7 and 8, although there is still scope for more students to be working towards Levels 7 and 8 by the end of Year 9.

The standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 in 2000 were well above the national average. These students made much greater progress from the start of Year 10 than in most other schools nationally. These GCSE results were the best in the history of the school and the targets set for 2000 were considerably exceeded. Girls' results were especially high. Students did particularly well in design and technology, modern foreign languages and science. From an examination of students' current work in lessons it is clear that the standards being reached are in line with the ambitious targets that the governors have set for 2001.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Students are mature, responsible and keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Incidents of bullying are rare, and are swiftly dealt with. There have been no recent cases of permanent exclusion.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students are given high quality advice and guidance and are able to accept considerable personal responsibility. There are high levels of respect between teachers and students.
Attendance	Good. The attendance rate is above the national average.

Students are very proud of the school and the great majority enjoy school life. There is a fair and effective system for rewards and sanctions. The progress that students make is being monitored with increasing accuracy. Very good support is being given to those students who are at risk of achieving below their expected level, especially in Years 10 and 11.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	very good	good

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

In every one of the 42 lessons seen the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. In 86% of lessons it was good or better, and in 42% it was very good or excellent. These are very high figures and represent a very big improvement since 1996. The best teaching was seen in Years 7, 8 and 11. The overall quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science throughout the school is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching. In all subjects lessons are imaginatively planned and proceed at a stimulating pace using a variety of techniques. Student-teacher relationships and classroom control are very good and any instances of challenging behaviour are managed well. The quality of support given to students with special educational needs is outstanding, enabling them to make particularly good progress. In a minority of lessons in Years 7 to 9 higher ability students could be set more demanding targets, and more imaginative homework could be set. Marking is usually thorough and written comments are supportive although they often lack enough guidance about how work could be further improved. Considerable attention is given to developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum, but this needs tighter co-ordination. Teachers are prepared to invest a great deal of time and energy in supporting out-of-hours learning activities that are highly beneficial to students.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets current statutory requirements. The teaching and use of key skills are not sufficiently consistent from subject to subject.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Much of the learning support is outstanding and there is very good use of individual education plans to guide lesson planning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for moral and social development is very good, whilst that for cultural development is good and for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school has a caring, friendly and optimistic ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Very great care is taken to advise students carefully about their personal development and to ensure that they are safe.

A special feature of the curriculum is the availability of after-school learning sessions on three days each week. These are used for such things as music, sport, drama and study support and make a very positive impact on standards and personal development. These sessions help to overcome some of the difficulties that some students experience in living in relatively isolated rural communities with few cultural or educational amenities. The additional grant for being a Technology College has been used well to encourage a much wider use of new technology. All students have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities provided by the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior managers have a clear vision for the school as a community college. They have a strong commitment to achieving high standards and providing high quality support for personal development. The quality of leadership for subjects, pastoral care and special educational needs is also very high.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very committed to continuous improvement and bring valuable expertise. This is a good example of a self-managing school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Increasing use is being made of data, surveys and classroom observations to identify strengths and weaknesses. This enables action to be focused on those aspects that will make a significant difference.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Grants and special funding, including a large budget for special educational needs, is used well. Teachers are greatly helped by an above average expenditure on support staff.

Senior and middle managers, other staff and governors have worked well together to achieve the many successes of the school. There are particular strengths in the arrangements for staff development and training and the organisation of the learning opportunities for older students. The principles of best value are being increasingly applied, although for a specialist school in a small local education authority (LEA) it is hard to make direct comparisons with similar schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good GCSE results • the dedication and hard work of teachers • the high quality of the advice, guidance and support to students • very good support for students with special educational needs • extensive learning opportunities outside the taught day • high standards of behaviour • good facilities • effective leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better dining facilities • more attention to setting interesting homework to an agreed schedule • ensuring that able children are suitably challenged in Years 7 to 9 • providing parents with more information about their child's learning targets and the progress being made in meeting them

The inspection confirmed that the strengths identified by parents were substantial and impressive. The governors are committed to attending to the areas of concern. The third and fourth points that concern parents are important areas for further improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school's results and achievements

GCSE examination results are rising rapidly and are now well above the national average.

