

INSPECTION REPORT

APPLEMORE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Dibden Purlieu

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116504

Principal: Mr F C Callaghan

Reporting inspector: Mr N A Pett
17331

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th January 2001

Inspection number: 193058

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the College Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of college:	Comprehensive
College category:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 - 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
College address:	Roman Road Dibden Purlieu Southampton
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Vaughan
Date of previous inspection:	18 th November 1996

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17331	N A Pett	Registered inspector		The college's results and achievements How well is the college led and managed?
8991	Mrs P Goldsack	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the college care for its students? How well does the college work in partnership with parents?
19528	R Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics	
20709	D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English	
23188	V Maunder	Team inspector	Science	
7531	E Cole	Team inspector	Design and technology	How well are students taught?
31981	E Forster	Team inspector	Art	
16747	A Jones	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
31332	J Marshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18755	R Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	
3287	J Knight	Team inspector	Geography	
31329	K Barratt	Team inspector	History	
24026	C Holland	Team inspector	Music	
2396	M Davidson	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
27058	K Cannon	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
1517	D Griffith	Team inspector	Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

This technology College is situated on the outskirts of Southampton. There are 854 students on roll aged between 11 and 18, including 90 in the sixth form, making it similar in size to the average secondary College nationally. The sixth form was introduced three years ago. Students come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of students eligible for free College meals is below the national average. Their ethnic heritage is mainly white European and the percentage of students not having English as their first language is low in comparison with the national average. The proportion of students identified with special educational needs is well above the national average. Twenty-four students hold statements to address their specific needs, including 2 in the sixth form. There is a specific unit for 30 students who have dyslexia and 18 have statements. Attainment on entry for the current Year 7 reflects the national average, overall. The College's aims seek to provide for the academic and personal development of all of its students.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

This College has a number of significant strengths, which have been maintained since the last inspection. Many students achieve grades in GCSE examinations which are good for their prior attainment. The overall quality of teaching is good. The College is an orderly community. It has recognised the need to revise its management structures to improve the overall quality of monitoring and evaluation. The College gives good value for money.

What the College does well

- Gains good success for its students in GCSE examinations.
- Teaches effectively in most lessons so that many students learn well.
- Makes very good provision for students in the dyslexia unit.
- Gives good support to students with special educational needs.
- Effectively encourages the good behaviour, attitudes and personal development of students, and provides good guidance.
- Makes good provision for extracurricular activities, overall.

What could be improved

- Consistency in the use of assessment procedures and monitoring of students' academic and personal progress.
- Extending the use of computers in subjects across the curriculum.
- Aspects of curricular provision in Key Stage 4 and in physical education and religious education, overall, to raise standards in these subjects.
- Ensuring that there is greater consistency in management at all levels.

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

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The College was last inspected in 1996. The overall improvement has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained overall as the prior attainment of the students on entry has fallen. Teaching has improved. Better resources for information and communication technology exist, but are not yet consistently used in some subjects. The provision for students in the Learning Support department and the Dyslexia Unit has improved. Students' individual education plans have also improved, but not to the same extent and this is being remedied. The curriculum for students between the ages of 14 and 19 has been improved, especially by the introduction of the sixth form. Satisfactory use is made of the analysis of whole College results, but there has not been sufficient improvement in assessment procedures in some departments. The management arrangements, at both senior level and in the leadership of departments, has been recently restructured. There are still issues to be addressed, but when fully implemented, the new management arrangements provide the potential for further improvement.

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 colleges			similar colleges
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	B	A
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	D	C	

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

Standards have been consistently maintained at well above average in the overall performance in GCSE in relation to the national average and in comparison with similar colleges when the points score is taken into account. The percentage of students gaining 5 A*-C grades in 2000 was below the national average and 5 A*-G grades were average. Many students do better than their prior attainment. The trend for improvement over the last four years is below the national trend. Many students with special educational needs do well. Sixth form numbers are small, but the results at GCE A-level and GNVQ show improvement and are in line with the average. Results in the year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 show improvement in mathematics to average and were average in science but below in English. Taken together, results in the core subjects were in line with the national average and the average for similar colleges. For students currently in College, standards are broadly in line with the average in the large majority of subjects at the end of both key stages, although they are below average in religious education at Key Stage 3 and in geography and physical education at Key Stage 4. Standards in the sixth form are generally in line with expectations.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	The majority of students have good attitudes towards their work and teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The majority of students behave well, and understand the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Most students enjoy good relationships with teachers and each other.
Attendance	The overall attendance is satisfactory.

Students enjoy College and work hard. They are proud of their College and care for resources very well. Their positive attitudes, good behaviour and relationships enable them to do well. A minority of students do not respond as well and exclusions are effectively used to combat their anti-social behaviour. Unauthorised absence is above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years	Aged 16-18 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.

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and it remains a strength of the College. It is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons, is good in 41 per cent of lessons and very good in 20 per cent of lessons. In 7 per cent teaching is excellent. There is a slightly higher percentage of good and very good lessons in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4. Over a half of the lessons are very good in the sixth form. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, overall. In science, teaching is satisfactory, overall, but needs to be improved to eliminate some underachievement at Key Stage 3. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The teaching of information and communication technology is good, but computers are not being consistently used in some subjects. Teaching is good over time and has a positive impact on students' learning and leads to their generally good progress. A particular strength is the very good teaching by staff in the dyslexia unit. Students with special educational needs are supported very well through the effective partnership between teachers and learning support staff. The very large majority of teachers' have good expectations for both behaviour and work, providing a good challenge to their students, to which the majority willingly respond.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is breadth and balance, but statutory requirements for physical education and religious education are not met.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Provision is very good within the unit and good for other students in the main College.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. These minority of students make similar progress and achieve similar standards to other students.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory, overall. There are many good elements, but the opportunities for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the college cares for its students	Satisfactory. The overall arrangements for pupils' personal development are good but the monitoring of their academic and personal development is underdeveloped.

The curriculum provides effectively for the needs of the students in Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, there are good opportunities for either GCSE or GNVQ courses and a work-related curriculum. Extra-curricular activities are generally good, although the limitations in physical education have been recognised by the College. Some individual education plans for students with special educational needs lack sufficient focus. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met. Opportunities for multicultural awareness are underdeveloped. Assessment procedures are not consistently applied, and the monitoring of personal development by tutors is underdeveloped.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Recent changes to management structures are not yet fully implemented and this is impeding the monitoring and evaluation of the College's performance.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are involved and supportive of the College, but statutory responsibilities are not fully met.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Test results and national data are well analysed. Targets set at all levels are not sufficiently monitored and evaluated to support the raising of standards.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally effectively used and the College is giving good value for money.

