

INSPECTION REPORT

KEMNAL TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Sidcup

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101672

Headteacher: John Atkins

Reporting inspector: Michael Buckley
OIN: 30517

Dates of inspection: 15th - 18th January 2001

Inspection number: 188317

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Sevenoaks Way Sidcup Kent
Postcode:	DA14 5AA
Telephone number:	020 8300 7112
Fax number:	020 8300 5619
Email:	admin@ktc.bromley.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lesley Alexander
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd - 26 th April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
30517	Michael Buckley	Registered inspector		The school's results and students' achievements; How well students are taught; How well the school is led and managed; Sixth form provision
9163	Geoffrey Humphrey	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development; How well the school cares for its students; How well the school works in partnership with parents; Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning
23588	Charanjit Ajitsingh	Team inspector	Religious education	
22958	Terence Bailess	Team inspector	English; Drama	
30317	Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education	
30433	Chris Corp	Team inspector	Science	
22953	Peter Dacombe	Team inspector	Modern languages	
19827	Mary Henderson	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Equality of opportunity	
12566	Barbara Jones	Team inspector	Geography	Assessment
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art; Media studies	
8630	Frederick Peacock	Team inspector	Music; Careers education	
1254	Marguerite Presman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
14522	Ian Smith	Team inspector	Design and technology; Information and communication technology	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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33, Kingsway,
London,
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kemnal is a boys' Technology College situated in the south London borough of Bromley, on the edge of the Green Belt. It has 1,051 pupils on roll. This is larger than the national average and the number is rising each year. The college takes pupils from a very wide area. They come from 76 different primary schools and almost two thirds come from outside the local authority area in which the college is located. The sixth form is small, with only 35 students in Year 12 and 45 in Year 13. Both year groups include one girl. Eighty per cent of the pupils are from a white British heritage and there are comparatively low numbers of pupils from other ethnic groups. The college has a few pupils from Traveller families. Almost one in every four pupils is eligible for free school meals, which is a higher proportion than the national average. Overall, 274 pupils (26 per cent) are on the college's register of special educational needs. This is a higher figure than is seen nationally and the proportion of pupils with statements identifying the additional help they need (five per cent) is also above the national average. The majority of these pupils have identified learning difficulties. The attainment of the majority of pupils entering the college in Year 7 is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school and it provides satisfactory value for money. Although attainment is generally below the nationally expected levels, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and standards overall are improving. The quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management of the college are also good, with many very good features.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good across the college.
- The college provides good pastoral support and relationships are good.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The college is well led and managed.
- Arrangements for development planning, monitoring performance and financial management are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and in literacy across the curriculum should be raised further.
- Provision for personal and social education and careers education.
- Practice in assessing students' attainment and progress.
- The narrow range of option choices, particularly in the sixth form.
- The college does not meet the statutory requirements for modern languages, religious education or daily collective worship.

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

Standards in Key Stage 3 have been improving in mathematics and science and GCSE results are also improving each year.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college has made good progress in many aspects of its work since the last inspection in 1996. It has successfully tackled most of the key issues identified then. Teaching, accommodation and assessment have been particularly well developed. However, personal, social and careers education is still not well provided for and independent learning skills are not being consistently taught. These aspects show little improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The GCSE results are below the national average for all schools but they are above the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Most importantly, the results are well above those achieved by schools with similar scores in the 1998 tests at the end of Key Stage 3. This indicates very good progress is made at Kemnal through Key Stage 4 and the GCSE results are improving each year at a faster rate than the national trend. Advanced and intermediate GNVQ results are close to the national averages, although the A-level results are well below this standard. This, too, indicates good progress from entry into the college in Year 7. Results of the year 2000 tests in Year 9 were below the national averages in mathematics and science and well below them in English. Results were better in mathematics and science when compared with those of similar schools. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. The majority of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are working at just below the nationally expected levels and attainment is satisfactory when previous attainment is taken into account. They make good strides in certain areas, such as geography, art, design and technology, music in Key Stage 4 and history in Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The biggest barrier to pupils reaching higher grades is the underdevelopment of basic skills, particularly in writing. It is to the credit of the college that all its pupils obtain grades in the GCSE examinations. The targets set are sensible and pupils are likely to meet them in 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are generally satisfactory. Most pupils respond well to challenge.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class is generally satisfactory and often good. No instances of oppressive behaviour or bullying were seen.
Personal development and relationships	Good. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility outside the classroom and relationships are generally good.
Attendance	Satisfactory

Pupils respond well to the many opportunities provided for using their initiative. They are very involved in the wide range of activities provided outside formal lessons. They are mostly courteous and considerate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good across the whole college. It was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of all the lessons seen and good or better in almost 60 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the sixth form but, otherwise, there were no significant differences in the quality of teaching in any year group. English, mathematics and science are well taught in Key Stages 3 and 4. The most consistently good teaching was in art, history, mathematics and music in Key Stage 3 and in science, history, modern languages and music in Key Stage 4. English is particularly well taught in the sixth form. On the GNVQ courses, pupils' learning is sound and they benefit from teachers who have a good understanding of the vocational and occupational areas they teach. Strengths in teaching include teachers' good knowledge of their subjects, their careful preparation of lessons, their infectious enthusiasm and high expectations. Teachers make good use of support staff to the direct benefit of pupils with special educational needs. They use praise well and conduct lessons at a good pace. Pupils respond well to these approaches. They develop skills and understanding at a satisfactory rate and make efforts to progress, although sometimes they work too slowly. This is often when lessons lack variety. Teachers generally work hard to improve literacy and numeracy, although their expectations of pupils' writing are not always high enough. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and taught and they learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Statutory requirements are not being met for modern languages in Key Stage 4 or for religious education in the sixth form.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is a complex and effective network of support and pupils are given good opportunities to gain access to the whole curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social development is good. Many opportunities are provided. Provision for wider cultural development and for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The provision made for personal and social education is not satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for child protection are good, as are procedures for monitoring attendance. Practice in assessing pupils' attainment and progress is not consistent.

All the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in Key Stage 3 and additional subjects, such as drama, enrich pupils' experience. There is not enough time allowed for two modern languages to be studied or for personal and social education and careers. The range of options is not wide enough, particularly in the sixth form. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the college works well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership from the principal is well supported by senior staff. All staff share a strong commitment to raising standards and the college is well placed to improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very conscientious and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Development planning and the monitoring of progress towards the targets set for all areas of the college's work are very well done.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are well deployed to meet the central priorities.

Particular strengths of leadership include the strong drive to improve the opportunities offered to pupils in the college, the high levels of efficiency in the management of staff and resources and the rigorous review procedures that ensure the college is on track to meet its targets. Great care is given to the use of resources and financial planning and management are of very high quality. The principles of 'best value' are strictly and effectively applied. Statutory requirements are not being met in respect of modern languages, religious education and collective worship. Staffing and resources are satisfactory and the standards of accommodation are generally good

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard of education and the progress their children make. • The moral and social values promoted by the college. • The range and quality of information provided by the college. • The welcome that parents feel when visiting the college. • The leadership and management of the principal. • The ongoing improvements in accommodation and learning resources. • The local reputation of being an improving educational provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some expressed concern that standards in technical subjects are not high enough. • Behaviour of pupils, particularly outside college, for example on the buses. • Aspects of the homework provision and the lack of textbooks to support work at home. • Some felt that the college did not work closely enough with parents.

Inspectors found that standards in design and technology are at the nationally expected levels or better across the college. Standards in information and communication technology are close to the nationally expected levels at the end of Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, although they drop below this in Key Stage 4. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although there are some disruptive elements in a few lessons. The college goes to great pains to ensure that pupils leave the premises and board buses after school in an orderly and very well organised manner. In some subjects, such as modern languages, history and geography, there are not enough textbooks for pupils to take home. In other respects, however, resources are satisfactory. The view that the college does not work closely enough with parents was not substantiated.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The most recent information about attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 indicates that the attainment of most pupils who entered the college in Year 7 was below the national average in English, mathematics and science. About a quarter of the higher-attaining pupils each year opt to go to local grammar schools. More than two out of every three entrants in Year 7 have reading ages below their chronological age and over 20 per cent per cent have a reading age of under nine years.
2. In 2000, the results of the standard tests for fourteen-year-olds were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and close to the average in science. The proportions of pupils reaching higher levels were well below the national averages in English and below the national average in mathematics and science. These results are similar to the ones for 1999, although the performance in English was comparatively worse in 2000. The average point scores in English have been below the national average for boys since 1996 and they were worse in 2000 than in previous years. In mathematics, the average point score has been further below the national figure for boys and below the overall national figures. However, standards in this subject have improved in the past two years. There has been an even more marked improvement in science in the past two years, although the average point score was still below the national average in 2000. When compared with the results of schools having a similar percentage of free school meals, Kemnal's 2000 results were below average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. Calculations by the college, based on comparisons between attainment at the ends of Key Stage 2 and 3, show that its pupils are making better progress through Key Stage 3 than those in similar attainment bands.
3. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the percentage obtaining five or more A* to C grades was below the national average but the percentage obtaining five A* to G grades was above the national average and the percentage obtaining one or more A* to G grades was well above the national average. Apart from a dip in 1999, the percentage of A* to C grades has risen year on year over the past five years. The average point score in 2000 was close to the national average for boys, although still below the overall national average. These scores show an even more marked improvement over time than the percentage figures and, despite the dip in 1999, the trend is above the national trend, with the gap between the school's results and national figures closing steadily. This indicates good progress in the school's achievements over time. The results are particularly significant because all pupils are entered for the examinations.
4. When the most recent GCSE results are compared with those of schools whose pupils achieved similar scores in the 1998 Key Stage 3 tests, the percentage passes at all levels are all well above the average. This indicates very good progress through the key stage. The proportion of five or more A* to C grades is close to the average for schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals but the proportion of A* to G grades is well above the relevant average and Kemnal's average point score is above the figure for comparable schools.
5. The 2000 GCSE results were significantly above the national averages in art, design and technology, media studies and statistics. They were significantly below the national averages in science, English language, English literature, history and physical education. Within the school, the best results were in art and design and technology, with comparatively good performances in French, mathematics and statistics. Results in science, English language, English literature, history and physical education were significantly below the average for the school. A similar pattern appeared in 1999, although candidates did better than in English literature than they did in 2000. The average point score at A-level has been well below the national averages for the past five years and low results have been obtained in most subjects. However, in 2000, all students on

the advanced GNVQ business course attained a pass and, in 1999, eight passes, two merits and two distinctions were achieved.

6. The college is setting realistic but testing targets for pupils in Key Stage 4. The hoped-for percentage of A* to C grades was not reached in 2000 but the targeted proportion of A* to G grades was achieved and the average point score was exceeded. This suggests that the college is having some success in bringing on the middle and lower attainers but it is not producing many higher attainers. This is borne out by the clustering of grade D results in most subjects and fits the profile of attainment on entry. Numbers entering the sixth form are comparatively low. About a third of college leavers go on to further education but comparatively few enter higher education.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Many of those with specific learning difficulties are high achievers and attain a range of GCSE results, including some higher grades. Pupils with more general learning difficulties make steady or good progress in relation to prior attainment, although working below age-related expectations.
8. The overall standards of attainment seen during the inspection indicate that, in about two lessons in every three, pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are working at close to the nationally expected levels. However, this proportion is not enough to suggest that attainment at the ends of the key stages is likely to reach the national average. The proportion is slightly higher in Key Stage 4 than it is in Key Stage 3. This supports the view that the college is enabling pupils to achieve satisfactory progress through Key Stages 3 and 4, in relation to their past performance. It also supports the view indicated by the comparison with similar schools that progress over time in Key Stage 4 is at least good, if not very good. In Key Stage 3, attainment is best in art, information and communication technology, music, physical education, religious education and science. Attainment is particularly low in English and geography. In Key Stage 4, attainment is below the expected levels in English. It was generally close to the expected levels in the other subjects, but the numbers of lessons sampled was sometimes small.
9. Attainment in the GCSE media studies course is above the basic pass level and the majority of pupils find the work interesting and relevant to their lives outside college. A-level students in the subject are producing some interesting, individual work that is approaching the required level of attainment. Students' attainment in the advanced and intermediate level GNVQ courses is mostly in line with course requirements at pass grade standard. The intermediate students have a good understanding of basic business finance and are able to research company information on the Internet. The advanced students organise their work well to meet the assessment criteria but do not always give sufficient feedback in the evaluative section of their assignments.