1. Standards attained at the end of Year 11 are well above the national average and are rapidly improving. In 2000 the school achieved its best ever GCSE results and it is on track to achieve its targets in 2001. In 2000, 66% of students achieved five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, considerably exceeding the target of 58%. This shows a notable improvement on the comparable figure of 56% in 1996. 2000 was the first year when this indicator exceeded 60%. This places the school well above the national average and also the average for similar schools. In 2000, 96% of students achieved five or more GCSE passes at grade G or above compared with 94% in 1996. 2000 was the first year when this indicator exceeded 95%. This again places the school above the national average. In 2000, 98% of students gained at least one GCSE grade G pass, again above the national average. In 2000, the average total point score was 46.0 points. This compares very favourably with 39.3 points in 1996 and the 2000 target of 41.0 points. This is a particularly important indicator because it gives credit to all the GCSE results of all students.
2. Students make expected rates of progress from an above average baseline at the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9 and then make greatly accelerated progress from the start of Year 10 to the end of Year 11. The overall trend of results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in the core subjects between 1996 and 2000 shows a lower rate of increase than the trend for GCSE point scores over the same period. This is mostly because fewer students in 2000 reached Levels 7 and 8 at the end of Year 9 than might be expected and overall point scores in mathematics were slightly depressed. Boys are currently performing slightly better than girls in mathematics and science in Year 9. During Years 10 and 11 students of all abilities make good progress, with the more able students doing especially well. This is evident both from recent GCSE results and from the work seen by inspectors in current GCSE lessons. Boys are reaching high standards compared to the national average whilst girls are reaching very high standards. This means that the GCSE results show considerable "added value" from the start of Year 7, but that it was predominantly achieved in Years 10 and 11.
3. There are many factors that have led to these successful GCSE results. Expectations are high and in many lessons across all subject areas challenging tasks are set that motivate students well. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge coupled with a clear understanding of the ways in which students learn effectively. Students with special educational needs are given highly effective support. Teachers use question and answer techniques well to develop understanding and to stimulate enquiry. Students have a mature attitude to learning and are keen to do well. They are well aware of what they need to do to reach their expected grades. At appropriate times students are given valuable coaching on examination techniques, as was well demonstrated during the inspection in art and design, geography and mathematics. ICT is used well to enrich independent learning, particularly in science and design and technology.
4. Students, when interviewed, said that they were being well prepared for their examinations and coursework. For example, there is a very well planned "countdown" programme that prepares students week by week for the final exhibition and examinations in art and design. Students were observed undertaking a very rigorous examination exercise in geography. Students said that they considered that they were making especially good progress in design and technology, music, English, modern foreign languages and ICT. These perceptions were confirmed by the school's own analysis of its results and by the observation of students' work during the inspection.

The high quality of teaching is a key factor in raising standards and improving students' progress.