There is some good practice in leadership and management at all levels and recent changes in arrangements are a response to the developing needs of the College. These changes are at an early stage of development. Approaches to monitoring and evaluation are inconsistent, occasionally having a detrimental effect on the overall efficiency of management. For example, the need to improve assessment to set and meet targets in all subjects is not being achieved. The roles of governors have also recently changed to extend their practice in ensuring the standards and quality of education and to meet statutory requirements. This reorganisation of College management and governance presents the potential for sound improvement. There are sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications, experience and subject knowledge to teach the age range and the curriculum, although there is weakness in religious education and science. The learning support staff add significantly to the overall provision. Administration and support staff make a good contribution to the effective organisation. The accommodation is good. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, but there are issues in music and science.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like College. • The progress being achieved by their children. • The College has high expectations. • It helps students to become mature and responsible and the majority of students are well-behaved. • How well the College cares for its students. • The good quality of teaching. • Students with special educational needs are well supported. • The sound range of extracurricular activities. • That they feel able to approach the College with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrangements for homework. • The information on their children's progress. • Working more closely with parents.

Only a minority of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and about 15 per cent returned the questionnaire. Inspection evidence generally supports all of the points that please parents and carers. Inspectors find that there is an inconsistency in the setting of homework, but that where practice is good the activities clearly extend students' learning. Reports are satisfactory and along with arrangements for parent consultations there is a satisfactory provision for information on progress. The large majority of parents who responded find that they can approach the College with questions or problems and, although a minority expressed some concerns, inspectors do consider that the College is seeking to work closely with parents and carers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The College's results and achievements

1. The profile of prior attainment of the students who entered Year 7 this academic year broadly reflects the national average. However, a higher than average proportion of the students are identified as having special educational needs and there is a specific unit to support students who have dyslexia. A significant minority of students have high prior attainment.
2. Results in the year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, when students are aged fourteen, were below the national average in English and in line with the national average in mathematics and science. When compared to similar colleges, the results in these subjects were below average in English, in line with the average in mathematics and well above average in science. The proportion of students gaining the higher levels in English was below the average, but, in mathematics and science, results were above average. Taken over the last 4 years, the average points score achieved by the students has been close to the national average. Boys perform better than girls. The targets set by the College for the percentage of students achieving the expected levels have been broadly achieved, although the trend for improvement is below the trends to be found in secondary colleges nationally.
3. Results in GCSE/GNVQ examinations for 5 passes at A*-C in 2000 were below the national average, but A*-G passes were above the average. In comparison with similar colleges, results at A*-C were well below average. When taking into account the average points score per pupil and in relation to their prior attainment, students' results were much better and are very high. This is a very positive achievement and shows the benefit added to their attainment over time. This situation has been maintained in recent years, although in comparison with national trends, there is not the same level of improvement. In year 2000, boys and girls achieved similar levels over their range of subjects, although over a four year period girls have performed better than boys. Only a small minority of students leave College without any qualification, although the proportion that achieves one or more grades is below the average nationally.
4. The sixth form was introduced in 1998 and thus only 2 sets of results are available. Results at GCE A-level in year 2000 show improvement over the previous year and, overall, were in line with the average. However, making comparisons is difficult as the number of candidates in many subjects is small.
5. Standards by the end of both key stages for the students currently in College are in line with expectations, although there are some anomalies. Standards are above average by the end of both key stages in art, are above average by the end of Key Stage 3 in information and communication technology and are high by the end of Key Stage 4 in music. They are below average at the end of Key Stage 3 in religious education and in geography and physical education in Key Stage 4. Standards are in line with expectations in all other subjects by the end of both key stages. Students with special educational need generally achieve well in relation to their learning difficulties and in accordance with their individual education plans. This is particularly so for those students who are members of the dyslexia unit. The minority of students with English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. In the sixth form, standards are above average in English and art, but below average in modern languages. In all other subjects chosen by the students for study at AS and A-level, standards are broadly in line with the expectations for the students' ages.
6. Standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are average. There is a very well focused approach to learning key words in some subjects. A significant number of students converse easily and willingly, showing good vocabulary. In geography and history, students competently develop their skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. All students are encouraged to use the correct subject vocabulary in class in all subjects and standards are improving, overall. Good examples of the use of technical terms occur in mathematics, science and art. Most students listen attentively and with a sense of purpose and follow

instructions well. Students achieve neat presentation in most subjects, and write effectively for a range of purposes. Standards in reading are satisfactory. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory. Mental arithmetic skills are reinforced in mathematics lessons. Students handle numerical and graphical information with confidence. Graph drawing and interpretation skills are used in science, design technology, geography and information technology. In design technology, students are good at estimating number and measurement, using this to check accuracy of calculations. The improvement in standards of literacy and numeracy are hindered because there are no whole College approaches so that all departments take a common approach in their teaching.

7. In information and communication technology, students achieve good standards in their basic skills, but there is still an inconsistency in subjects to provide adequate opportunities for them to apply their techniques to their work. Very good opportunities occur in design and technology, but computers are insufficiently used in English, mathematics, science, religious education and modern languages. They are used very well to promote learning for the students with special educational needs, but in music, although staff have the expertise and interest, a lack of resources impedes the effectiveness of modern technology.
8. Students' learning is good. It is at least satisfactory in most lessons and in over two thirds of lessons it is good and often very good. This reflects the good quality of teaching over time and students generally positive attitudes. Across the College, students with special educational needs make good progress overall. Those students who have withdrawal lessons in the Learning Support Department and the Dyslexia Support Base make very good progress in their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Many high-attaining students receive further support from teachers in the form of extra lessons, extension materials and further reading, which supports their learning. They have been formally identified as gifted and talented students. The small minority of students with English as an additional language make good progress and their learning reflects that achieved by other students.
9. Since the last report, results have not risen in comparison with national averages, although students' overall attainment at GCSE reflects the good progress that they make in relation to their prior attainment. The increasing proportion of students with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties adversely affects the overall results of the college at Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies and the development of monitoring on a more consistent basis is required to raise standards.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The attitudes of students are good, overall, and have been maintained since the last inspection. Students like their College and work hard to succeed. In nearly all of the lessons observed they listened carefully to teachers, joined in discussions and set to work on learning activities with a sense of purpose. These commendable traits help support learning across all years. Students in the Sixth Form and the higher attaining students in the College can work well independently and display mature and productive research skills. Students' enthusiasm is also reflected in their participation in extra-curricular clubs, musical recitals, drama productions and projects in the local community. However, the opportunities for students to take part in extra sports activities have decreased since the last inspection. The positive attitudes of the students combined with the professionalism of the staff have created a good atmosphere for learning.
11. Students' behaviour continues to be generally good in and around the College. Students respond well to the College's positive approach to discipline and support the rewards and sanctions outlined in the behaviour policy. The large majority of students arrive promptly for lessons without bells to prompt them. Students with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, behave very well in the small withdrawal groups in the Learning Support Department. Students attending individual support lessons in the Dyslexia Support Base behave in an exemplary manner. The limited canteen facility means that students have their morning break and lunch in classrooms or open areas and outdoors. Students are trusted to behave sensibly and most do not disappoint. A minority tend to be boisterous, but, overall, they are friendly as they move around the site. Wrappers and