Literacy across the Curriculum

10. Overall, standards of literacy are unsatisfactory. Pupils participate well in class discussions and the great majority are competent readers but standards of written work are below national expectations. Weaknesses in writing hinder progress and depress levels of attainment across the college.
11. In all subjects, teachers provide opportunities for developing skills in discussion through whole-class, paired and small group work. Effective use of questioning by teachers also encourages speaking skills. Good examples of this, when pupils were challenged to develop their responses and expand on their ideas, were noted in history, religious education, music, science and physical education. As a consequence, standards of speaking are good throughout the college. Pupils sometimes rely too much on colloquial expressions in situations calling for more formal speech but, in general, most pupils in Year 9 can express their views confidently, using appropriate vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 4, the majority can put across their views clearly in reasoned discussion. Sixth form students speak clearly and confidently but wide-ranging and fluent discussions in A-level studies were not systematically encouraged in all subjects. Listening skills are also good and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. The great majority of pupils listen to teachers and one another well, showing good respect for others' views.

12. The majority of pupils reach satisfactory standards in reading. The college has a range of teaching strategies, particularly in English lessons, to encourage understanding and a wider interest in reading. Skills are also developed in Key Stage 3 through the 'Successmaker' computer programme. A significant improvement in pupils' average reading ages during their early years in the college has been recorded by tracking pupils' progress in the programme. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils are independent readers who are able to read aloud with appropriate expression and pace. These skills continue to develop through Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In most subjects, pupils read from a range of texts, with an increasing emphasis on analytical, close reading skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the development of research skills through the use of the Internet and CD-ROM.
13. Standards of writing are unsatisfactory. Teachers provide regular opportunities to write for different purposes but their expectations are often low. Much written work is brief and lacking sufficient thought and care. Standards are marred by frequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Extended writing and the development of ideas are not sufficiently encouraged. In the sixth form, students write intelligently about topics studied, although essays are not always well structured or developed in depth. Several departments promote writing skills well. For example, teachers in English, geography and information and communication technology provide glossaries of specialist words that help to reinforce correct spelling and promote an interest in language. Displays of key words and of the pupils' written work in English, physical education, history, design and technology and mathematics help to create a supportive environment for the development of literacy. Spelling corrections are required in many subjects. Finally, support staff work well to develop the skills of pupils with special educational needs. There is a policy for literacy but good practice is the responsibility of individual departments. Approaches are not consistently implemented, nor their success evaluated.

Numeracy

14. A three-year programme to develop numeracy has been established, from Year 7 to Year 9, focusing on design and technology, science and information and communication technology. At present, the contribution of numeracy to other curriculum areas is variable. In science, pupils are able to plot a basic line graph in Year 7, draw a melting curve in Year 8 and use graphs for speed and sound experiments in Year 9. However, they have difficulty using formulae and weak numeracy skills hamper the progress of some lower-attaining pupils. In design and technology, pupils measure accurately, use right angles and use basic numeracy skills well for recording and measuring. In information and communication technology, pupils use spreadsheets and make good use of their numerical skills. In geography, they use simple graphs in Year 7 and higher-attaining pupils have developed good graphical skills by Year 9. However, although there are pockets of good practice, numeracy is underdeveloped across the curriculum.
15. Particular strengths in the college are that speaking and listening skills are well developed, indicating that good progress has been made in this area since the last inspection, and the presentation of work is generally of a good standard. At the moment, the majority of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are working just below the nationally expected levels in their subjects. They make good strides in certain areas, such as geography, art, design and technology, music in Key Stage 4 and history in Key Stage 3. The biggest barrier to pupils reaching higher grades is the underdevelopment of basic skills, particularly in writing. It is to the credit of the college that all its pupils obtain grades in the GCSE examinations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Overall, attitudes to learning are satisfactory. The majority of pupils show a positive interest in lessons and enjoy participating in the many extra-curricular opportunities that the college provides. In most lessons, pupils are attentive, relate well to their teachers and make an enthusiastic contribution to discussions and to practical and investigative work. Good examples of this were observed in English, where pupils are highly motivated and make a lively contribution to class discussions, in mathematics, where pupils demonstrate sustained concentration and in history,

where teachers and pupils together created an excellent learning climate. The majority of pupils approach practical work in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and music with enthusiasm and commitment. Extra-curricular activities are popular and well attended, particularly where they offer extended learning opportunities. For the majority of pupils, positive learning attitudes make a significant contribution to their attainment and progress.

17. In a few of the lessons observed, a minority of pupils presented behaviour which began to disrupt the learning of others. This occurred where teachers lacked the skills or experience needed to deal effectively with poor behaviour, or where the content, structure and pace of lessons were not matched to the needs of those who find learning and concentration difficult. In a very few cases, particularly in lower ability sets at the beginning of Key Stage 4, a significant minority of pupils demonstrate a firm determination not to respond to the college's prescribed strategies for managing behaviour, irrespective of how rigorously they are applied. In three lessons in Year 10, in mathematics, science and information and communication technology, the ensuing disruption seriously interfered with other pupils' learning.
18. Behaviour around the college is satisfactory. There are some incidents of jostling, pushing and shouting, particularly during movement between lessons, but in most cases pupils show respect for each other and for adults. For example, they will generally hold open doors or stand aside to let others pass. The quality of relationships is good. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other and they collaborate well. There is good racial harmony and pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. There are few incidents of bullying and, when these do occur, pupils have the confidence to report them to members of staff who respond quickly and effectively. The number of permanent and temporary exclusions has fallen significantly since the last inspection.
19. Most pupils are well aware of the impact that their actions can have on others but a minority do not appear to appreciate that their disruptive behaviour in class is having an impact on the rights of others to learn and to have access to the curriculum. Staff extend consideration and courtesy towards pupils and endeavour to promote an ethos of mutual respect and trust. The majority of pupils respond well to this lead and older pupils are particularly responsive and frequently help staff prepare for college events and extra-curricular activities. Good examples of partnership and collaboration were observed in lessons and during extra-curricular activities, such as the rehearsals for the next musical production, evening meetings in the library and club activities in the computer suites. Pupils show great respect for the college's property and have access to all learning resources before, during and after lessons, with minimal supervision. There is very little litter or graffiti around the site and public areas and classrooms are kept tidy in spite of intensive use.
20. Overall, the majority of pupils with special educational needs respond very well to the additional support available to them for their learning, emotional and behavioural needs. A minority are resistant to help, especially a few pupils whose attendance is poor, despite the efforts of the family liaison counsellor and the head of learning support. Most pupils behave well and have good relationships with learning support assistants as well as with teachers. Pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress in moderating anti-social and disruptive behaviour.
21. There are many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take responsibility. The school council, with representatives from every year group, meets regularly and makes a positive contribution to the college's environment. Older pupils help with the organisation of many of the extra-curricular activities. For example, several students in Year 12 manage the Year 7 football team. Some of the sixth form students are attached to Key Stage 3 tutor groups to provide academic and personal support, where appropriate. Pupils from Year 10 regularly work with a group of severely disabled pupils from a local special school. Overall relationships and the personal development of pupils are good.
22. Attendance is satisfactory. The majority of pupils try hard to arrive punctually in the morning but severe traffic congestion in the neighbourhood frequently delays school buses. Consequently, large groups of pupils often arrive up to ten minutes late, even though they are on a bus that

should arrive with time to spare before the start of the school day. Punctuality to lessons throughout the school day is good. Attendance and punctuality have improved since the last inspection and now make a positive contribution towards standards of achievement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is good across the whole college, supporting the rising trends in attainment. It was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of all the lessons seen and good or better in almost 60 per cent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the sixth form but, otherwise, there were no significant differences in the quality of teaching in any year group. The most consistently good teaching was in art, history, mathematics and music in Key Stage 3 and in science, history, modern languages and music in Key Stage 4. English is particularly well taught in the sixth form. On the GNVQ courses, pupils' learning is sound and they benefit from teachers who have a good understanding of the vocational and occupational areas that they teach. The key skills, including information and communication technology, are taught as an integral part of the courses.
24. A particular strength of teaching is the teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. This quality enables teachers to pitch lessons at the right levels for the knowledge and ability of the pupils. They are able to anticipate where difficulties might arise in pupils' understanding and provide good clear explanations. In several subjects, such as art, music and physical education, teachers' enthusiasm is infectious, producing stimulating and challenging lessons. In history, this enthusiasm is often coupled with a gift for vivid story-telling that brings historical narrative to life. In these lessons, pupils learn well and at a good pace. The interest and concentration shown by students in the sixth form are strong features of their learning. Well-structured lessons in subjects such as geography and modern languages enable pupils to gain knowledge systematically, in easily assimilated steps.
25. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Overall, the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are taught mostly in mainstream classes. In addition, pupils may receive additional lessons using specific computer programmes, small group withdrawal lessons for literacy or one-to-one tuition by personal tutors employed by the local authority. Teaching across these additional support lessons ranges from very good to one lesson that was unsatisfactory. Teachers and learning support assistants use their very good knowledge of the pupils to establish a good basis for learning. Pupils generally trust the staff they work with; they accept help readily and attempt work with confidence. Very good strategies are employed to address specific learning difficulties, such as disorganisation and poor short-term memory. For example, they encourage pupils to develop mind maps or linear maps and build up personal cue cards of essential information in difficult subjects. Learning support assistants work hard to support learning and behaviour. Occasionally, however, insufficient help is maintained throughout a lesson.
26. Pupils are helped to concentrate well and the generally good relationships in lessons mean that they co-operate well and support one another. In most subjects, teachers plan with care and good preparation is a particular strength in science, media studies and art. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' achievements and behaviour, setting tasks which challenge and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
27. Many lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with a variety of teaching approaches, ensuring that interest is maintained and that learning points are reinforced thoroughly. Most teachers manage their classes well and they use praise and encouragement appropriately. They do well to engage and retain the interest of their pupils, who are not always disposed to make efforts or concentrate. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to lessons are generally good. They usually enjoy the subject being studied, work well and stay well focused for the whole lesson. In science, many opportunities are presented for pupils to improve their problem-solving, analytical and investigational skills and this is a particularly strong feature of the teaching in art, where pupils are being constantly challenged to become creative, independent thinkers. Pupils respond to this approach very positively and show a great deal of application and maturity. In art and design and

technology, the growth of independence is further encouraged by good assessment practice that involves the pupils in evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses. However, such good practice is not as widespread as it could be and, in some departments, pupils are not encouraged to develop independence. This and an occasional lack of variety in teaching approaches are comparative weaknesses that interfere with the pace of lessons, causing pupils to work too slowly and make insufficient progress.