5. The overall quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 3 and is good in Key Stage 4. There is a substantial amount of very good and sometimes excellent teaching. Of 42 lessons sampled, teaching was always satisfactory or better and in 86% of cases it was good or better. In 42% of the lessons seen teaching was very good or excellent. This represented 50% of lessons at Key Stage 3 and 30% of lessons at Key Stage 4. Examples of very good teaching were seen in Years 7, 8, 9 and 11. These were in English, design and technology, drama, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music, personal and social education, religious education and science. Excellent teaching was seen in Years 7 and 11 in English, drama and music.
6. Whilst there were many strengths in the teaching at the time of the last inspection there were also some important weaknesses. Then 15% of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory compared to none now. Then the majority of weak teaching was to be found in Years 7 and 8. Now these two years are characterised by some of the strongest teaching, together with Year 11. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are invariably very good and sometimes excellent, as was very well demonstrated in the design and technology, drama, English, geography, history, ICT and music lessons that were seen. Detailed and imaginative lesson planning is evident in all subjects. Many lessons proceed at a brisk and stimulating pace with a variety of learning techniques being employed. Many teachers have a good understanding of the specific learning needs of individual students and offer them helpful personal advice, especially during practical work.
7. The widespread use of mixed ability grouping at Key Stage 3 requires teachers to pay careful attention to ensuring that students of differing capabilities are able to work at different levels. This was done particularly successfully in the Key Stage 3 design and technology, drama, English, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and science lessons seen. For example, in design and technology different books and worksheets enabled students to work at their own pace, whilst in science careful attention was given to the particular needs of students with differing learning styles. In a Year 7 music lesson students were working extremely well in pairs to do compositions using electronic keyboards. In a minority of the Key Stage 3 lessons sampled, opportunities to enable more able students to develop their thinking and reasoning skills to a high level were not emphasised sufficiently. This was largely because the resources that were used were too basic for the most able students or because the tasks set required the repetition of skills that they had already gained competence in. However, the widespread lack of challenge reported upon at the time of the last inspection was not evident. The very good overall standard of the teaching and learning at Key Stage 3, especially in Years 7 and 8, shows that valuable staff development work undertaken since the last inspection has paid off and that standards are rising as a consequence.
8. The specific learning requirements of students with special educational needs are very well attended to in all subjects and in all years. Very effective use is made of support staff. Good examples were seen of homework being used successfully to consolidate and extend class work in art, English, French and history in Years 7 to 9. However, in some homework diaries there were some days in which very little formal homework was recorded. Very good student-teacher relationships and classroom control was seen in all subjects. Any cases of challenging behaviour were managed well.
9. Students attend between one and three after school sessions per week which are provided between 3pm and 4pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. These sessions (known as 'session 6') include additional opportunities to participate in music, drama and sport and to use the extensive ICT facilities of the school. Some older students use this time to take an additional subject or to complete their coursework. These additional sessions are superbly taught in a very friendly and enthusiastic way. This makes a big contribution to motivation, good relationships and increased self-confidence.

The Technology College initiative has had a valuable impact on standards of attainment and upon the quality of provision.

10. Additional specialist Technology College funding has been very well used. As a consequence there is a greatly increased provision for the teaching of ICT skills. It is clear from observing lessons that students in all years make very good progress in acquiring a wide range of ICT skills and many reach high levels of competence. In 2000 every student was entered for a qualification in ICT at the end of Year 11. Most took a short or full GCSE course, with about 10% gaining a Certificate of Achievement award. These ICT results were above the national average. In the work seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection it was evident that students were working to higher standards this year than in 1999 and 2000 within specialist ICT lessons held in the ICT rooms. However, these high level skills were not seen to be applied very widely in lessons in some other subjects. The school also provides training in ICT skills for local primary teachers and adults in the community.
11. Specialist funding has enabled an outstanding design and technology curriculum to be provided that includes the use of a wide range of construction materials and ICT. Graphics, modelling, electronics and control are used exceptionally well. The Key Stage 3 art and design elements of the National Curriculum are very effectively integrated into a modular programme along with design and technology. Accurate planning ensures that all elements of both subjects are properly covered. Equally accurate assessment methods are used to track individual students' progress in these modular courses. Collaboration with local businesses has enabled a strong vocational element to be present in the Key Stage 4 design and technology curriculum. For example, in textiles, students have visited clothing manufacturers and have exhibited their own garments at a fashion show in Derby.
12. The science curriculum has also been enriched by additional funding, particularly in the use of ICT, better assessment arrangements and a stronger emphasis on thinking skills. Mathematics teaching is about to be enhanced by a class set of lap top computers. New technology greatly enriches learning in music. Opportunities for independent enquiry through the enhanced library and computer facilities have benefited learning in all subjects. The impact of this work is particularly evident in English. An outreach worker, funded by Technology College money, is helping to ensure that the teachers of students in Year 7 have a better knowledge of what they have been taught in Year 6 by collaborating with teachers in partner primary schools.