packaging from the impressive amounts of snacks and crisps consumed daily are cleared away quickly, although there is some litter. Students are generally trustworthy; few rooms are locked during the day, and books, computers and other resources are treated with respect. The few instances of misbehaviour observed during the inspection tended to be inattention to the teacher; calling out and a lack of interest in the activity that was taking place. Students and parents agree that bullying does take place and is mostly verbal taunts with few instances of physical bullying. It is not considered to be an alarming issue as the College takes any bullying incidents seriously and responds quickly according to the guidelines in the anti-bullying policy.

12. There is, however, a significant minority of students who are unsettled and negative about learning and complying with the rules. A number of these students have special educational needs that include emotional and behavioural difficulties. To their credit, the other students can ignore their disgruntled attitudes and occasional outbursts and carry on with their work with little delay. There have been 90 fixed period exclusions and seven permanent exclusions over the last reporting year. These figures reflect the College's high standards and commitment to ensuring the safety and well being of all students. Behaviour among the most difficult students appears to be improving as the rate of exclusion during the term before the inspection was lower. Students form into mixed groups easily for collaborative work or to socialise. There is no evidence of racism or sexism.
13. Relationships among students and between students and adults are good, but not outstanding, as they were reported in the previous inspection. Students are well aware of the feelings of others and understand the effect of their actions. Students listen well to each other in lessons and this supports learning. In a successful Year 9 English lesson students improvised performances individually and their classmates watched with interest and attention and then applauded spontaneously. Year 11 students help with the induction programme for Year 7 students, providing the youngest members of the College with a sense of belonging and reassurance. There were no tutorial sessions scheduled during the inspection, but students report that these classes provide them with appropriate opportunities to discuss relevant social issues. Students with special education needs and those trying to reintegrate into College life are treated positively by other students. In both settings, the students form very constructive relationships with the support teachers and show a keenness to learn. In subject lessons the students with special educational needs appreciate the support and guidance provided by the learning support assistants.
14. Students respond well to the opportunities provided for personal development. The College Council includes representatives from all years and these responsible students discuss ideas about improving the College community. Students who take part in work experience are well behaved, conscientious and act as good ambassadors for the College. Students take homework seriously and complete assignments as required.
15. Attendance is satisfactory and continues to be close to the national average. The College records attendance diligently, but has not had the service of an educational welfare officer for some time. The rate of unauthorised absence is much higher than the national figure, partly reflecting students who are travellers and those with whom the College has lost touch. Investigation of these absences by a specialist would provide the College with a more accurate view on students' attendance.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, teaching is good and a significant strength of the College. It effectively promotes the good progress of the large majority of students. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, through an increased proportion of very good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons, good in 41 per cent, very good in 20 per cent and excellent in 7 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in 4 per cent of lessons, but there is no one subject where this is concentrated. In religious education, the teaching by non-specialists is satisfactory, overall, but does limit the progress that students achieve. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire are pleased with the quality of teaching.

17. Teaching is consistently good, with no significant difference between the key stages, although, from inspection evidence, teaching is strongest in the sixth form. Across the College, the teaching has a positive impact on students' learning and leads to their good progress and standards, which is evident in the scrutiny of work. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and they use this well to provide challenging tasks to stimulate and motivate students. The very large majority of teachers have high expectations, providing a stimulating challenge, to which students willingly respond. For example, in Year 11 science, the teacher provides an excellent input that extends students' knowledge and understanding on microwaves, in preparation for students' own presentation to the class.
18. Lessons are well planned, with most lessons having good introduction and summary sessions. Teachers are clear about their learning objectives and share them with students. Just occasionally, this is not done effectively enough. For example, in a Year 9 religious education lesson the purpose was to develop an open and inquiring mind but the students were too dependent on the teacher telling them what to do. The majority of teachers manage and organise their classes well, but a feature of unsatisfactory teaching is when the teacher fails to gain students' attention quickly enough and talks over them.
19. Good use is made of time and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Relationships and class management are good, overall, and the generally good quality of relationships has a marked effect on the learning process. In the majority of lessons, teachers spend time checking for the levels of understanding through purposeful questioning. There are inconsistencies in marking among teachers and departments. Where there is good practice, teachers write constructive comments to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Similarly, whilst assessment is effectively used, there is still too much inconsistency to support planning and setting of targets. Homework is set, sometimes to extend work done in class as well as to extend students' learning. Students are beginning to use e-mail to send their homework to College and print it out the next day. However, there is some inconsistency in the setting of homework and the quality of the tasks, a view expressed by parents.
20. The teaching of English and mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4 is predominantly good, and leads to the good progress that the large majority of students make. In science, teaching is satisfactory, overall. Although there are no whole-College policies for developing literacy and numeracy, the teaching is satisfactory across subjects. Teaching in English covers all aspects of speaking and listening, reading a stimulating range of texts and writing for a very wide range of purposes, but other subjects do not have a consistent approach and this limits the potential to raise the standards of literacy, overall. Where provision is good, for example in geography and history, they have their own policy and actively encourage the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. There is a very well focused approach to learning key words in media studies and literary appreciation in English lessons at both key stages, but checking for the understanding of specialised subject vocabulary is inconsistent, overall. Similarly in numeracy, mental arithmetic skills are reinforced in mathematics lessons and there is no over reliance on calculators, although their efficient use is taught. Teachers of mathematics make good use of the initial start and the end of lessons to develop mental skills. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, a good example was seen in data handling when students were involved in calculating, interpreting and graphically representing the work to deepen their understanding. Teachers in science, design technology, geography and information technology develop students' numeracy skills appropriately. Teachers make generally good use of resources, but there are times when computers are not accessible to promote the teaching of computer skills. For example, the access is very good in design and technology allowing teachers to develop students' skills in a wide range of programs, so that they can competently apply the skills in other subjects.
21. There is high quality of teaching for students with special educational needs in withdrawal sessions in the Learning Support Department and in the Dyslexia Support Base. There is very good and often excellent knowledge and understanding of individual needs, very effective planning based on thorough assessment and good use of computers. The positive, supportive approach means that the students can sustain concentration and are highly productive and motivated. Teaching, in relation to students with special educational needs in subject lessons, is satisfactory. Good practice is evident in English, geography, history and in information and

communication technology where the teachers know the needs of the students well and address them, often relating work effectively to individual education plan targets such as in English. Work is very well matched to meet their differing needs. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson, the excellent teaching with questioning, explaining and extending knowledge and understanding enabled the students to make very good progress. In design technology and in music there is a very good approach by teachers to meeting individual needs, with care taken in planning and using learning materials. Not all teachers understand that they must not abdicate responsibility for students with special educational needs in their class to a learning support assistant. For example, work set does not consistently meet the differing needs of students in physical education and in religious education to allow for students to work at their own level. This factor is evident in the minority of unsatisfactory lessons.