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

28. Across Key Stage 3, the school provides a good range of learning opportunities for all pupils. Throughout Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, the range of learning opportunities provided is satisfactory. However, there are two significant statutory requirements that are not met. Since September 1999, French has been dropped from the core curriculum in Key Stage 4 and has instead been offered as an optional subject. The rationale of the college has been to disapply pupils from modern languages so that they may follow a course in information and communication technology. Although the college was guided by the regulations on flexibility in the Key Stage 4 curriculum and acted in good faith in this matter, the scale of the disapplication does not meet the specific criteria issued by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The current arrangements do not meet statutory requirements. There is no provision for religious education in the sixth form and, therefore, statutory requirements are not being met there, either. All subjects have developed and improved their schemes of work since the last inspection and the most effective practice has helped to raise standards. The college has no strategy for monitoring activities to promote skills in literacy or for dissemination of good practice. This is also true in relation to the college's strategy for numeracy.
29. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is good and provides the full range of National Curriculum courses plus a range of additional courses e.g. Drama and Media. Across Key Stage 3, pupils are taught for a total of twenty-five hours a week, which is above the recommended level. Time allocations for design and technology, geography and history are above the national averages for those subjects but they are comparatively low for English, mathematics and modern languages. The introduction of Spanish as an additional language is a positive step. However, the amount of time allocated was already low for one language and splitting the same allocation between two languages severely limits what can be achieved in either, providing a weaker basis for progression to GCSE.
30. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is broadly satisfactory. All pupils follow courses in English, mathematics, science, physical education, design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education. In addition, pupils choose from a wide range of other subjects, such as art, drama, physical education, music, media studies, history, geography and modern languages. However, in reality, the choice of additional courses is limited, owing to the way in which the subjects are grouped together. The taught week across Key Stage 4 is twenty-five hours and the time allocations for science, religious education and design and technology are above the national average. However, the time given to English, mathematics and physical education is below average and it is very low for modern languages. In the sixth form, students can choose from one-year or two-year GNVQ business courses and fifteen different A-level subjects or they may re-sit GCSE subjects. This provision is satisfactory for the present very small sixth form but it is not adequate to support further recruitment.
31. There is a complex pattern of learning support designed to provide access to the whole curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. Additional help is given by external specialists, such as teachers from the local authority's services for Travellers, for pupils with visual impairment and from the behaviour support team. Social skills groups are being established to provide additional learning opportunities for a number of pupils. A minor weakness is that the effect of individual withdrawal for additional support is not monitored to establish whether it has an effect on progress within subjects.

32. The range of extra-curricular activities is now very good. Pupils can choose to participate in a wide range of opportunities during the week-day evenings, at the weekends and during the school holidays. This has been a significant improvement in provision since the last inspection. Provision for personal, social and health education across Key Stages 3 and 4 remains inadequate and uncoordinated. However, the college has recently appointed a member of staff to take responsibility for developing this area of the curriculum. The sex education programme is very limited and in need of urgent review. Careers education is also significantly restricted, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The college has a comprehensive syllabus for this topic but allocates very little time for it. In interviews with students, none felt they had received good careers advice in the school and those in the sixth form who were intending to go to university found a mismatch between the A-level courses they were following and university entrance criteria. The college recognises these shortcomings and has recently taken steps to review provision. A specialist from the careers service has been employed as a full-time member of staff to make an audit and plan for the effective development of careers education throughout the college. This is supported in the partnership agreement with the local careers provider and both parties aim to ensure that all students receive the best possible guidance.
33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with some aspects being stronger than others.
34. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Assembly themes cover a wide range of spiritual, social, moral and cultural topics but do not always include a formal act of collective worship or appropriate reflection. The religious education syllabus includes consideration of the spiritual dimensions of Christianity and other main religions and, in history, pupils study the role and influence of the church in society. Spiritual references also occur in music, English and drama. For example, pupils discussed the reference to the power of nature as a 'divine' force in Hardy's description of Egdon Heath. However, there is limited provision for spiritual development in other areas of the curriculum and it is not a strong aspect of the life of the college. There are not enough planned or spontaneous opportunities in assemblies, tutor times and lessons for pupils to reflect quietly and seriously on their own beliefs and experiences or to consider issues about the world and their place in it.
35. The provision for moral development is good. The college effectively promotes the moral development of the majority of pupils, although there remains a minority whose behaviour and attitudes are unsatisfactory. Staff set good examples for pupils to follow and expect pupils to behave well, care for others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The virtues of truth, honour, courtesy and respect are incorporated into assembly themes, the personal and social education programme and, where appropriate, lessons. The college's rules and codes of conduct are strongly promoted and pupils are left in no doubt regarding their obligations.
36. The provision for social development is good. Extra-curricular activities such as sports, drama and computer clubs, including the 'Cybercafe', all help in the development of positive relationships. The annual 'Enrichment Week' provides many opportunities for pupils to collaborate and participate in new experiences. They are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility and to help others. For example, pupils in Key Stage 4 have frequent opportunities to work alongside severely disabled pupils from the Rectory Paddock Special School and some students from Years 12 and 13 are attached to tutor groups in Key Stage 3.
37. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Cultural and multi-cultural interests are promoted through art, drama, geography, history and music. For example, the music curriculum provides opportunities to experience Balinese, Caribbean, African, Chinese, Indian and South American music in a variety of forms. The religious education syllabus includes the study of world religions but there are few opportunities for those pupils from different ethnic or religious backgrounds to share and celebrate their traditions and beliefs with others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is good. There is an effective pastoral support structure within which tutors are able to stay with their tutor groups as they progress through the college. In this way, tutors get to know and understand the needs of their pupils. Health and safety procedures are good and implementation is rigorous and well managed, although there is no appointed governor with specific responsibility for health and safety matters. The provision for first aid is good. Child protection procedures are effective. A senior teacher is the designated co-ordinator for child protection issues and staff are diligent and well trained. The college employs a family liaison officer who is a trained counsellor and thus able to provide counselling for those pupils who are in need of advice and guidance. There are well-established relationships with all appropriate outside agencies.
39. Elements of health and social education are taught through other subjects. For example, sex and health education are taught within the science curriculum. However, the remaining elements of the programme, together with careers education, are provided only in the very limited daily tutorial time which is completely inadequate for the coverage of this programme. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed and is currently reviewing the provision.
40. The policies and procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The majority of staff understand the recommended strategies and apply them rigorously but, in some situations, the strategies are not always effective. A few teachers find it difficult to manage disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, are good and effective. The social inclusion policy provides good support to those pupils who have poor attendance records, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or are under-performing in some way. 'Pastoral Support Plans' are provided for those who have already had several fixed-term exclusions or are at risk from further exclusion. In these individual cases, the whole pastoral support team, as well as parents and a representative from the local education authority, are involved
41. The policies and procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are good. A full-time attendance officer rigorously monitors the morning and afternoon registers and the local education authority welfare officer and the college family liaison officer provide effective follow-up for those pupils who do not attend regularly or persistently arrive late. Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence have improved significantly since the last inspection.
42. The staff of the college and staff from the local authority's centrally maintained service work hard to provide a chain of support for pupils with special educational needs. They provide a high level of care and commitment to motivate pupils to attend and to learn. Personal development is assisted in different ways, frequently using individual educational plans. These plans have been considerably improved with the use of a new computer programme and information gained from assessment conducted when pupils first enter the college is generally well used. Annual and transitional reviews meet statutory requirements, although reviews of progress against the previous year's targets generally lack detail relating to individual subjects.
43. The college's policy for assessment sets minimum standards to be observed by faculties but permits varying degrees of rigour in its implementation. Responsibility for overseeing the whole school system is divided between three different members of the leadership group. These two factors lead to some differences in practice between departments, detracting from the overall effectiveness of arrangements. For example, there is varying practice in marking within some subjects and in assessment at the end of Year 9. There is emerging good practice in history, design and technology, modern languages and music and in the GNVQ courses. Practice is weaker in science and geography. Although teachers generally use day-to-day assessment well, the information derived from the longer-term systems established by the college is not consistently used for curricular planning. In most subjects, pupils are given consistent and accurate feedback about their attainments and clear messages about what they need to do to improve but this practice has not been fully adopted by all departments. The practice of regular self-assessment by pupils is helpful in encouraging them to reflect on how they learn but it does not always help them to understand their strengths and weaknesses in different subjects. The school meets statutory requirements for reporting but the quality of teachers' comments on the reports is

variable. They seldom present a clear picture of standards or of strengths and weaknesses, nor do they suggest how pupils might improve their work.

44. The college has good procedures for compiling national Records of Achievement for pupils leaving at the end of Year 11. Sixth form students are allowed to decide whether and how they continue to gather evidence of achievement for when they finally leave school. The school's register of pupils with special educational needs is well maintained. Pupils' individual education plans are vastly improved since the last inspection. The department makes good diagnostic use of software programmes to identify and plan for pupils' particular needs. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive annual and transitional reviews as required. As, yet the school does not have a system to monitor separately the achievements of pupils for whom English is an additional language or any other groups of pupils, such as the gifted and talented, asylum seekers or Travellers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The majority of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and completed and returned questionnaires expressed positive views about the college. These parents are pleased with the standard of education provided and the progress that their children make, particularly those who stay on for Years 12 and 13. They also consider that the college promotes good social and moral values and provides good information about the curriculum and activities to support learning. They feel welcome when they attend events or make use of the facilities in the college and have been impressed by the improvements in learning resources and the accommodation over recent years. There is also high praise for the leadership and management of the headteacher.
46. The minority of parents with critical views expressed concern that the standards in technical subjects were not high enough. They felt that some aspects of behaviour were not satisfactory, that there was a lack of textbooks to support work at home and that, in some respect, the college did not work closely enough with parents. The inspectors found that standards were just below the nationally expected levels in Key Stages 3 and 4 but in line with expected levels in the sixth form. Pupils achievement is satisfactory in all age groups. Behaviour is satisfactory overall but there are some disruptive elements in a few lessons. Behaviour of pupils outside of college premises is not within the remit of the inspection. Inspectors confirmed that there are insufficient textbooks in some subjects to enable pupils to take them home, for example in modern foreign languages, history, and geography. The view that the college does not work closely enough with parents was not substantiated.
47. The college uses every opportunity to provide regular information on the curriculum and all other activities and events and to encourage parents to participate in the education of their children. The expectations regarding the partnership between the college and parents are clearly defined in the home-college agreement. The majority of parents respond positively to these opportunities. They visit the college library, computer clubs and sporting events with their children, use the home college notebooks for effective communication with tutors and subject teachers and attend the twice-yearly consultations and open evenings covering special events such as college trips, option evenings and discussions on careers and further education. Relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. There is a very high attendance at annual reviews, good use is made of the home contact books and the college is in regular communication with parents by letter or telephone as the need arises.
48. There is an active parent-teacher association that helps to organise social and fund-raising events. This meets regularly with the principal to consult on matters of mutual interest and receive progress reports on new initiatives and developments taking place within the college. The college also distributes an annual 'customer satisfaction' questionnaire. The annual progress reports provide a summary of the curriculum for each subject, a report on learning attitudes and progress, guidance and target-setting for future development and grades for attainment and effort. Overall the

effectiveness of the school's links with parents, the impact of their involvement in the work of the school and the quality of information provided, including progress reports, are good and the contribution that parents make towards their children's learning is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Over the last ten years, the college has moved from being a failing school, with a roll of under six hundred, to being a technology college with a growing roll of over a thousand and improving standards of attainment in GCSE examinations. This success has been largely due to the dynamic leadership provided by the principal. With the strong support of the senior management and the governors, he has taken every opportunity to introduce initiatives that have significantly improved the opportunities offered to students. The college has a very clear picture of how to achieve its goals and it pursues them tenaciously. The developments are all founded on the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the primacy of these activities permeates all activities in and out of the classroom.
50. The large leadership team is made up of six vice principals and two advanced skills teachers. Five of the vice principals each has responsibility for a faculty, made up of several teaching departments, and they also have responsibility for year groups and for several aspects of the work of the whole college. Delegation is clearly defined and the vice principals are accountable to their peers and to the principal for their performance. The other vice principal is responsible for the budget, all non-teaching staff, the premises and all the college's facilities. The advanced skills teachers are comparatively new additions to the leadership team. They lead the 'Sharing good practice' initiative, which is focused on raising standards of teaching and learning in the college, and for assessment, and they operate in all the faculties.
51. The leadership group operates in a collegiate manner and individual members bring major policy matters to the group for decisions to be made. These arrangements generally operate very effectively. Heads of department are given a growing amount of delegated responsibility for monitoring teaching and curriculum development and most carry out their duties well. The failure to meet statutory requirements in modern foreign languages and religious education is the calculated consequence of policy decisions taken by the leadership group and the governors in order to bridge temporary difficulties. There is a well-structured and rigorous programme of lesson observations across all the teaching departments that is closely monitored and followed up by the leadership group. Heads of year are responsible for co-ordinating the regular cycles of assessment in their year groups. However, there are a few areas where the lack of further checks and balances within this network of delegated responsibilities is leading to inconsistency in performance. For example, there is no formal mechanism alerting senior management to the fact that not all heads of department are monitoring the way teachers use their skills to develop literacy. The lack of a central person with the task of managing assessment has led to different practices across the school and undeveloped moderation within and between faculties.
52. The leadership provided by heads of department and heads of year is generally good. The head of learning support provides very good management of a complex system. Difficulties derive partly from the different policies of referring authorities. These authorities often apply differing criteria for issuing a statement of special educational needs and prescribe different levels of support, even where needs are similar. Many of the issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. There is much more support for pupils who need it most and accommodation and resources have been improved. There is now much closer interaction with subject departments, although the deployment and role of support staff are not always sufficiently clear. Provision has been extended with the appointment of a family liaison counsellor for pupils with attendance or behavioural difficulties. Specialist training for staff has increased, particularly in the areas of specific learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. The current development plan does not contain sufficient emphasis on whole school targets for pupils with special educational needs.
53. The governors are very well informed about the daily life of the college. They receive regular detailed reports from the principal and senior staff and pupils give presentations at governors' meetings. In addition, most governors visit the college regularly to follow up their particular

interests and they often observe lessons. Their visits always include a debriefing with one of the vice-principals and their observations are recorded on a monitoring sheet. The work of the governing body is guided by its Educational Standards committee and this ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is the prime consideration. Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and of the main priorities for development. They monitor progress closely and they have helped to guide the college through its many developments, taking difficult decisions, when necessary.