Students with special educational needs are extremely well supported and make very good progress

13. Rutland local education authority has made a policy decision not to operate any secondary special schools and to place as many students as possible with special educational needs aged between 11 and 16 into its three mainstream secondary schools. Uppingham Community College therefore has a higher than average proportion of students with a statement of special educational need, including some with relatively severe learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Appropriate levels of funding are provided to support these students. The school has responded to the specific requirements of all students with special educational needs extremely well. The aim of including them fully into the life and work of the school has been thoroughly fulfilled. Imaginative approaches have been adopted to enable these students to have full access to the curriculum and facilities on offer whilst ensuring that their personal learning requirements are being met. This has been extremely well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator and senior managers.
14. Each student with identified special educational needs is provided with a very detailed individual education plan (IEP) that is frequently updated. Each IEP contains precise learning targets that are fully communicated to teachers and which are consistently used in lessons to ensure that appropriate classroom support is given. Very accurate records are used to monitor targeted students' progress diagnostically. Learning resources are often adapted to the specific learning requirements of individual students. In the great majority of cases where learning support

assistants are deployed in lessons, they offer imaginative and timely help. This was well illustrated in a French lesson where the learning support assistant spoke in French along with the class teacher. ICT is used well to help students develop language and number skills. Where students are withdrawn from lessons for individual or small group tuition, the quality of the coaching that they receive is very good. This work is done in a well-equipped and very stimulating learning support suite.

15. As a consequence of such well-organised and thoughtfully planned provision, students with special educational needs make very good progress. This is confirmed by the results that they achieve at GCSE, comments in reports and IEPs, work seen by inspectors in lessons and the views of parents and students. At the parents' meeting held before the inspection some very impressive personal stories were told about how teachers had helped students to overcome problems associated with dyslexia, mobility, emotional and behavioural difficulties and lack of self-confidence. Teachers and learning support assistants have responded very successfully to the specific challenge of teaching students with relatively severe behavioural difficulties when they are integrated fully into lessons with other students. The success of the school in managing arrangements for the teaching and support of students with special educational needs well illustrates the extent to which the principles of inclusive education are being realised in daily practice.

Students' standards of behaviour are high, their attitudes to learning are very positive and there are very good arrangements to support their personal development.

16. The school is fully committed to the principle of social inclusion by offering equal opportunities for all students. Students and parents recognise this and respond very positively. As a consequence the very good behaviour of students in lessons is an important factor in the high and rising standards of attainment in the school. For example, excellent inter-personal relationships were seen in art, English, drama, French, history, ICT and physical education lessons. In several personal, social and health education lessons contentious and complex issues were able to be dealt with very sensitively thanks to the mature attitudes of the students. An especial strength is the effective use of self-directed learning which encourages students to work independently, made possible by students' readiness to work well when not under the direct supervision of a teacher.
17. Very good behaviour was seen in both the lower and upper school assemblies, enabling thoughtful messages to be given and received with sensitivity within a big gathering. Behaviour was also seen to be considerate and sensible in the dining area, in crowded corridors between lessons and in the bus queues. Sometimes the enthusiasm shown by students in lessons motivated their teachers and so made learning especially cheerful and enjoyable. A history teacher was delighted with the way that Year 8 students responded to a homework task to make a model totem pole as part of a unit on North American Indians. A drama teacher was similarly delighted by the way in which students developed the theme of miming.
18. Parents and students spoke very warmly about the valuable part played by form tutors and heads of year in promoting personal development. Each student is known well and great care is taken to track their progress and to help them if they experience any difficulties. Those students identified as making slower than expected progress are given additional support by designated staff mentors. Arrangements for the induction of new students into Year 7 are excellent and are very highly praised by parents. Equally impressive are the arrangements for welcoming newcomers into the school from other secondary schools. The after school 'session 6' is a very good means of developing trust and friendship between students and members of staff, as are the many other sporting, dramatic and musical activities run by the school and the residential visits. The extensive community education facilities attached to the school offers valuable additional ways of supporting students' personal development.