22. Learning support assistants are well deployed and make a good contribution to the quality of learning of students with special educational needs and for English as an additional language. The learning support assistants play a key role in enabling inclusive access to the curriculum for students with the most significant literacy needs. Occasionally there is a tendency to do too much for the students. Opportunities for subject teachers and learning support assistants to forward plan and increase the effectiveness of support and promote independent learning are undeveloped in most subjects.

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

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It generally meets the needs of the students. Statutory requirements are met and the overall curriculum time is above average. In Key Stage 3, the time given to the various subjects is satisfactory, with a suitable emphasis on the teaching of English, mathematics and science. All students follow the same curriculum, except in Years 8 and 9 where they study either French or German. In Year 7, students study only French: this is planned to be the usual pattern up to Year 9 in future, even though German is the more successful subject.
24. The overall provision at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Students can select from a range of options, which include either examination at GCSE or GNVQ, offering a link between academic study and applications to the work place. In response to a weakness identified at the previous inspection, the College has removed duplication between GCSE and GNVQ courses and provided increased time for religious education. The recently introduced programme for a minority of Year 10 students who are experiencing disaffection with education is proving helpful in improving their commitment to study. A day spent each week in a work-oriented environment away from the College, together with a reduced number of subjects and strong pastoral support, are proving beneficial. The work students do on their day away from the College leads to the first stage of a National Vocational Qualification and adds to their motivation to attend College, as almost all do regularly. A small minority of Year 10 students who undertake separate sciences do not receive their religious education and students who take two languages in Year 11 do not have the opportunity to take the full physical education programme. Thus, statutory requirements are not met. In science, the various opportunities to take either separate sciences or the double award science leads to a minority of students undertaking inappropriate courses. The College recognises these weaknesses and plans are set to eliminate them in the next academic year.
25. Since the previous inspection, a sixth form has been introduced. There is a good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects. Some subjects are taught in mixed Year 12 and 13 classes when numbers are particularly small and two, law and psychology, are learnt through video conferencing. Religious education is taught within the GCE general studies course, although students who study four A-levels in Year 13 cease to take general studies, and thus religious education, so that this statutory requirement is not met. The alternative provision for those students who do not undertake GCE AS/A-level is underdeveloped, although other established sixth form and further education colleges in the area offer many alternative courses.

26. There is a broad range of very worthwhile opportunities which meet the needs of students with special educational needs. The students designated to the Dyslexia Support Base benefit from outstanding input that results in the development of their literacy skills, self-esteem and confidence and ensures access to the College curriculum. Students who have English as an additional language have equal access to the curriculum.
27. There are a good variety of extra-curricular activities. These include clubs and classes in design and technology, art, drama, music and physical education, as well as provision from learning support teachers and the careers teacher. The attendance at activities is relatively small, because a number of clubs are organised for the lunchtime and because of transport. There are competitive fixtures with other colleges and schools and a range of visits and College journeys all enhance curricular opportunities.
28. Provision for students' personal development is satisfactory, overall. A programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided for all students. This is well planned and is taught by form tutors, thus enabling PSHE to be closely aligned with the College pastoral provision. The programme has appropriate content, including sex education, education in the dangers of drug abuse, health education and aspects of citizenship. Visitors to the College and the College nurse contribute their expertise to parts of the programme.
29. Good provision is made for careers education and work experience. Careers education is taught within the PSHE programme where it receives an appropriate proportion of the available time. Consideration of different work roles begins in Year 7 with a useful activity as part of the students' induction to the College. Careers education builds up to a full programme in Years 10 and 11. Careers guidance interviews are provided for students in this age range, with attention focused on those who need to benefit most from this guidance. Work experience is undertaken in the first term of Year 11, by which time students have already begun to develop their understanding of the workplace through their GNVQ studies. The latter involves visits, for example, to retail outlets to study strategies for meeting customer demands in GNVQ Business.
30. The contribution of the community to students' education is good. The College has recently appointed a teacher to co-ordinate and to develop links further. Very good plans are being devised to develop opportunities for curriculum development. Opportunities to visit local business and industry for the GNVQ courses and work experience are a valuable support for the College's work. Visitors from the community, for example through the Neighbourhood Engineers scheme, further help to bring alive for students the relevance of their studies to future employment.
31. Relationships with partner institutions are satisfactory. The College has developed a variety of mathematical, scientific and technology projects as part of their overall work. The link with external providers for the small group of disaffected Year 10 students, the teaching of students from a local student referral unit and a video conferencing link with the science museum for a primary school are examples of good initiatives. There is a master class for 60 primary school pupils in information and communication technology. The College has appropriate plans to extend these links.
32. The overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There has been improvement in the arrangements made for spiritual development, but the overall provision is unsatisfactory. There is now a wider contribution from other subjects and a greater understanding of how well activities in lessons can help students to develop their appreciation of and respect for different values and beliefs and for awe and wonder in the natural world and human creativity. For example, in English, through the study of poetry, students think deeply about the experiences portrayed and share their responses to the poems. In history, it is through the consideration of war and revolution. In design and technology, students were helped to recognise and marvel at the ingenuity of human inventiveness. Good examples were also seen in other subjects when teachers and students stood back and took the time to appreciate human values. However, there is no specific policy or planning in subjects to ensure that opportunities are not missed. The

statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all students is not met and the arrangements in tutor groups are not enabling this requirement to be met.