54. Development planning is based on a three-year rolling programme stemming from the action plan drawn up after the last inspection. The leadership group reviews progress regularly and one of the vice-principals is responsible for ensuring that the cycle of review and progress is carried through successfully. The work of every department and the progress made by pupils is reviewed twice a year and every person with a specific responsibility emerging from the development plan is interviewed about progress in their area. Following the departmental reviews, the overall progress made by the college is also reviewed. New priorities are accurately identified through this process and the implementation of the programme is monitored on a very detailed spreadsheet. An external consultant monitors the whole process and provides the college with an annual report. The principal is supported by an external consultant every six weeks.
55. Financial planning and management are extremely thorough. Regular budget statements are provided for governors and for budget holders in the college. All expenditure is very carefully measured to ensure best value and the college often uses computer programmes to model various different options before making a final decision. Specific grants are well used for their intended purposes and the college is held closely to account for the sums of money it receives. As with the development planning, financial planning is firmly based on the college's educational priorities. The small sixth form is carefully staffed and it is financially viable.
56. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff is a good match to the demands of the extended curriculum taught in the college. The college has very good strategies for appraisal, performance management and the professional development of staff. A comprehensive appraisal procedure, which includes observation of teaching by senior managers and department heads and opportunities for teachers to share good practice through the observation of lessons in other departments, leads to a clear identification of individual professional development needs. Teachers are also offered a separate career development interview and all members of staff are provided with professional development portfolios. The principal is appraised by two external consultants. The morale of staff is very good and all the adults in the college share a strong commitment to raising educational standards.
57. The procedures for the induction, mentoring and support of newly qualified teachers, and newly appointed teachers, are very good. In the current year, there are twelve newly qualified teachers in the school and the college has set up additional training and support programmes to meet their development needs. No newly qualified teachers are required to cover for other teachers and their non-teaching time is protected. The college also provides effective initial teacher training and has established links with the London Institute of Education and with Goldsmiths' College. A number of trainee teachers were in the college during the inspection and the level of support they received was very good.
58. The match of the available accommodation to the demands of the curriculum, including all specialist technology subjects, is good. The original purpose-built, grade-two listed buildings have been added to over the years, with the most recent extension completed last year. All accommodation is maintained and cleaned to a satisfactory standard, although there are differences between the condition of some of the corridors and classrooms. There are good quality displays in many of the specialist classrooms, the most notable being in art and history, with general displays in most of the public areas. These displays celebrate the work of pupils and stimulate interest in a number of topics and extra-curricular activities.
59. There is a rolling refurbishment programme that ensures a satisfactory standard overall. The landscaped site, with ample playing fields and recreational space, is also well maintained. The

only weaknesses are the condition of the changing rooms for the large gymnasium and the limited capacity of the new art rooms in the light of growing class sizes. The provision for the special education needs department has much improved since the last inspection.

60. The college has adequate learning resources. There is a shortage of small equipment for physical education and audio-visual resources in the drama department are unsatisfactory. In modern foreign languages, history and geography, there are insufficient textbooks for pupils to use in support of their homework. The college plans to improve the situation with fresh purchases in the current financial year. The provision of resources for information and communication technology is good but not all departments have equal access to them. Overall the provision of learning resources has improved since the last inspection.

61. The college is not meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship and there is no provision for religious education for students in Years 12 and 13. The college is also in breach of requirements with respect to the provision of modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4. Not all the key issues from the last inspection have been satisfactorily tackled but, nevertheless, there have been good improvements on most fronts and the college is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to maintain the college's rate of improvement, the senior management and the governors need to:
- raise standards of attainment further, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and in literacy across the curriculum (paragraphs 2, 5, 13, 15, 63, 64, 73, 79, 143);
 - improve provision for personal and social education and careers education by allocating adequate dedicated time each week (paragraph 32);
 - ensure that the best practice in assessing students' attainment and progress is adopted by all teaching departments (paragraphs 43 and 51);
 - extend the narrow range of option choices, particularly in the sixth form (paragraphs 28 and 30);
 - ensure that the statutory requirements for modern languages, religious education and collective worship are fully met (paragraphs 28, 61, 127, 150).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	178
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	16	41	37	6	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	971	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	233	N/A

Special educational needs

	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	49	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	272	2

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	152	0	152

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	86	88
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	57	86	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	47 (53)	57 (54)	58 (50)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (15)	29 (21)	20 (9)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	88	88	98
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	88	88	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (58)	58 (57)	64 (56)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (26)	30 (21)	26 (9)
	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	108	0	108

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	36	102	107
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	36	102	107
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	33 (29)	94 (89)	99 (98)
	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	34
	National	38.4

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

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	1	35

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	9.9	4	9.7	1.3	N/A	1.3
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

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

International Bacculaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Bacculaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	N/A	N/A
	National		76.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	45
Black – African heritage	7
Black – other	4
Indian	23
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	834
Any other minority ethnic group	40

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	1
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	18	4
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	62
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	575

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	23.9
Key Stage 4	22.2

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2,962,889
Total expenditure	2,955,888
Expenditure per pupil	3,070
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,673
Balance carried forward to next year	41,674

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,055
Number of questionnaires returned	164

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	47	10	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	52	3	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	53	10	2	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	52	14	6	1
The teaching is good.	38	51	3	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	43	14	6	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	39	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	36	43	12	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	48	44	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	46	8	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	40	5	2	4

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

63. In 2000, the proportion of fourteen-year-olds reaching the expected level or higher levels in the national tests was well below the national averages. It was also well below the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. These comparisons with similar schools include girls' results. As girls outperform boys nationally, the comparisons are skewed unfavourably for the college. Even so, the results were well below those achieved by boys nationally. Test results were better in the previous two years, although still below national averages. Within the college, pupils did better in the tests in mathematics and science than they did in English but this a national pattern. Over a three-year period, the overall difference between the college's results in the three subjects is slightly less than that seen nationally.
64. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of higher grade passes in the 2000 GCSE English examination was well below the national average and well below the average for boys in all schools. The results at higher grades in English literature were also well below the national average and well below the average for boys. In both subjects, very few pupils obtained the highest grades of A* or B but the proportion of pupils gaining A* to G grades was in line with national averages. Within the school, pupils did less well in English than in mathematics, but better than they did in science. In both English and English literature, the proportion of pupils gaining higher-grade passes was higher in the previous two years, although the number of pupils entered for the literature examination has increased significantly during this time. For the past two years, all candidates have obtained grades between A and E in the A-level English examination and only two failed to obtain a pass grade in 1998. More than half of the candidates gained the highest grades of A and B in 2000. However, the number of students opting to take the subject at this level is very low and, every year, some drop out before the end of the course.
65. Standards in English on entry to the school are below the national average. In the light of this prior attainment, achievement by individual pupils is satisfactory in Key Stage 3. In 2000, value-added analyses of Key Stage 3 test results show that rates of progress were broadly in line with what would be expected nationally. There was, however, some under-achievement at higher levels and a high proportion of very low-attaining pupils. In Key Stage 4, some higher and middle ability pupils fail to realise their full potential in the subject and under-achieve, particularly at the borderline to the higher grades. However, in the sixth form, students build on their work at GCSE successfully to achieve realistic target grades at A-level. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards in line with their abilities. They are well supported by additional staff during lessons and clearly benefit from the help provided. In Key Stage 4, almost all these pupils gain at least a G grade pass in English. This represents satisfactory and often good levels of achievement for many pupils with special educational needs.
66. Pupils have good attitudes to learning in English lessons. The great majority are interested in the tasks set and make constructive contributions to discussions. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school. In Key Stage 3, for example, a lower ability Year 9 group was able to sustain a discussion on corporal punishment with some fluency. The debate was well led by the teacher, who ensured that the class listened carefully to the contributions made and enabled pupils to give sensible reasons for their views, which were expressed persuasively. In Key Stage 4, pupils across the ability range speak clearly and are willing to express opinions. They respond relevantly to ideas presented by staff and by their peers. One Year 11 set was able to comment in detail on their reading of 'Journey's End' by R C Sherriff, showing some insight and understanding of events and character as they develop in the play. Throughout, teachers emphasise the need to respect others and to listen carefully to views expressed. Only a minority of pupils in some lower ability classes in Key Stage 4 have not developed such good listening skills. At Advanced level, students are well-motivated and show good levels of interest in discussions of literary texts. They are not always confident when putting forward opinions on texts they are reading for the first time

but they generally express their ideas articulately and understand the need to support them with relevant textual detail.

67. Standards of reading are satisfactory at each key stage. Throughout the school, pupils are given the opportunity to study a range of high quality literature by major authors, poets and dramatists. In Key Stage 3, time allowed for private reading, the use of reading logs and timetabled library sessions help pupils to establish sound habits of wider personal reading and research. In Year 7, all pupils also spend time following the Successmaker' computer-based reading programme. Data from this show that in 1999 and 2000, thanks to the range of strategies employed, the reading ages of pupils in Year 7 improved on average by two years in the first twelve months they were in the school. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are secure, independent readers. Many are beginning to come to grips with written evaluations of texts studied in class. In Key Stage 4, reading skills are developed further through the study of novels, plays and poetry, in preparation for the GCSE examination. However, pupils of higher and middle ability do not develop the more advanced, close reading skills. In the sixth form, students engage with an appropriate range of demanding literature for Advanced level work. Most demonstrate sound understanding of the development of theme and character.
68. The quality of written work often falls below national expectations. Unsatisfactory standards in writing are the main factor in below average levels of attainment in Key Stages 3 and 4. In Key Stage 3, pupils are provided with regular opportunities to write narrative essays, poems, personal and factual writing, letters and newspaper reports for a range of purposes and audiences. Work is marked regularly and to a common grading system which has been explained to the pupils. However, many pupils produce written work that is too brief and lacks sufficient thought and care. Standards are also marred by errors in grammar and punctuation and many pupils give insufficient attention to handwriting and presentation. The college has developed some strategies for improving technical accuracy and the importance of correct spelling is also emphasised. There are too few opportunities for more extended writing, allowing for the fuller development of ideas and pupils do not always extend themselves when re-drafting work. The presentation of work is improved when work is word-processed or re-drafted on computer. Most pupils are motivated by this work. They have regular opportunities to develop their skills. By the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils make progress. The majority take pains to present GCSE coursework effectively. Personal and imaginative writing is generally coherent and well developed but essays on literature often contain insufficient structure or personal interpretation and response. In the sixth form, students write intelligently about the literature studied but their essays often lack depth and an adequate commentary on textual detail to substantiate arguments.
69. The standard of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only two lessons observed. Teachers manage pupils well and, in most classes, supportive and constructive relationships are forged. They also monitor pupils' progress carefully and are prepared to give additional personal help and guidance where it is needed. The best lessons are brisk and purposeful and teachers share the overall learning aims with pupils. Particular strengths include the teachers' good knowledge of the subject, particularly in the sixth form, and their use of a range of methodologies to generate interest. One Year 9 lesson on 'Macbeth' was particularly well paced and varied, with a mixture of whole class and paired discussions, individual reflection and writing. Pupils were clearly engaged with the text studied and they were helped by the variety of approaches. Some imaginative teaching was also seen with less able pupils. In a Year 7 lesson on Blake's poem, 'The Poison Tree', the teacher helped pupils to appreciate the subtleties of structure and imagery in the poem by relating theme and subject matter closely to their everyday experience.
70. A relative weakness is the teachers' undemanding expectations of the quality and depth of written work. More could be expected from middle and higher ability pupils, in particular. In several classes in Key Stage 3, activities and extension work focused on drawing and illustration rather than on the development of writing skills. In a few lessons, planning lacked a sharp focus and the aims were often too broad and general. In particular, the intention to develop skills was not defined or explained sufficiently. In less effective lessons, pupils sometimes did not understand clearly what they had to do, or how best to tackle the task. At other times, the structure of lessons

lacked variety and pace and, consequently, interest was not maintained to the end. Audio-visual resources are seldom used to aid understanding and stimulate interest. In a few lessons, opportunities were not provided to evaluate progress and reinforce understanding.

71. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The head of department monitors pupils' work each term and follows a regular programme of lesson observations. As a result, priorities for raising standards of teaching and learning further are well identified in the department's development plan. The department is committed to staff development and all staff have trained in information and communication technology to help pupils develop their own skills further. Teachers regularly attend examination and assessment meetings organised by the examining boards. Communication within the department is good. There is a clear willingness amongst staff to work together as a team to share and develop good practice and to support new members of staff.
72. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. A number of issues for action, identified in the last report, have been addressed successfully. Speaking and listening skills, which were considered a weakness, are now good. There has also been improvement in the promotion of reading skills, in particular through the range of strategies adopted in Key Stage 3. The use of computers is now integral to the teaching of English, with beneficial results for the redrafting and presentation of pupils' work. Finally, academic standards have improved over time at A-level, although not in the main body of the school. The key issue for further progress must be to raise all pupils' levels of attainment in Key Stages 3 and 4. The improvement of pupils' writing skills and the structure and development of their essays will be central factors in this.

MATHEMATICS

73. In 2000, the results of the standard tests at the end of Year 9 were below the national average. However, when compared with the results of schools having a similar proportion of free school meals, attainment is above average. The results of the GCSE examinations in 2000 were also below the national average but they have been improving over the past few years at a faster rate than that seen nationally. Those pupils who take the GCSE examination in statistics at the end of Year 10 achieve very good results and, in 2000, all the candidates obtained grades between A* and C. The results in A-level mathematics have been well below the national averages. However, a greater proportion of higher-attaining students has opted for the course in the past two years and it is anticipated that results will improve substantially. Inspection evidence confirms that the attainment of most pupils is below the expected national levels at the ends of both key stages.
74. Pupils make good progress through Key Stages 3 and 4 from a low starting point. They generally concentrate well in lessons and work hard, although there are occasional instances of poor behaviour. All the attainment targets are studied but, during the inspection, very little mental mathematics was observed. Good use is made of information and communication technology. Pupils learn to use graphical calculators, which help them to understand better how equations can be drawn and to analyse what a straight line or a curve looks like. They use computer packages to create spreadsheets and to work out problems, such as the relative costs of flying a group of employees to meetings in different parts of the world. Lower-attaining pupils successfully use a computer programme to improve their mental mathematics.
75. The quality of teaching is good. In all but one of the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory or better. It was good or very good in almost two thirds of lessons and satisfactory in almost all the others. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and present the work well. Most teachers manage their pupils well and keep pupils involved and interested throughout the whole lesson. Teachers prepare their lessons well. In one lesson, the teacher had prepared a very good instruction sheet showing pupils how to use a graphical calculator and, in another lesson, the teacher gave very good step-by-step instructions on how to draw a scattergram. Teachers maintain a good pace in lessons and give very good encouragement to the pupils. Records of pupils' progress are usually well kept. Homework is well used to extend pupils' learning and to practise work learnt in class. Teachers make good use of a computer program to stimulate pupils with special educational needs, helping them to gain confidence and make small

but significant steps forward in mental mathematics. There are far fewer weaknesses than strengths in the teaching. However, pupils sometimes lose interest if teachers wait too long before giving help or provide insufficient challenge. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are generally good. They usually enjoy the subject, work hard and stay well focused for the whole lesson. They show respect for their teachers and for each other.

76. There has been improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. This year, Year 10 pupils are taking a modular mathematics course, which should improve motivation throughout the two-year GCSE course. The department has begun to teach potential A-level students after the Year 11 GCSE examinations are finished, offering greater continuity of learning. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are helped to improve their skills in numeracy when they are withdrawn from lessons to work on the 'Success Maker' programme.
77. Leadership within the mathematics department is unsatisfactory. The head of mathematics does not monitor the quality of teaching consistently, according to college policy, and mathematical keywords are not displayed to support pupils' learning and aid their literacy skills. Systems to support teachers in establishing discipline are not well embedded. However, the senior management team has supported the department well in its progress. The college has made good and successful efforts to secure sufficient teachers for the department. Accommodation for mathematics is very good and resources are good.

SCIENCE

78. The percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has increased over the past four years. In 2000, the proportion was very close to the national level. Teachers' assessments were slightly but not significantly higher. However, the proportion reaching higher levels was below the national average. When compared with the results of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, attainment is above average. Within the college, fourteen-year-olds achieve better results in science than they do in English or mathematics. In work seen during the inspection, the majority of pupils are reaching the nationally expected levels.
79. At the end of Key Stage 4, only 27 per cent of pupils gained a GCSE grade C or above in single or double co-ordinated science, compared with a national figure of 49 per cent. This is well below the national average. However, the percentage attaining a grade G or better is above the national figure. Pupils in the present Year 10 are following a different course and, after the first module examination, over half gained a grade C or above, which is close to the national level. However, the standards of attainment in the work seen are just in line with expectations. Attainment is the same in all aspects of science in both key stages. The attainment of sixth form students in the A-level examinations is well below the national average, with only one student gaining a grade C in physics out of the fourteen entered in 2000 for any of the three science subjects.
80. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory and often good or very good. Higher-attaining pupils consistently show the best attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs learn well in Key Stage 3 and they make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets in Key Stage 4. Pupils learn best when the teacher's expectations are high and there is good classroom control. The most successful lessons are those planned in distinct sections, requiring various changes of approach or activity, and including some practical aspect. Pupils also show a willingness to answer questions and join in with class discussions, such as one concerned with global warming and its consequences. Attitudes to practical work are good, especially when pupils understand exactly what they have to do, and pupils work in a safe and careful manner. Not all pupils complete written assignments and so they are given revision notes. These are often incomplete, having a detrimental effect on attainment as well as demonstrating a poor attitude to the subject. Homework is set regularly and is an integral part of the lesson plans. It is usually a relevant and useful extension of the work carried out in class. Teachers spend a great deal of time ensuring that pupils complete homework to a good standard.

81. Teaching is good overall. It was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the lessons seen and good, or very good, in over half. The lesson preparation and organisation of resources is always of a high standard. Every lesson starts in a similar manner, with the aims fully explained. Members of staff are well qualified to teach the groups they have been allocated. The most effective teaching is in Year 10, where the pupils follow a more relevant course and are aware of their attainment and progress. Teaching is less effective with the lower-attaining groups, where some of the tasks set are beyond their capabilities and pupils lose interest. For example, pupils worked effectively to produce a set of results on the speed of sound but could not calculate the answers from the formula given. On other occasions, tasks are not stimulating or challenging enough and this sometimes leads to loss of concentration and misbehaviour. Many opportunities are presented for pupils to increase their problem-solving, analytical and investigational skills throughout both key stages.
82. All pupils now follow double certification GCSE science in Key Stage 4. The new modular science GCSE course in Year 10 has already had a positive effect on attainment. A new course in Year 7 has had a similar positive effect owing to the wider range of teaching styles and approaches used. It is important that, where no changes in the curriculum are planned, the existing schemes are continually reviewed and improved until the new schemes are adopted. The plans to introduce AS-level or GNVQ accreditation are likely to have a positive impact on raising attainment post-sixteen.
83. The use of information and communication technology is limited to specific times when pupils record data from experiments. The facilities available are not being used widely enough for research or revision or for word-processing coursework. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly according to the department's and the college's guidelines. However, there is little comment made on future targets and, where targets are mentioned, there is insufficient monitoring of these by staff. Pupils' attainments are determined at the end of each module and these results are reviewed centrally and used to move pupils to different sets, if required. There is no analytical assessment within the department that staff could use to determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning or as a means of motivating the pupils. With the exception of Year 10, the majority of pupils are unaware of their attainment or potential. This is a weakness in the department.
84. Overall, however, the department is well managed. The majority of teachers in the department have been at the college for less than two years. The new head of department was appointed eight months ago and, since this time, has been responsible for introducing many initiatives and ideas. Many issues still need addressing and the department already realises this. Accommodation is very good, with well-equipped laboratories that are efficiently maintained by a team of well-organised support staff.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Over 90 per cent of fourteen-year-olds reached the nationally expected level in the teachers' assessments conducted in 2000. This is significantly higher than the national figure and more than half the pupils achieved higher levels, including a significant percentage who demonstrated exceptional performance. These results are very high when compared with national figures. In Key Stage 4, all the candidates achieved grades between A* and C in the GCSE art examination in 2000. This result is very much higher than the national average for boys and the college's average point score for art was almost twice that achieved in any of the other subjects. This is a much greater difference than is found nationally. The college obtained good results in the GCE A-level examination in 2000. All the candidates obtained grades between A and D. The percentage obtaining higher grades was broadly in line with the national average for boys and the proportion obtaining grades between A and D was better than the overall national average. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection.
86. Attainment is good in Key Stage 3 and most pupils are working at levels well above those expected for their ages. Pupils in Year 7 produce interesting and lively work that reflects their growing confidence in their ability to draw and to paint. They have been introduced to some rudimentary colour theory, which they are expected to apply in their work. They have acquired some basic skills in using a pencil to create form and shape by using line and tone. These initial

pencil studies have served as starting points for development into more finished pieces of two-dimensional work employing paint and colour. Year 8 pupils have made good progress and their work reveals growing assurance and control. They can carry out adequate research into their chosen subject matter either at home or in the college library. They then modify the results until a final idea emerges from all of their efforts. In Year 9, pupils distinguish between applied art and fine art and illustrate this difference through a series of projects, producing their own designs for a stained glass window. This challenging work has given them new-found confidence in their ability to communicate through drawing and painting. The majority of students at this level have become very self-reliant and they think and act with a high degree of independence.

87. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are working at levels above those expected nationally. Much of the art work at this level is truly ambitious. For example, pupils in Year 10 have recently embarked on a project based upon drawings of the human face. They produced linear and tonal studies of their own faces and, from these studies, some have progressed to produce prints using polystyrene tiles and printing inks. All pupils are actively encouraged to develop their own ideas based upon their initial research studies and most display the capacity to think creatively and to act independently in achieving their goals. The quality of most of the work produced is of a very high standard. During the inspection, the major focus for Year 11 pupils was on preparation for the coming GCSE examination. Following the recent completion of mock examinations, they were being introduced to the criteria provided by the examinations board against which their work will be assessed and graded.
88. All students in the sixth form are expected to work independently, to devise their own projects and to carry out detailed and thorough research, both inside and outside the college. They work with great concentration to develop their own concepts and ideas that can be communicated visually to others. All of these students have worked hard to develop ideas through research and the application of appropriate skills in two and three dimensions. They have demonstrated that they have the capacity to work in a highly disciplined manner and they responded positively to directions from their teachers.
89. At every level, there has been significant improvement in the attainments of most students since the last inspection. There is ample evidence of greater depth in the work now being carried out, including much more genuine and thorough investigation of a wide range of diverse subject matter. Pupils are operating with greater confidence in a highly supportive environment. This progress can be attributed to the hard work and energy displayed by the new head of department, who was appointed two years ago. The overall change in staffing has had a significant impact on attainment and on achievement throughout each key stage.
90. Teaching is very good overall, particularly in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Teachers know the subject very well and this allows them to challenge pupils' imaginations, as well as teaching the basic skills effectively. A great deal of thought and effort goes in to the planning and organisation of lessons. The new head of department has set up a very effective framework that supports learning at every stage. Pupils are being stretched and, consequently, there is growth in their self-confidence and their self-esteem. Teachers encourage them to be creative in their thinking, to resolve problems themselves and to work with a high degree of independence. This has produced interesting and highly personal responses to the briefs set by their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with a variety of media and materials and to explore ideas in a wide range of different contexts in both two and three dimensions. Assessment is carried out regularly and pupils are active participants in the assessment of their own work. This demands some degree of maturity on the part of many of the students and it is mainly because students now find themselves working in a challenging, yet wholly supportive environment that the quality, range and diversity of work has improved at all levels.
91. The curriculum is well planned to provide a good range of learning opportunities, although it does not offer aspects of modern technology, such as photography or image-making, using computers within a vocational context. There is a very good match between the demands of the curriculum and the skills and experience of the teachers and resources are good. Accommodation is

satisfactory but there are insufficient storage and studio spaces to cater for the growing popularity of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. The standards of attainment reached by pupils entering the college are below average for their age but they reach the nationally expected levels by the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. In the GCSE examination results, seven out of every ten pupils gained A* to C grades, which is well above the national average. All of the pupils gained A* to G grades, which again is well above the national average. The average trend and the average point score per pupil in GCSE examination results over the last three years have also shown continued improvement to the present high point. In the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum assessments in 2000, seven out of every ten pupils achieved the nationally expected level or better. This is also above the national average. In examinations across the college, pupils do better in technology than in many other subjects. Pupils entering the school with below average scores in the Key Stage 2 test results gain considerable educational value from design and technology.
93. Pupils make rapid progress through Key Stage 3, but it is only at the age of fourteen that the attainment of the majority reaches the expected level. This is evident in the work seen in their finished products, their design folders and books and in discussions held with them about their work. One group, when making models to meet a specification, could identify the different materials for use in a mechanical toy, or components in an electronic hand tester, and enthusiastically suggested why they had been used. They could explain how to improve their work through the medium of the material. Few, however, linked the quality of their design with the manufacturing process. By the age of sixteen, most boys have acquired good practical skills. Displays of their work show that they can make prototype products in resistant and compliant materials, such as plastic, wood, metal, food and textiles. They extend their designing abilities to create products in differing contexts and they understand how manufacturing methods influence their ideas as designers. At the age of eighteen, the majority have finished products up to industrial standard and the work in their design folders and books is at, and sometimes better, than the nationally expected standards.
94. The achievements of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are good across all the years of the school. They make good and rapid gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in the earlier years and, although the pace of learning slows, they still achieve well. In Key Stage 3, the teaching is consistently matched to the needs of the pupils but, in Key Stage 4, there are several factors affecting progress. For example, basic literacy and numeracy skills are underdeveloped. However, teachers are working on these basic skills across the key stages and in the revision for GCSE and A-level courses.
95. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They are interested in learning about technological skills and products, mainly from a technical standpoint. Most pupils display sustained concentration levels and persevere with both their ideas for designs and the manufacturing of their products. Behaviour is generally satisfactory. Positive relationships and good co-operation are demonstrated by the way pupils share equipment and work collaboratively when required. However, a small number of pupils do not show enough respect for adults or for each other.
96. The quality of teaching is good across both key stages and very good in the sixth form and one in every ten of the lessons seen promoted high educational standards. In all the lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory and it was good or better in more than half of them. The balance of experience and the range of teachers' knowledge and understanding are appropriate for the curriculum being taught. In general, teachers explain and demonstrate skills and techniques well, both in designing and making. They do so in a way that shows they expect good quality products, safe working practices and products completed to design specifications. They are at pains to communicate the correct use of technical terminology.

97. In the best lessons, teaching styles are varied skilfully and expectations of pupils are very high. In these lessons, pupils are made more responsible for their work at an earlier age by the use of good assessment strategies during and at the end of lessons. Teachers often offer prudent advice, support and evaluative comment and demand more intellectual and creative effort from the pupils. The more mature pupils respond well to this type of challenge. Staff give all pupils sufficient time to wrestle with their design or technological problems but they time their interventions well to prevent frustration and to advance learning without discouraging creativity. In less successful lessons, planning is not always firmly based on assessment of pupils' needs. The management of pupils and standards of discipline are satisfactory but time and resources are not always used well, despite the general efficiency in the faculty.
98. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements, providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The ethos in which the subject is taught reflects very well the school's aims. The scheme of work, the medium and long-term planning and organisational strategies are systematic and well documented. The curriculum generates a range of good opportunities for modelling, prototype products and modern technological skills. Design, as a way of thinking about products, is built in from the start and becomes established in Key Stage 3. The college provides an effective learning environment in the majority of technological contexts, such as resistant materials, food, graphics, electronics, textiles, control technology through computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture. The curriculum is planned effectively and, within the constraints of the college's timetabling, it provides for continuity and progression. The effectiveness of systems for assessing pupils' attainment, targets and progress are good and, where they are used to inform teaching, they are very good.
99. The technology faculty is well led and this has a positive impact on the education provided and the standards achieved in the subject. The style of teamwork, where all members of the department contribute strategically, ensures a fully co-operative and well managed approach to change. Consequently, curriculum development is a continuous process of improvement, built in to the cycle of development planning. Nevertheless, there is realism about the implementation of planning priorities. The head of department regularly monitors this development, as well as the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Health and safety procedures are managed well and risk assessments are carried out systematically to identify all hazards. Improvements since the last inspection are very evident and go beyond the initial requirements of the last report.

DRAMA

100. Drama is taught as a separate, practical subject in Key Stage 3. The course is designed to develop understanding of theatre skills and dramatic conventions. It also explores links with other subjects, including art, history and the school's personal, social and health education programme, through topics such as myths and legend, diverse cultures, conflict and peer pressure. The department co-operates with the English department to support work on Shakespeare in preparation for the Key Stage 3 tests. Drama is offered as an optional subject for GCSE and A-level examinations.
101. In Key Stage 3, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Work on spontaneous improvisation and scripted drama was seen during the inspection. In Key Stage 4, about fifteen to twenty pupils choose to take drama each year. Standards inevitably vary from year to year in these smaller teaching groups, according to the ability of those opting to take the subject. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining higher grade passes at GCSE was well below the national average, though all pupils obtained grades between A* and G. Results were better in 1999, though still below the national average at the higher grades, when GCSE drama was re-introduced after a two-year gap. However, results in both years represent a major improvement on attainment in 1996, when the course had last been offered in the college. The first candidates to prepare for A-level will take the examination this year. All are expected to be successful.
102. Pupils clearly enjoy and appreciate drama lessons. The great majority take the subject seriously and join in practical work enthusiastically. In one lesson, there was some inappropriate behaviour from a small group of more challenging pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 but, even there, pupils

showed a clear enthusiasm for participation. Overall at Key Stage 3, pupils show that they can speak and listen confidently and well in a range of contexts. One Year 7 group worked hard to present short extracts from a scripted play. They co-operated well together to learn their lines and develop ideas, showing some inventiveness in using expression and movement to create character. In Key Stage 4 and at Advanced level, pupils are well motivated and go about their work with commitment. They make good progress, developing a more structured insight into the subject, and they can reflect on and justify the use of specific dramatic techniques. Practical work for group presentations at both levels showed flair and imagination. In particular, Year 13 students made an excellent contribution to improvised sequences demonstrating Brechtian alienation techniques. They achieved high standards in clear and expressive speech and in portraying short action sequences.

103. It was possible to observe only a small sample of lessons. On the evidence provided, teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. At its best, the teaching style is active and dynamic, keeping all pupils engaged on task and eliciting well-considered responses. Sound standards are promoted, particularly by the teachers' good knowledge of the subject and their effective techniques for managing behaviour. The evaluation of work done, against clearly stated assessment criteria, is an integral part of each lesson. This helps pupils greatly to understand what has been achieved and how their work can be improved further.
104. The head of department has worked hard to raise the profile of drama in the college. There is one other full-time member of staff. They work together well as a team. Specialist resources for the subject in two newly-built drama studios are now very good. An after-school drama club is offered to Year 7 pupils to enrich their experience of the curriculum. Theatre visits are also arranged in co-operation with the English department. Finally, the department makes a particularly valuable contribution to school life through annual school productions, in collaboration with the art and music departments. This year, some 70 pupils are involved as cast members and backstage support in a production of the rock musical 'Return to the Forbidden Planet.' It was clear from rehearsals seen during the inspection that staff, as well as students, are giving considerable time and energy to making this production successful.

GEOGRAPHY

105. In 2000, the results of teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 were below the national average. Evidence from the inspection shows that most pupils in Key Stage 3 are working at levels below those expected nationally, although the national standard is reached by some pupils. From Years 7 to 9, pupils make good strides in their mastery of some geographical skills, especially mapping skills and graphs. They increase their knowledge of other countries, such as Italy, being able to identify differences between the North and the South of the country. They are less secure, however, when asked to account for these differences. They become increasingly more confident with the vocabulary required in the study of geographical themes, for example 'function' in the study of settlements in Year 7. By Year 9, pupils can distinguish between 'population density' and 'distribution'. There is little evidence, however, of their ability to formulate their own geographical questions, or of being able to follow a sequence of enquiry. This is because some aspects of the revised National Curriculum have not been fully introduced.
106. In Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils obtaining grades from A* to C in the year 2000 GCSE examination was below the national average for boys while the percentage of A* to G grades was close to the national average. The percentage of A* to C grades has declined since the last inspection largely because most higher-attaining pupils make different option choices at the end of Year 9. Despite the overall results, pupils' achievements are still considerable over the two years. When achievement at the end of Year 9 is compared with that at the end of Year 11, they are seen to make good progress. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 have produced a good piece of independent coursework, comparing two local shopping centres. Pupils in Year 10 can distinguish between two different causes of coastal erosion and lower-attaining pupils in Year 11, including some with special educational needs, are able to participate sensibly in a discussion about the effects of a factory closure on a local community.

107. In the sixth form, classes in the subject are small but growing in size. Of the three students who sat A-level examinations in 1999, which was the last entry, two obtained passes. When compared with other schools nationally, standards are below average. No teaching could be observed in the sixth form because of timetable arrangements and public examinations. Evidence from looking at students' work indicates that achievement between GCSE and A-level is good. After a year and a half's work, students are able to write well, at some length, to describe and explain geographical processes and hazards, to evaluate people's impact on the landscape and their attempts at managing the environment. Based on this evidence, results should improve.
108. In almost all the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory or good and it is satisfactory overall. Strengths in teaching include the careful structuring of learning by good preparation and the well-timed staging of new ideas and experiences. This approach ensures that pupils acquire new knowledge and skills systematically but it is at times repetitive and unimaginative and it does not always ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities. The last inspection criticised the narrowness of teaching approaches in the department and there has been little movement to extend them to give pupils opportunities to learn in different ways and to test out their understanding. As a result, pupils do not learn to handle a good range of resources or to develop their skills in thinking, communicating or in information and communication technology as much as they could. Without a wider range of activities and approaches, pupils are not being helped to become independent learners, less dependent on their teachers for their progress.
109. Teachers usually mark pupils' work regularly. The quality of marking is inconsistent across the age range, being most effective in the sixth form, where teachers highlight strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for improvement. It is weakest in Key Stage 3, where pupils are praised enthusiastically for their efforts but are not helped to understand what they do well and what is weak. Neither are they given suggestions how to improve their work. The marking of work to determine levels at the end of Year 9 is not yet completely in line with what is expected nationally.
110. The head of department has identified appropriate priorities for development. The first of these, to improve the quality of the GCSE coursework, has been successfully met. Procedures are now being considered for ensuring full coverage of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and improving the quality and consistency of marking and assessment. Other priorities that are appropriately identified include widening the range of teaching approaches and monitoring the work of the department more closely and effectively to achieve consistency.