The curriculum provision has improved since 1996 and there are plans for additional improvements.

19. The overall breadth and balance of the curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4 are good. There are particular strengths in design and technology, ICT and science as part of the Technology College initiative. There are also very great strengths in physical education (as recognised in the Sportsmark Award) and in music and drama.
20. At Key Stage 3 all students have the opportunity to follow all prescribed elements of the National Curriculum. In addition they have the chance to experience a superb drama course and to extend their musical, dramatic and sporting capabilities during after school sessions and visits. Since the last inspection the curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been greatly strengthened by improved opportunities for using ICT and a very imaginative combined design and technology and art and design course. All students follow a well-planned personal, social and health education programme. A particular concern at the time of the last inspection was the inadequate curriculum coverage for art and design. The findings from this inspection confirm that all National Curriculum requirements are now being fully met for this subject and that standards of attainment are rising as a consequence. Art and design work is often integrated with ceramics, graphics and textiles to enlarge the range of contexts for applying artistic skills and concepts.
21. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum enables all students to follow a balanced range of GCSE courses and to obtain a qualification in ICT. The main shortcoming at the time of the last inspection was the inadequacy of arrangements for teaching religious education to the majority of students who did not take this subject as a GCSE course. Since then the position has been strengthened, although there is still more to do to meet all of the requirements set out in the Agreed Syllabus that has been adopted by the school. This syllabus has been produced by Northamptonshire local education authority and issues covered include morality, relationships, community involvement, peace, conflict, punishment, prejudice, medical ethics and homelessness. There are two attainment targets, one of which is to respond to questions of meaning and value. The current course enables this to be done satisfactorily. The other attainment target is to develop a knowledge and understanding of religions, and this element needs to be strengthened.
22. Staff and governors are aware of the value of broadening the Key Stage 4 curriculum further by introducing designated vocational courses. There are significant vocational elements within the current design and technology curriculum. Some students have followed a business studies course as a way of sampling a more vocational approach. There are plans to introduce either GNVQ part 1 or Vocational GCSE courses into Year 10 from September 2002.

Very good leadership and management have created a very effective school.

23. The many substantial strengths of the school and the continuing drive towards further improvement are the direct result of very good leadership and management. Aims, values and policies are well considered and are put into practice well. High standards of attainment are reached by students by the end of Key Stage 3 and very high standards are achieved by the end of Key Stage 4. The teaching is consistently good, with much that is very good. There are very good arrangements to support all students and to ensure that they are able to learn in safe and stimulating environments. Students with identified learning and behavioural difficulties are extremely well integrated into the life and work of the school. The school is well governed and is open to good ideas and new challenges. New opportunities made available by recent Government initiatives have been used to good advantage. Arrangements for staff development and training are very good. Governors and members of staff with management responsibilities are well aware of what the school does well and what could be improved further. The high standards present at the time of the last inspection have been improved upon still further. Good value for money is provided. These are all characteristics of an effective and well-managed school where leadership at all levels is strong.

24. There is abundant evidence of the impact of incisive strategic planning by both the former and present principals, supported by two experienced and very capable deputies. Performance data is increasingly being used to pinpoint aspects of best practice and areas where further action would be beneficial, such as in enabling more students to reach Level 5 in mathematics by the end of Year 9. The curriculum is well planned and is interpreted through an efficiently organised ten-day timetable. The governing body is fully committed to supporting the work of the school, especially through setting the right priorities for development and monitoring performance. Statutory duties are fulfilled well and a complex budget is well managed to support key aims and priorities. The experience gained of being a self-managing school when it was Grant Maintained has been continued now this is a Foundation School.
25. An especial strength is the very high quality of middle management. Subject leadership is very good, with some outstanding examples. The roles and responsibilities of subject leaders are well defined. They are well aware of how to interpret whole-school development priorities within the context of their own subject. Heads of year provide a top quality support and guidance service to students with very effective direction and support from a deputy head teacher. The special education needs co-ordinator ensures that all students who need it have an up-to-date individual education plan that identifies precisely the level and nature of support that is required. That support is invariably provided well and the impact of it is accurately monitored. The community education is also very well managed, with many examples of out-of-hours and adult learning opportunities being used to enrich the main school curriculum.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Students are not given a sufficiently clear picture of their personal learning targets and how to reach them in every subject, and this information is not as accessible to parents as they would wish.