33. Provision for students' moral development is good. Support for students provided by the ethos of the College, particularly through the pastoral system, encourages self-discipline and responsible behaviour. The rules of the College are low-key and are built on respect for others. The College is orderly and quiet and students are expected to move quickly to their workplace without the need for bells. Adults who work at the College as teachers and support staff, provide good role models of friendly and respectful relationships. When students fail to rise to the College's expectations for their behaviour, the response is a suitable balance of encouragement, explanation and punishment. The teaching of some subjects contributes well to students' moral development, as in the study of character and motivation in English and issues around world population pressures in geography.
34. Many opportunities are provided for students to develop socially and provision is good. Team working in subjects such as science, music, drama and design and technology supports both social and academic development. Successful learning methods in GNVQ courses develop the ability to work through tasks with other students to arrive at agreed conclusions. During trips from the College to places of interest, including fieldwork in geography, students can practise their social skills in other contexts. The College Council gives some students a chance to develop their leadership skills and to experience decision-making procedures in a formal setting. The ethos of the College, with a strong measure of trust of the students, underpins the good provision for their social development.
35. Overall, the provision for students' cultural development is satisfactory. It is good in a number of subjects, including art, drama and music and also in aspects of English. In the latter subject, study of contemporary writing is set in the context of the history of the British cultural heritage, thereby helping students to appreciate their own culture. Visits to the theatre and to concerts broaden students' cultural experiences. The study of elements of non-British cultures in art, geography, history, music and religious education, as well as in English, enables students to learn about and appreciate other cultures. Though clearly valuable, this does not amount to a concerted and co-ordinated effort across the College to teach students about, and to learn to appreciate, the diversity of cultures represented in Britain. Improvement has been inadequate.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

36. The overall development of assessment is a key priority to further support the raising of standards. New procedures are being developed, but present arrangements are unsatisfactory, overall. There is inconsistent practice between and within departments for marking and recording students' progress. The procedures for assessing students' capabilities in information and communication technology and in the use of the skills in all subjects is unsatisfactory. Where practice in assessment is good, for example in English, art, design and technology and music, students are effectively informed of their standards. In other subjects, provision is often satisfactory, but the data are not being used extensively enough to ensure that it not only informs teachers but also informs the overall process of target setting and to address curriculum planning. Thus, the potential impact of the assessment data is not fully utilised, for example, to ensure that work is reviewed and changed so that when it is set in lessons, it fully meets the needs of all pupils. Similarly, whilst pupil reports meet requirements, the assessment data are not always used to inform target setting. The procedures for pupils to develop self-assessment techniques are also underdeveloped and militate against their ability to become independent learners. Much data exist from the analysis of national testing systems, key stage tests and public examinations. This is not always used sufficiently to set targets within departments to ensure that curriculum and performance issues are being effectively informed with regard to the performance of boys and girls or particular groups of pupils. Some good practice exists, and the College recognises that this is an area for improvement.
37. The quality of recording and assessing the performance of students with special educational needs in withdrawal groups is good. It is very thorough in the Dyslexia Support Base, where it

is used well to guide planning. Learning support assistants provide informative written comments about individual education plan targets when in subject lessons. Good regard is given to developing self-esteem and confidence and improving behaviour. The key issue in the previous inspection report about reviewing and monitoring targets set in individual education plans is only now being addressed. Taking account of the time lapse, this is unsatisfactory. The College accepts that targets on individual education plans are too general. All individual education plans are currently being reviewed within the new structure of responsibilities to ensure that targets are specific. A start has been made and the overall presentation of new individual education plans is clearer and more informative.

38. The tutorial system provides the framework for providing effective support and guidance to students. However, there is inconsistent practice amongst tutors in the monitoring of students' personal development. The College does not make and keep records of students' progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding in PSHE. A number of staff members contribute well to the care of students. The College matron is dedicated to the welfare of students and the system to care for students who suffer from asthma, allergies or other ailments is organised and delivered to a high standard. She is available to discuss concerns and students are also able to meet privately with her or a trained counsellor each week.
39. The Learning and Behaviour Support Department has developed initiatives that are having a positive impact. These include early intervention on entry and anger management work with students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, withdrawal intensive literacy support sessions and a growing homework support club. These initiatives are recent and relate to the appointment of a new special educational needs co-ordinator. Improvement in the provision for students with special educational needs has been limited by staff change and the restructuring of responsibilities, including for the development of individual education plans.
40. The procedures to monitor and improve attendance continue to be good. Registers are called during the morning and afternoon sessions and are monitored by the Heads of Year. Punctuality is also recorded and followed up along with absences. The taking of registers for each lesson to check for any truancy is inconsistent. Parents and students are reminded regularly about the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. Long term absences among travellers and students who may have moved away continue to be recorded as unauthorised absence because the College has been without the service of an educational welfare officer and this has an adverse effect on the accuracy of the overall attendance figures.
41. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and this is similar to the findings at the last inspection. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are well written and well matched to the needs of the students. The system of rewards and sanctions is applied evenly. During the inspection, students gave credit to the perseverance and patience of teachers who have to deal with students who exhibit difficult and challenging behaviour. Members of staff have high expectations regarding discipline and act as good examples for students. There are members of staff and a specialist team from the local authority who are dedicated to supporting students who have difficulty complying with rules and whose tendency to misbehave is sometimes confrontational. They are very effective in the reintegration of students after exclusion. In some cases, their prompt intervention to support teachers helps to ward off further exclusions.
42. The legal requirements regarding arrangements for child protection are met. A senior teacher is the child protection liaison teacher and the College policy supports the guidelines from the local authority. The policy is distributed to members of staff and discussed as part of the induction programme for new teachers. However, there is no system to review guidance with all members of staff on a regular basis and share information about vulnerable students with staff members who are well placed to provide monitoring and support.
43. The governors fulfil their statutory requirements regarding health and safety. Fire drills and risk assessments of the site are carried out on a regular basis. Students' sensible behaviour during the day helps to support safe practices.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The College enjoys a satisfactory partnership with parents. Most parents have positive views of the College and members of staff value any contribution parents can make to the education of their children. There is no longer a Parent Teacher Association, although the Parents Consultative Group is a small group of parents who meet every half term to discuss issues and express their opinions. Parents give good support for sports activities and work experience modules for Year 10 students. However, the decline in parental support for music and students' participation in musical performances, brought about whilst staff have changed, has a negative effect on standards.
45. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report contains the required information. There are regular meetings organised for parents to meet with tutors and subject teachers to discuss progress. These are usually well attended by parents, particularly among parents of students at Key Stage 3. The College will make alternative arrangements to suit parent's schedules so that they can meet teachers. Reports show what work has been completed but the College does not provide any prior information for parents about the curriculum their children will be studying over the year.
46. Inspection evidence generally supports all of the points that please parents and carers most. Of the minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the meeting, most parents consider that their children like College. They consider that the College has high expectations and students are making progress and achieve well. It is felt that students are supported effectively to become mature and responsible and the majority of students are well behaved. Teaching is seen as being good. They consider that students with special educational needs are well supported and that the College cares well for all of its students. Parents feel that there is a sound range of extracurricular activities. Overall, parents express the opinion that they can approach the College with questions or problems. Some parents feel that there is an inconsistency in the setting of homework, but that where practice is good the activities clearly extend students' learning, a view which inspection evidence endorses. Whilst parents would like to be better informed about their children's progress, which they feel is good, the reports are satisfactory and, along with arrangements for parent consultations, there is a satisfactory provision for information on progress.
47. A minority of parents who responded would like to work more closely with the College, although evidence acquired during the inspection shows that the College is seeking to work closely with parents and carers. Staff members are friendly and easy to approach and the College encourages parents to meet with them should they have any concerns. The home College partnership agreement is attached to every student's homework diary, but they have not been reviewed by the College to ensure that parents sign them. Some parents play a positive role such as helping with the homework support club and supporting College work at home with guidance from staff. The majority of parents of students with statements of special educational needs are fully involved in regularly reviewing their children's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