HISTORY

111. The results of teachers' assessments in 2000 showed that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was below the national expectations for this subject. Pupils currently in Year 9 are on target to achieve higher National Curriculum levels in the summer of 2001, although it is likely that the overall results will be below national expectations once more. The underlying reason for this is that, whilst many pupils have very good oral skills and are capable of giving detailed answers to questions posed by the teacher in the lesson, their reading and written skills need further development to enable them to achieve higher levels.
112. From the evidence gathered during the inspection, the quality of learning is improving and it is good across Key Stage 3. An improving range of resources, devised by the teachers within the department, and the extensive use of teaching and learning styles that actively involve pupils combine to support lower-attaining pupils in their work and enable them to make progress. Pupils are very largely hard working and sustain good concentration. Relationships between pupils and teachers are consistently good.
113. The results of the GCSE examinations in 2000 were below the national average for history and significantly below the average for other subjects in the college. However, the results are an improvement on those of the previous year, with more pupils achieving higher grades. At the time of the last inspection, the results were also below the national average for the subject and, on the

face of it, no improvements have been made. However, a new head of department was appointed in 1998 and she took the decision to change the examination syllabus with effect from September 1998. The results of the 2000 examinations were the first to be based on the new syllabus which provides all pupils with the opportunity to access the course and achieve a grade. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are generally making consistent progress in relation to their age and ability.

114. The A-level results for 2000 show that, of the seven candidates entered, six gained grades between A and E but the average point score is below the national average. A scrutiny of students' work indicated that they are on target to achieve in line with their age and ability in the summers of 2001 and 2002. Owing to modular examinations taking place during the week of the inspection, it was not possible to observe taught history lessons in the sixth form.
115. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is good and sometimes very good or excellent. Where teaching is good or very good, planning is detailed and a very good range of well-chosen teaching and learning styles is used. Learning objectives are made clear to the pupils at the start of each lesson and lessons end with a review of the progress made. The management of pupils is very good, motivation is effective and the pace of learning is often very good throughout the hour-long lesson. Where teaching is very good or excellent, all these qualities are evident and, in addition, teachers are particularly skilled storytellers and their natural enthusiasm for the subject is conveyed to the pupils.
116. Teaching across Years 10 and 11 is good overall and often very good. In the lessons where teaching was very good, much learning was achieved through the exploration of sources, clearly aimed at developing historical research skills. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils were asked to investigate the range of reasons why support for the Nazi party grew between 1929 and 1933. Through the exploration of a range of resources, such as pictorial evidence, video-taped evidence and written evidence, pupils were fully engaged in the learning process throughout the lesson and were able to present convincing arguments to the teacher at the end of the session. In the lessons where teaching was very good, learning objectives were made clear from the start, high standards of written work were demanded and regular question and answer sessions took place to check what the pupils had learned. By contrast, in one unsatisfactory lesson, the task set was not sufficiently detailed and questioning was at a superficial level. The pace of the lesson was very slow as the teacher had not planned realistic but challenging time frames for each activity and, as a result, the pupils made poor progress.
117. There is clear evidence that good teaching is having a positive impact on learning. Although lessons are mainly led by the teacher, this is appropriate given the wide range of ability in many classes and it enables the teacher to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the work. Most of the teachers are highly skilled at challenging the thinking of pupils and pushing them to give detailed answers to questions. Pupils are given many opportunities to manage their own learning, to show initiative and develop their organisational skills, but this is not a firmly established feature of the department. The range of resources has improved since the last inspection and pupils are actively encouraged to use the Internet to explore topics, either through the historical web sites or by accessing the departments own web-site.
118. Work is marked regularly but marking is often not sufficiently detailed to enable the pupils to see what they can do to improve their performance. Assessment opportunities are built into the department's schemes of work and the results are collated. However, they are not being used to track the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils or to set targets with the aim of raising standards.
119. There have been a number of significant improvements since the last inspection. The department is very well led and managed and the head of department has developed a very positive team spirit. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and the work of the pupils and teachers is regularly monitored by the head of department, in line with college's policies and procedures. The main focus for the department is to ensure that all pupils are actively engaged in learning so that they can achieve. As a result, there are very few incidents of indiscipline in lessons and, where they do occur, they are swiftly and skilfully managed by the class teacher.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Standards of attainment are at the nationally expected level by the end of Key Stage 3, despite low attainment levels on entry to Year 7. In 2000, teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the nationally expected level was above the national average. Until the current year, pupils in Key Stage 4 have not been entered for examinations. However, since the recent improvements in management, staffing and resources for the subject, increasing numbers are entering for examinations in information and communication technology. All pupils in Year 11 are entered for the full GCSE or half GCSE courses and a group of students in the sixth form are entered for the A-level examinations.
121. Evidence from the inspection shows that the attainment of the current Year 9 is just in line with the nationally expected level, although some pupils do not achieve this standard. Pupils in Year 7 find working with spreadsheets stimulating and they enjoy the challenge of using formulae and charts to improve their performance. In Year 9, the data-handling, modeling and control activities covered by English, mathematics and technology are developing a wide range of computer skills and supporting an improvement in quality of pupils' school work. Pupils use these basic skills to generate, develop, organise and present their work. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in lessons is generally below the expected level. A significant number of pupils have basic literacy and numeracy problems. They find it difficult to complete the full range of work required and, without extensive support from their teachers, they become disillusioned. Those pupils who have reached satisfactory standards are becoming competent in the range of basic skills and applications. They know about real-world applications of information and communication technology and understand the implications for working life. They can use the technology to structure, refine and present information in different forms and styles for specific purposes. For example, they can produce animated presentations, using 'Powerpoint', to create simulated commercial advertisements. Attainment in the sixth form is also at the expected standard. Students are able to explain their work well. They respond to opportunities to plan and organise their own work, accessing information from the Internet, from newspapers and from media sources.
122. When the standards of their previous attainment are taken into account, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all age groups, especially in communications and handling information. Progress in computer-related courses, such as the GNVQ, is at times good. The aspects of control, measuring and modeling link most easily to other subjects where the context is suitable for extending pupils' competencies. For example, English, mathematics, science and technology have units of work that teach skills and competencies in information and communication technology within a strong subject context. This is extending their achievement appropriately.
123. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their behaviour and the quality of their relationships are satisfactory. They enjoy the subject and this ensures that they maintain interest and sustain higher concentration levels. This, in turn, helps to raise their attainment, even in the more demanding aspects of the subject. A few pupils let themselves down on occasion with discourteous behaviour and they show very limited ambition for improvement to their work. Teachers spend much of their time refocusing these individuals so that the majority can learn effectively.
124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school and it is often good. In the better lessons, teachers are confident, stimulating and very knowledgeable about the subject. Lessons are generally well prepared, with clear objectives. They are well presented, sometimes with new technology as an aid, and with an appropriate range of good learning activities. In the better lessons, teaching strategies are well matched to pupils' needs. Work is organised in a range of stimulating ways, lessons are taught with enthusiasm and the learning objectives are generally achieved. Lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace with well focused and assessed learning outcomes for all the pupils. In most lessons, teachers explain the content clearly and have appropriate expectations of the range of pupils and their needs. In the few less successful lessons, teaching methods are more limited and learning outcomes are less effective because the assessment of the work is not clear and the lesson is not challenging enough. Teachers feed

back to pupils what they have learned but they make insufficient use of assessment to inform further developments.

125. The schemes of work from the contributing courses fully meet the requirements at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Tasks are sufficiently demanding and teachers are particularly concerned to ensure that pupils make progress and cover the syllabus. Each part of the course is well structured and the course overall provides for continuity and progression. The college has made significant improvements to its provision in the last few years, particularly to the facilities and equipment, with accompanying improvements in the coverage of the schemes of work. The department has a standardised system of recording and reporting pupils' accomplishments and records of work are kept by other teaching departments as well, as part of their contribution to information and communication technology. The assessment system ensures that marking and feedback focus on achievement and standards rather than merely rewarding pupils for taking tasks through to completion. The college recognises that the development of assessment is a priority and plans to achieve this objective in the next year.
126. Leadership and management of the subject throughout the school are now satisfactory. Since the last inspection, every aspect of the subject has been significantly improved. The curriculum is appropriately focused on offering paths to qualification. The model where five subjects develop skills in information and communication technology is effective for the college's present stage of development. Their schemes of work go beyond using the subject as a resource for learning and spell out firm intentions for developing pupils' competencies. The co-ordination and monitoring of all the contributions made in other subjects have not been developed sufficiently but the college has strategies for doing so. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory for the present programme, with a computer-to-pupil ratio of one to seven, which is broadly in line with the national average for technology colleges and much better than the national average. Subjects outside the information and communication technology programme, such as music, history and modern languages, offer significant computer-related courses. However, other subjects have limited access to facilities and make little or no contribution to wider technological education. Staff development has matched the demands of the changes that have taken place so far, but the training needs of some staff across the college are still to be met.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

127. Results in the GCSE examinations in French have shown a steadily rising trend since the last inspection and, in 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C grades was a little above the national average for boys. In lessons and work observed, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are meeting national expectations. They are able to discuss future plans, give opinions about their school and are writing extended pieces containing a variety of tenses with a fair degree of accuracy. However, French is currently an optional choice for pupils and the proportion of pupils entered for the GCSE examination each year is low compared with the size of the cohort, being generally about one quarter. Furthermore, the remaining majority of pupils have no opportunity to study a modern foreign language. These arrangements do not meet statutory requirements.
128. In Key Stage 3, pupils in the Year 9 top sets and some in middle sets are working at the nationally expected levels in French. These pupils have studied only French over the last three years. They can identify and note down key points when listening to quite rapid spoken French and they can write short passages about free-time activities, containing at least two tenses. Pupils take part in short conversations, based on welcoming visitors, and can give details about a journey. However, standards of attainment in the key stage are below national expectations overall. Overall, standards are better in listening, reading and writing than in speaking and standards of pronunciation in French are unsatisfactory.
129. Spanish has recently been introduced in Key Stage 3. This very positive step is being well received by pupils. For example, pupils in Year 8 can answer a range of simple questions in Spanish from memory, covering personal details, pets and school subjects. They make good progress in learning the numbers from twenty to one hundred. Within the scope of each lesson, pupils are making sound progress. As yet, no pupils have studied Spanish for longer than a year.

130. Under the college's new curriculum plan, pupils begin either French or Spanish in Year 7 and they will then change to the other language in Year 8, with a view to dividing their time equally between both languages in Year 9. These particular arrangements are unsatisfactory as no more teaching time has been allocated. The amount of time allocated for only one language was already below the national average. The arrangements, whereby pupils of all abilities study two languages in the scant time previously allocated for one, can only lead to lower standards of attainment and provide a weaker basis for progression to the GCSE coursework. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Standards overall have improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards in the GCSE examinations have risen, the range of reading and writing work has improved, teachers now use French and Spanish extensively in the classroom and all pupils have opportunities to use information and communication technology.
131. Much of the teaching is good. All teachers plan lessons well, using a series of small learning steps to guide pupils forward. There is a consistent approach to the use of choral repetition and good use is made of flashcards and other visual aids. Teaching approaches are adjusted to suit pupils with special educational needs but expectations remain high. Elements of grammar are taught explicitly and clearly, within the context of appropriate topic areas. There are now regular opportunities for pupils to practise speaking in pairs and groups but their responses are too brief and lacking in originality. Teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently to work from memory at the end of a learning sequence. They pay too little attention to the teaching of pronunciation and, especially in French, to the relationship between the written and spoken word. The majority of pupils behave well and they are generally attentive. They freely volunteer answers to questions and concentrate on their lessons. However, in some lessons, pupils demonstrate a certain lack of interest and motivation, leading to a lower standard of learning.
132. The department is well managed and it has made good progress since the last inspection. There are very good arrangements for monitoring which are reflected in a uniform approach to planning, teaching and assessment across the department. Planning identifies clear and manageable learning objectives but these are not set into appropriate contexts so that they relate better to pupils' interests and experience and so improve levels of motivation. The organisation and appearance of the department are good. Opportunities for using information and communication technology are written into schemes of work in a detailed and helpful way, with pupils' work on display in all classrooms. The development plan has relevant aims and objectives, including the need to extend the range of pupils' speaking. The school is planning a visit to Madrid in the near future, with a strong cultural element. Pupils will be staying with families and exploring the city by day. An after-school Spanish club makes good use of the Internet to bring a cultural dimension to language learning.