26. Schemes of work for all subjects are being upgraded to incorporate the new requirements of Curriculum 2000. The guidelines provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are being used to identify appropriate learning outcomes for each unit of work for students of differing ability. In some subjects, most notably in design and technology, English and science students are being provided with summaries of these outcomes so that they can identify exactly what they need to do to reach or exceed a particular level. This is helping them to set personal learning targets and to understand how well they are progressing towards them. In other subjects, learning targets are not so clearly or consistently shared with students, with the consequence that they are less clear about the standard of their work and what they need to do to improve.
27. A great deal of assessment information is now available to teachers from an electronic database. Teachers are now entering level and grade indicators from tests and coursework assessments during the year so that a detailed statistical profile of how well each student is doing is beginning to emerge. Currently, subject teachers and form tutors provide a good level of academic support for students, but lack detailed information to show how well students are progressing across all subjects and what learning targets they are working towards. An improved statistical profile for each student has the potential to help them in this work.
28. Some parents have expressed the wish to be better informed about what their children are learning and the standards that they are expected to reach. They too would therefore gain from having access to summarised schemes of work and level descriptions. A start was made in a recent newsletter to parents. In some subjects schemes of work have been placed on the school web-site, which is undergoing further development.

The key skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are not being taught and used consistently from subject to subject.

29. Teachers recognise the improving standards of literacy skills possessed by students entering Year 7 as a result of the National Literacy Strategy operating in primary schools. They also accept the need to play a part in the continuing development of these skills through the context of each subject area. However, different subject teams tackle the work of improving such skills as spelling, punctuation, syntax, handwriting and extended speaking in different ways to differing standards. There is an agreement that a more unified and better co-ordinated approach to literacy development in all subjects, particularly at Key Stage 3, should be introduced and steps have already been taken to do this. There is plenty of expertise available in the English, modern foreign languages and curriculum support teams to act as a catalyst for this to happen. Less groundwork has so far been done to ensure a consistent and coherent whole-school approach to the development of numeracy skills.
30. Since the last inspection the range and quality of the ICT provision have greatly increased. Specialist teaching in fully equipped ICT rooms has enabled all students to gain an above average level of competency in the use of new technology. However, more opportunities to apply these competencies as a means of extending and enriching learning in other subject areas could be provided, especially in sessions that involve whole-class teaching.

More able students are not being given sufficient opportunity to reach Levels 7 and 8 by the end of Year 9.