48. The College has appropriate aims which are being broadly fulfilled. Since the last report, there have been significant changes in management. The Principal recognised that there was a need to evaluate management styles and this led to a new management structure being introduced in September 2000. The Leadership team now comprises nine senior members of staff. There is a good partnership between the Principal and these colleagues. This reorganisation of management has led to changes at middle management and combined together there are some initial problems in ensuring that there is cohesiveness and understanding at all levels. Whilst there is good leadership and management in the majority of departments, in some subjects the clarity of responsibility, for example in Modern Languages and science, is unsatisfactory and is not conducive to quality leadership or to addressing required improvement. Many staff with responsibility for other aspects of management, such as pastoral care and special educational needs, are managing their responsibilities very well, with examples of very good practice. This is reflected in the overall good quality of teaching and basic care of the students. Nevertheless, where there is inconsistency, it is because the

monitoring and evaluation of whole College activities is not well enough organised. This is reflected in the links between senior staff in the Leadership group and by some heads of subjects. For example, the need to improve assessment to set and meet targets in all subjects is not being achieved. Data from assessment and national testing systems of student performance are used, but, again, there is not the consistent practice to ensure that the detail from the evaluations is followed up sufficiently. This is because some middle managers do not have the skills or resources to implement the findings.

49. Part of this reorganisation includes the role of the governing body. The governors have reorganised their roles and responsibilities and there is now a much greater involvement of governors in the overall management and leadership of the College. For example, the governors have established working parties which address the initiatives and the Strategy and Performance group is effective in its partnership with the senior staff. Governors are committed and involved but recognise that their involvement in monitoring the standards and quality of education and statutory requirements have not been rigorous enough. They now have a programme by which they will monitor results over time, link with lead managers and monitor targets. This is effective governance. They recognise that the statutory requirements are not fulfilled in respect of a daily act of collective worship and in meeting curriculum requirements for a minority of students in Key Stage 4 in physical education and religious education and for sixth formers in the latter subject. The recent introduction of these management and government changes means that there has been insufficient time to evaluate their impact on standards and performance, but, when established, they have the potential to initiate College improvement.
50. In relation to the key issues from the last report, improvement has been satisfactory. The overall provision for students aged between 14 and 19 years has been satisfactory. The sixth form has been introduced as well as eliminating the possibility of students taking a dual course in GCSE and GNVQ. Links with other institutions have been well maintained for students to gain access to alternative courses. The Learning and Behaviour Support Department has been effectively reviewed by the new co-ordinator. Good relationships between the department and subject areas have been established through a key teacher network. There is now strength and vision in the leadership, with developmental priorities well thought through. Close liaison with the Governor who has responsibility for special educational needs now ensures thorough monitoring and a commitment ensuring that the best provision is made. Learning support assistants are now well organised, informed and consulted. Very good use is made of computers for students with special educational needs, with resources and accommodation in general being adequate. The development of individual education plans has been satisfactory. Approaches to assessment are still inconsistent and the overall improvement has been unsatisfactory. Policy and plans in hand for implementation, show that the senior member of staff is fully aware of what needs to be done to ensure that all departments and teachers improve their approaches to assessment. The overall improvement in management is satisfactory and the College has recognised the need to remain vigilant and adapt practice as necessary.
51. In its overall performance, the College has maintained students' standards, particularly in the benefit that it brings to students who often achieve GCSE results which exceed their potential. Whilst the overall proportion of students who gain 5 A*-C has fallen, their individual points score has been maintained to be above the average for similar colleges. The quality of teaching has been improved. Noteworthy is the very good improvement to the provision within the special unit for students identified with learning difficulties. There has also been improved provision for information and communication technology. The introduction of alternative work related curriculum opportunities in Key Stage 4 for disaffected students is encouraging them to remain in education.
52. The College development plan recognises a significant range of areas and is strategically structured to achieve its vision. Financial administration is good and the recommendations of the last audit report are being implemented. The governors' finance committee is very involved in budgeting and operate effectively to ensure that the best possible value is achieved. Specific grants for aspects such as special needs are correctly spent. Taking into account the standards being achieved by students, the overall quality of education and the

fact that aspects of management are in an early stage of development, the College is giving good value for money.

53. The match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory, overall. The staff have a good balance of experience and expertise. They are generally well deployed, but in modern foreign languages a significant minority of classes are shared between two teachers, complicating planning for teaching and learning. There are insufficient specialist staff in science and in religious education, which has a negative effect on standards. Learning support assistants are well organised, informed and consulted. The amount and range of in-service training undertaken by the staff are good and contribute well to meeting the priorities identified by the College and to professional development. The College holds Investors in People accreditation. Arrangements for performance management are being effectively developed. Induction arrangements for new staff are good as is the support provided for newly qualified teachers. Administrative support is sufficient to meet the College's needs and these staff make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the College.
54. Accommodation is satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. Very good use is made of the community sports hall facility. The exterior of some of the buildings gives rise to some concern and there is a programme of refurbishment being carried out. The computer rooms provide a very good resource, which supports all areas of the curriculum. The library provides a good focus for independent learning and research.
55. Resources are satisfactory and are used effectively to support teaching and learning. They are good in information and communication technology, where there has been effective development in the use of modern technology including electronic mail and video conferencing. However, in science and music there are significant shortfalls in overall resources, which adversely affect standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, Principal and staff now need to:

- improve the procedures for the assessment of both the academic and personal development of students and ensure that their use is consistently monitored and evaluated (paragraphs 19, 21, 36, 37, 50, 71, 73, 84, 99, 111, 131);
- monitor and evaluate the use of information and communication technology within departmental planning to ensure that there is greater consistency in its application across the curriculum (paragraphs 7, 20, 71, 79, 110);
- improve, where necessary, the governance and management, so that:
 - subject leadership and the links between senior staff and heads of subjects are more clearly defined to ensure consistent practice in monitoring and evaluation;
 - governors continue to develop their approaches to the monitoring of standards and the quality of education to better inform their decision-making.