MUSIC

133. Many pupils enter the college at the age of eleven with underdeveloped musical skills. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment in music are at the nationally expected level and they are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 4. These good achievements are an improvement since the last report. In 1999, all the candidates gained A* to C grades in the GCSE examination. In 2000, three out of every four candidates gained A* to C grades, which was still above the national average. The proportion of candidates gaining A* to G grades was just below the national average. A contributing factor to this dip in results was a larger, mixed-ability cohort, including students with limited practical skills.
134. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have made progress in their skills and understanding and they compose in a thoughtful and imaginative way. Many perform effectively on a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards improve because of the more practical nature of the course. This was not so evident at the last inspection. In both key stages, standards of attainment are close to the nationally expected levels.
135. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Pupils are motivated to do well because of the teachers' enthusiasm and high expectations. For

example, one Year 7 class listened to extracts from Stravinsky's 'Petrouchka' as a stimulus for their own musical improvisations on fairground sounds. A Year 8 class demonstrated skills in literacy as well as in music by chanting a string of railway station names in unison as a prelude to notating rhythms. Pupils in Year 9 practised a walking bass, with backing chords, to develop their basic understanding of the blues. In one lesson, the teacher's effective summing up included a brief résumé of the origins of the American civil war and the slave trade, which put the development of the blues into a historical context.

136. In Key Stage 4, most practical work is done on keyboards, classroom instruments and computers to develop practical skills and an understanding of musical form. Pupils in Year 10 listen to music of the Renaissance and model their own group compositions on this style. Year 11 pupils listen to extracts from Berg's 'Wozzeck' to give them a better understanding of dissonance, chromaticism and atonal progressions to reinforce their understanding of expressionism in music. In working on the use of modes, one pupil experimented with layering and sequencing to produce an intriguing composition based on oriental motifs.
137. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject and their very good expertise in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form produce confidence that inspires and motivates most pupils. Learning is reinforced but, occasionally, insufficient time is left at the end of lessons for appraisal and summing up. Sensible planning and high standards contribute to the breadth of study offered across the musical skills of performing, composing, appraising and listening. All lessons start and end in an orderly way. Lessons are planned and conducted in ways that insure all pupils can participate and benefit. This contributes to the commitment and enjoyment of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs.
138. Since the last inspection, there has been a change of head of department and more pupils now study music in Year 10. The opportunities for practical work have improved since the last inspection and five computers have been introduced to develop composing skills. None of the boys observed showed any self-consciousness when performing for their peers and some boys in Year 11 choose to do solo singing for their practical work.
139. Attitudes to learning are generally good throughout both key stages. In most lessons, pupils behave well and co-operate. They generally work hard and show an interest in what they are doing. When negative behaviour emerges, staff act quickly to defuse the situation and encourage a return to task. Pupils of all ages show good listening skills and they pay close attention when listening to their peers perform. Relationships are positive and there is a good rapport between pupils and teachers that enables the work to proceed in a relaxed but purposeful way. There is much support when groups perform for their peers. Pupils look after musical instruments and there is very little evidence of damage.
140. The music department is strongly led and managed by a competent head of department who has been in post for only two years. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Monitoring of teaching takes place at least twice a year with a written feedback on teaching and learning. There is a high level of challenge in the majority of lessons and standards are rising, particularly in Key Stage 4. The scheme of work addresses all statutory requirements, including the use of information and communication technology. Singing is taught in some lessons but simple things, such as standing with a good posture to improve voice production and tone, are not encouraged. Teachers make tape recordings of boys in Year 11 singing solos to encourage the idea that singing is for all ages. Assessment and marking are effectively done and understood by the pupils. The department has not yet built the new levels for music in Key Stage 3 into the assessment system but plans to do so this term. Marking in Key Stage 4 is in line with GCSE requirements.
141. Accommodation and resources are good. Seventy-four pupils are learning to play musical instruments and extra-curricular activities include rehearsals for the college's forthcoming musical, 'Return to the Forbidden Planet' and a flourishing steel band which performs in the college and in the local community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. In 2000, the results of the A-level examination were below the national average, with only three out of five students achieving passes, and these were at low grades. In 1999, the single candidate achieved an E grade. The standards reached by the four students in the current Year 13 are below the expected levels. They have a good technical vocabulary and are able to discuss the changing ethics of competitive sport in Britain but their essay writing lacks structure and depth. They have conducted little individual research and are not sufficiently developed as independent learners.
143. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, pupils achieved results that were well below the national average and the 1999 results were of a similar low standard. In both years, the results were significantly below the average for other subjects in the college. Pupils in Key Stage 4 attain standards in line with national expectations and a minority attain above these levels. In basketball, for example, boys in Years 10 and 11 are competent in lay-up and set shooting skills and have a good understanding of the basic rules and tactics. The majority of boys in GCSE lessons are currently working at the nationally expected levels. Their neat and well organised notebooks are growing into good resources for learning. Year 11 boys are able to describe the components of a balanced diet and Year 10 students illustrate their understanding of the respiratory system by their very well presented and accurate diagrams. A small number of students in each year group are held back by low-level literacy skills. Results in the A-level examinations have been below the national averages and students' essays lack sufficient depth and structure to reach the expected level.
144. In 1999 and 2000, the percentages of pupils in Year 9 assessed as reaching the nationally expected level were below the national averages. However, the attainment of the majority of boys in Key Stage 3 is now in line with standards expected nationally and, in some games activities, boys attain higher levels. The majority of boys enter Year 7 with little or no knowledge of rugby, gymnastics or health-related fitness. They quickly acquire the new skills involved and increase their knowledge of health and exercise. The majority of boys in Year 9 have a good standard of fitness and understand the importance of monitoring pulse rates before and after exercise. Pupils extend this knowledge through the progressive units of work in each year. Boys in Year 7 demonstrate good ball-handling skills in rugby and understand the basic principles of safe tackling. They plan well in gymnastics and produce interesting paired balances. However, their quality of performance, body tension, extension and basic travelling skills are not sufficiently developed. The college has a new gymnasium after being without one for some time and the time allocated to this discipline can now be increased and a more balanced curriculum achieved in Key Stage 3.
145. A few individual students and teams achieve high standards in district and county competitions in rugby, athletics, football, cross country, tennis, fencing and cricket. Several boys represent their country in these and other individual sports. The attainment of these students is well above the national average and they benefit considerably by the number and wide range of extra-curricular opportunities offered by the physical education department. These activities include not only competitive games but skiing, using local community facilities, badminton, and table-tennis clubs. The school takes a group on the challenging 'Ten Tors' event each year. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and often good progress in Key Stage 4.
146. In a few lessons, teaching is excellent or very good and good relationships enable pupils to benefit from the teachers' expertise. Overall, however, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teaching of games is a strength of the department and the teachers' expertise and enthusiasm for their sport enable the boys to acquire new skills and consolidate them in team games. The equal progress of students, regardless of their physical abilities, is well supported by teaching in ability groups, wherever the timetable allows, and by sensitive and safe teaching strategies. However, in gymnastics, teachers often struggle to find the best balance between teaching new skills and giving pupils the opportunity to plan, observe and evaluate their work and that of others.
147. Lesson objectives are often clearly set out but there is a lack of detail in the Key Stage 3 schemes of work, where the appropriate range of teaching methods and the linkage between

teaching objectives and assessment opportunities are not explained. Planning for information and communication technology has not been built into the programme of study. Assessment in Key Stage 3 is organised in relation to the new National Curriculum levels but greater clarity is needed to ensure the criteria are fully understood by pupils. Teachers have thorough procedures for recording, marking and assessment on the A-level and GCSE courses.

148. In one lesson, unsatisfactory behaviour hindered learning. The pupils were restless, noisy and frequently inattentive. In several lessons observed, five or more pupils did not participate in the activity. This is a regular occurrence for a few individuals and the department does not involve these boys sufficiently in the lesson. However, the majority of students behave well, are keen and enthusiastic and have very good relationships with their teachers. The number of students who participate in the early morning and after-school clubs and practices shows their interest in the subject. These positive attitudes contribute significantly to their learning.
149. The display in and around the department is both celebratory and informative. The school has some good facilities for physical education but, overall, the resources are inadequate. For example, there is no fixed apparatus in the gymnasium and there is not enough free-standing equipment. The head of department provides clear educational direction for the subject. He leads by setting a good example with his own teaching. However, insufficient coverage of gymnastics in Key Stage 3 remains a weakness, as it was during the last inspection. Recent improvements to the accommodation and planned professional development will begin to address this issue.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Evidence of the attainment of older pupils was gathered by discussions with pupils and staff and by analysing pupils' work and school documentation. Standards in Key Stages 3 and 4 have improved since the last inspection and they are close to those expected nationally and those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Religious education is not taught to students in Years 12 and 13, in breach of statutory requirements.
151. However, the small number of pupils who took the GCSE examination in 2000 achieved results that were close to the national average. Since the last inspection, and especially over the last three years, the numbers entered for full GCSE examination have been declining at the same time as results have been improving. Therefore, a decision was taken last year to offer the GCSE short course in religious education. Approximately half of the pupils in Year 11 are being entered for examination this year, an improvement that should help raise standards. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of basic beliefs in Islam and Christianity and of social and moral issues concerning marriage, abortion and euthanasia from the perspectives of those religions. However, they seldom relate this understanding to their own experiences in order to discover their meaning and purpose.
152. Similarly, in Key Stage 3, pupils' learning about religion is better than their learning from religion. For example, they can retell the story of the life of Buddha but find the concepts of suffering and enlightenment difficult to relate to or understand. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making sound progress, which shows that standards will improve in due course. Pupils in Year 7 are learning about the story of Esau and Jacob in their study of Judaism and exploring themes of deception and family relationships, relating them to their own situations. Pupils in Year 8 know the story of Jairus' daughter and are developing an understanding of the importance of the miracles wrought by Jesus and of people's faith in him. Pupils are also benefiting from the introduction of tests based on religious education skills to assist them in their learning. Attainment in the majority of lessons seen was close to the standards set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
153. Pupils respond well to religious education, particularly where teaching is linked to their interests and experiences. They like to talk about different religions, particularly the miracles, and about their relationships with each other, sharing their own experiences. They can empathise with and respect the feelings of others but some pupils become easily distracted. A minority lose interest when they feel that a writing task is too long for them. Then they waste time in settling down

before doing productive work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress across both key stages.

154. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory with some good elements, particularly where lessons are well planned. In most classes, teachers display secure knowledge of the subject. They question pupils effectively to help them recall facts from the current or previous lesson. They have high expectations of pupils' achievements and behaviour, develop good relationships with them and make effective use of time, resources and ongoing assessment to deepen their understanding. Occasionally, teachers are insecure in their knowledge of other world faiths and do not draw out the religious significance of pictures, artefacts or stories. In a few cases, teachers did not manage their classes effectively, with the result that groups of lower-attaining pupils lost interest.
155. The college follows the Bromley agreed syllabus for Key Stages 3 and 4. All pupils in these key stages have access to religious education, except two who are withdrawn and for whom supervision is provided. Pupils in Year 7 also have the opportunity to visit local churches and Year 10 pupils give good support to pupils from a neighbouring school who have special educational needs. The college is taking steps to introduce religious education into the sixth form next year as part of a general studies course.
156. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about faith and trust and have opportunities to share experiences and help each other. Religious education also makes a sound contribution to literacy as opportunities are provided for pupils to practise speaking and listening, reading and writing skills in lessons.
157. Good leadership is provided by the head of department who has overseen the process of matching the college's scheme of work with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Clear and realistic targets have been set for pupils in Key Stage 3 and for the GCSE examination. The head of department regularly monitors the quality of teaching and the standards reached by pupils. Three specialist rooms with displays of artefacts, pictures and pupils' work create a pleasant learning environment. Resources for the subject, such as good quality worksheets, artefacts and pictures, are adequate but information and communication technology is not used effectively. When necessary, resources are supplemented by the school library or through links with another secondary school.