31. In 2000, by the end of Year 9, the proportion of students reaching or exceeding Level 5 was better than in 80% of secondary schools in England. The proportion reaching or exceeding Level 6 was better than in 60% of secondary schools. However, the proportion of students who reached Level 7 was just below the national average and there were relatively few cases of students reaching Level 8. In contrast, the proportion of students who gain GCSE grades A and A* at the end of Key Stage 4 was well above the national average. These patterns were evident in the three previous years also.
32. This indicates that there is scope for extending opportunities for more able students in Years 7 to 9 to reach more ambitious learning targets in some lessons. A lot of groundwork has already been done. In over half of the lessons seen such opportunities were imaginatively provided. New schemes of work have recently been introduced in many subjects that incorporate the learning opportunities that need to be offered to ensure that the criteria for Levels 7 and 8 are met. Valuable and extensive staff development work has been undertaken to promote more advanced thinking skills, for example in interpreting meaning in drama and in testing hypotheses in science. New technology is available to be used to challenge students' imagination and to extend their knowledge in several subjects and during "session 6". Recent curriculum innovations in design and technology and science exemplify much of this. Even so, in approximately one lesson in five seen in Years 7 to 9 gifted and talented students did not have sufficient opportunity to use higher level thinking and reasoning skills to extend the boundaries of their work beyond those set for the rest of the class.
33. The written comments offered to students at Key Stage 3 who gain high marks are often, with justification, very complimentary. These complimentary comments are less frequently linked to written suggestions about ways of going still further. Written advice offered to students does not often suggest ways of using more advanced thinking or reasoning skills. In contrast, it is quite common for students in Years 10 and 11 to receive detailed and constructive help about how to go further to convert work that is of, for example, GCSE grade B standard up to grade A standard. The methodologies that have led to such successful outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 are therefore ready to be applied to Key Stage 3.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34. Uppingham Community College is a very successful school with many significant strengths and no major weaknesses. It has a record of continuing improvement. Many features are very good. To continue this drive towards excellence the staff and governors now should:

- (1) **Ensure that students have a clear understanding of their personal learning targets and how to reach them in every subject, and that this is communicated fully to parents,** especially by
 - *extending the good practice of identifying individual learning targets already established in some curriculum areas to all subjects;**
 - *providing parents with a summary of the scheme of work for subjects and an indication of the standards being aimed for. (paragraphs 26-28)*

- (2) **Develop a more co-ordinated approach to applying the key skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects of the curriculum,** especially by
 - *introducing a consistent whole-school approach to literacy development;*
 - *similarly developing a whole-school co-ordinated approach to numeracy development;*
 - *enabling students to apply their high levels of ICT expertise gained in specialist lessons in all subjects.* (paragraphs 29 and 30)*

- (3) **Provide further opportunities for more able students at Key Stage 3 to reach levels 7 and 8,** especially by
 - *enabling them to use more advanced thinking skills such as analysis, justification, synthesis, problem solving and hypothesis testing;*
 - *applying their learning to new and more complex contexts;*
 - *sharpening their enquiry and research skills further.* (paragraphs 31-33)*

[* these tasks feature prominently in the current college development plan]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	29	45	14	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	794	n/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	33	n/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	29	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	163	n/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	87	76	163

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	64	70	71
	Girls	62	58	51
	Total	126	128	122
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (79)	79 (80)	75 (76)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (28)	45 (50)	33 (31)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	66	71	63
	Girls	68	60	57
	Total	134	131	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (80)	80 (87)	74 (75)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	27 (39)	40 (43)	39 (37)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	55	69	124

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	32	52	54
	Girls	50	67	67
	Total	82	119	121
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	66 (59)	96 (95)	98 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46.0 (45.3)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	756
Any other minority ethnic group	33

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	44	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	45.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	384

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Year 11

Key Stage 3	24
Key Stage 4	21

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	2,094,742
Total expenditure	2,099,296
Expenditure per pupil	2644
Balance brought forward from previous year	104,635
Balance carried forward to next year	40,699

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	794
Number of questionnaires returned	168

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	37	54	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	60	9	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	55	17	5	1
The teaching is good.	30	62	2	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	56	13	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	39	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	32	49	15	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	54	1	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	56	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	47	8	2	1

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The overall picture is of very strong parental support. The majority of categories received a positive response of over 90%, with especial strengths in the areas of students' progress, teaching, staff approachability, students' personal development, extra-curricular activities and school leadership and management. In relative terms, slightly fewer parents were content with arrangements for homework and receiving information about their child's progress and the extent to which the school worked closely with parents.

Other issues raised by parents

At the parents' meeting held before the inspection began, those present were strongly supportive of the overall work of the school. They highlighted most of the strengths and areas of concern identified in the questionnaire replies, but also raised concerns about the small and congested dining room. Some parents indicated that they thought that more able students could be challenged further, especially in Years 7 to 9.