(paragraphs 48, 49, 78, 111, 119)

- meet the statutory requirements for a minority of students in Key Stage 4 for physical education, in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form for religious education and for a daily act of collective worship for all students.

(paragraphs 24, 32, 49, 129, 140)

Minor issues:

- Continue the current developments to ensure that targets in the individual education plans for students with special educational needs are made more appropriate (paragraphs 21, 22, 37, 100).
- Improve the opportunities for students' spiritual and multicultural development (paragraphs 32, 35).

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	136
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	19	41	29	4	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 college's students

Students on the college's roll

	Y7-Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the college's roll	755	90
Number of full-time students eligible for free college meals	112	0

Special educational needs

	Y7-Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	24	2
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	360	9

English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last college year

	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	6.7
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	1.3
National comparative data	0.9

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	64	72

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	27	35	42
	Girls	48	46	45
	Total	75	81	87
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	55 (67)	60 (56)	64 (51)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	64 (51)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	14 (29)	37 (42)	30 (20)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	39	44
	Girls	49	48	46
	Total	81	87	90
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	60 (60)	64 (67)	67 (61)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	32 (21)	41 (28)	37 (18)
	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	84	63	147

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	32	78	80
	Girls	23	58	61
	Total	55	136	141
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	College	37 (48)	93 (94)	96 (96)
	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	College	41 ()
	National	38.4 ()

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	College	120	71.7
	National		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	10	11	21

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
College	21.3	11.6	16.2	4	0	2
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 students who achieved all those they studied	College	N/a	N/a
	National		

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those students who achieved all they studied	College	0	N/a
	National		76.5

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	816
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last college year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	90	7
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7-13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.05

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7-13

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	754

Deployment of teachers: Y7-13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.8
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Average teaching group size: Y7 –Y13

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	24.6
Key Stage 4	22.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2431134
Total expenditure	2391278
Expenditure per pupil	2882
Balance brought forward from previous year	252675
Balance carried forward to next year	159775

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	845
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	50	39	10	1	0
My child is making good progress in college.	48	46	4	1	0
Behaviour in the college is good.	38	48	10	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	51	13	4	3
The teaching is good.	39	50	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	44	13	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	50	40	5	2	2
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	4	1	0
The college works closely with parents.	31	46	17	4	3
The college is well led and managed.	47	43	6	2	2
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	46	4	1	1
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	46	11	2	4

Only a minority of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and about 15 per cent returned the questionnaire. Inspection evidence generally supports all of the points that please parents and carers most. Inspectors find that there is an inconsistency in the setting of homework, but that where practice is good the activities clearly extend students' learning. Reports are satisfactory and along with arrangements for parent consultations there is a satisfactory provision for information on progress. The large majority of parents who responded find that they can approach the college with questions or problems, and although a minority expressed some concerns, inspectors do consider that the College is seeking to work closely with parents and carers.

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

ENGLISH

56. Results in the year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were below the national average and below those for similar colleges. Standards in this inspection are better than these results, reflecting students of higher prior attainment. In the GCSE examinations, there had been a steady improvement in performance in GCSE English language, particularly by the girls. Students had made good progress from their prior attainment at Key Stage 3. In GCSE literature, results have been below the national average, but the College should be credited for its policy of entering all students for both subjects. Results in both examinations in 2000 fell below the national average for both boys and girls at A*-C, but were in line with the average at A*-G. They compare favourably with results in the other core subjects. In the new sixth form, the very small numbers of students taking GCE A-level English literature achieved pass grades, but the small numbers entered are too small for comparison with national averages.
57. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations, overall. Students generally listen well and ask sensible questions. In their written responses to literature, the highest attaining students show above average insights into their reading, producing detailed and perceptive studies of contrasting poems from different centuries. They can trace themes, such as women's role in society in the work of Thomas Hardy and D H Lawrence, supporting their points with relevant quotations. The majority of students show adequate factual understanding of the books they read, but their responses are often limited to retelling the story. In a satisfactory range of writing for different purposes, the higher attaining students produce lively and mature pieces that are a pleasure to read. Students in a Year 7 class showed good understanding of appropriate style and presentation when writing about the Greek theatre. Many students enhance their work with word-processing, but many draw their titles and illustrations by hand rather than using different fonts and clip art to produce a professional finish to products such as their storybooks based on Macbeth'. For some students in Years 7 to 9, simple errors and narrow vocabulary limit the impact of their written work. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress and achieve similar success to other students. Overall, progress during Key Stage 3 is good.
58. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with expectations, reflecting students with higher prior attainment than the previous year. Most students listen carefully and work well in co-operative learning situations, such as discussion in their literature studies. When discussing a modern poem, Catlin, in a candid but sensitive way, students speak with confidence and listen to each other with respect. The lower attaining students continue to respond more at the factual and narrative levels, but they make sound progress in their understanding of character and motivation in the plays and stories that they read. The higher attaining students use an increasingly broad vocabulary with originality and confidence, using a range of styles including persuasive and analytical pieces. Overall, an encouraging number of students show the potential for high attainment - boys as well as girls. Progress at this key stage is satisfactory.
59. Standards in the sixth form, for a group of eight Year 13 students, are above average and indicate good progress. In their lively and intelligent discussion of several novels by John Fowles, they refer to similar themes in the different books and compare and contrast them with confidence. In both their spoken and written work, the overall standard is good.
60. Drama is taught to all students at Key Stage 3 and as an optional subject for GCSE. Standards are in line with expectations by the end of both key stages. In a Year 9 lesson, several students used masks to enhance their performances and achieved an above average standard in their improvisations. All students enjoy their drama and watch other groups with interest, acknowledging their achievements with spontaneous applause. Extra-curricular

drama is growing in strength, with the College production of *Bugsy Malone* currently in rehearsal and involving more than seventy students from Year 7 to Year 13.

61. The teaching is good, overall. It is never less than satisfactory at any key stage and four out of every five lessons are at least good and, occasionally, very good. In the best lessons, students are provided with a very well planned sequence of learning activities that enable them to build on previous achievements. For example, this approach enables a Year 9 class to make rapid progress in their understanding of how Shakespeare created setting and mood through the words spoken by even minor characters. The purpose of most lessons is clearly stated and reminders given so that the students understand why they were doing the activity and take it seriously. Key words for each lesson are regularly defined, tested and highlighted during the lesson so that students are provided with the vocabulary to speak and write accurately about media studies. Teachers have established a secure atmosphere in which students feel confident about sharing their ideas and responses. Their management of any potentially difficult behaviour is underpinned with a clear set of rules and lessons are orderly and purposeful. The marking of work is detailed, with helpful and challenging comments that encourage further independent study. The learning environment is good and very good displays in all classrooms stimulate the students and encourage their interest and involvement. Students are encouraged to use a range of study skills, including mind-mapping, note-taking and re-drafting work after self-correction. In drama, the teachers show a level of expertise that provides a very good model for the students and gives them the confidence to perform. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported in the majority of lessons and their progress is often good. Opportunities for students to develop their own thinking are taken, but, in a minority of lessons, the teachers do most of the talking and accept short and undeveloped first answers to their questions. In the best lessons, students are encouraged to talk in a constructive way, for example in pair or group discussions and solving problems, thus developing independent ideas and judgements. This enhances their progress.
62. Students' responses are good, overall, at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the Sixth Form. Generally, they listen well to the teacher and to each other, respecting what they have to say. They are willing to volunteer answers and keen to succeed. They work co-operatively in reading partnerships and other group exercises. Some students at Key Stage 3, however, have a short attention span and they are quickly off task if not clearly directed and provided with a variety of activities. At Key Stage 4, students are mature in their behaviour and attitudes, most of them taking notes without being reminded and developing good habits of independent study.
63. The department is well led and managed. All teachers have a very clear focus on learning objectives and share a clear determination to raise the achievement of students through approaches that appeal to them. The scheme of work provides a good balance between language development and the appreciation of literature, ensuring a common entitlement for all students. Although the teachers are well aware of individual students' needs and effective ways of providing for them, some units in the scheme of work for Key Stage 3 need to be broken down into shorter and more specific tasks for students with lower prior attainment. Marking of students' work is regular, positive and thorough and the progress of individual students is tracked and monitored. The department works hard to create and maintain an attractive learning environment in a well-furnished suite of rooms. Resources are adequate and well managed. The drama studio is a good space, carpeted throughout and provided with blackout and flexible staging. A good range of costumes is readily available and used to good effect in lessons.
64. Overall progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained. Although standards at both key stages were below national levels in 2000, reflecting the lower attaining group of students, the work seen during this inspection was in line with the average. The last report on English was generally very favourable, but four points for development were identified. Teacher's planning is now very clear and specifically designed to cover all the national requirements. The quality of poetry writing has improved significantly with good examples of original poetry written by students across the age range. The monitoring of students' reading skills is now thorough, with a well established system of

individual reading records. Further strategies are planned to develop ways of measuring students' progress in reading skills. The range of fiction available in the College library is now very good, with the College having one of the highest borrowing rates in the county.

MATHEMATICS

65. Results in the year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were broadly in line with the national average. These results show that the students in this year group achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. Boys and girls achieved similar results. There has been a gradual improvement in results in recent years. The 2000 GCSE results were below the national average for A*-C but above the national average for A*-G grades. Boys achieved better results than girls. This is contrary to the national picture. GCSE results are rising over time and those attained by this year group were appropriate to their prior attainment. Results in GCE A-level were slightly better than the previous year, which was the first year of the course. The average points score was below the national figure, but, as there were only five candidates, any comparison is not truly valid.
66. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly similar to national expectations. Higher attaining students at the end of the key stage can work confidently at the higher levels within the National Curriculum attainment targets. They can solve problems using Pythagoras' theorem and can confidently use a range of algebraic techniques. Average attaining students can form and solve simple equations and use the ideas of ratio to solve problems. Lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, confidently use percentages and can analyse and draw conclusions from data. Throughout the key stage, there are frequent opportunities to reinforce numeracy, practical work and investigational techniques. Attainment is higher than previous test results, because there has been a slight rise in the prior attainment of students on entry, coupled with good teaching. Students make sound progress in relation to their prior achievement. In Year 7, all students reinforce their numeracy with higher attaining students studying different types of numbers and the order of operations. This is developed in Year 8 to include algebra and equation solving and applied to finding rules for number sequences in Year 9. Average attaining students develop their numerical methods to include problems involving fractions and percentages in Years 8 and 9. The lower attaining students confidently use shape and space to reinforce their numerical work and extend this to work involving area and volume in Year 9. Students with special educational needs make good progress with the support given by their class teacher and the specialist support staff, as do the minority of students with English as an additional language.
67. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations, overall, reflecting a year group with higher prior attainment. The high attaining students confidently solve problems using advanced trigonometry skills in two and three dimensions. Students in the current Year 10 work at a very good standard. There is an increase in the attainment of students at this key stage which matches the rise in attainment, overall, in mathematics. The attainment of boys is higher than that of girls. The College is aware of this and is effectively monitoring the situation. Higher attaining students can work complex algebraic topics with confidence and can use the topics from the final levels of shape and space with accuracy and clarity. Average attaining students are working from topics at the intermediate level of GCSE across all attainment targets. Lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, follow the foundation course at GCSE level. This is appropriate for their needs. The policy is to enter as many students for examinations as possible and the entry rate for mathematics is very high.
68. Students in the sixth form achieve standards in line with that expected for GCE A-Level students. The course followed is modular and the topics chosen are successful in meeting the needs of the students. It is a relatively new course and, as such, has no tradition, but numbers of students taking A Level mathematics are increasing as the number of students gaining the higher grades at GCSE increases.
69. The quality of teaching is good, overall. It is slightly better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 and is good in the sixth form. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan

effective lessons, which lead to good learning. There is a good balance of teacher explanation and exercises. The best lessons start well and contain relevant and interesting material. They continue at a brisk pace, with time for discussion between teachers and students during practice. Investigations are regularly used, so that students apply their knowledge in an interesting way. The mutual support between students helps to confirm their understanding. Most lessons end with a summary, enabling teachers and students to judge their progress. Students respond with enthusiasm and interest. Good relationships exist between teachers and students, so that most lessons are not disrupted by a lack of discipline. Discipline structures, where necessary, are effective and a word of reprimand is generally sufficient. This positive atmosphere encourages students to ask for help when encountering difficulties. Therefore, learning during lessons is good and students make good progress. Students of all abilities work hard and enthusiastically. Their books are generally neat and well kept. Marking is good, with constructive comments from teachers giving direction for future improvement. Targets are written in their students' exercise books and reviewed at regular intervals. Where teaching is less effective, numeracy reinforcement is not consistently carried out, and in a minority of lessons, teachers do not use well thought out examples to illustrate the subject matter.

70. An experienced teacher, appointed at the start of the College year, manages the department effectively. The department is working well together and the mutual support of teachers and the sharing of ideas have been influential in raising standards. Monitoring of teaching and learning is encouraging the sharing of good practice. The scheme of work is effective and relates all topics taught to the National Curriculum. Opportunities for information and communication technology are built into the scheme at appropriate points and effectively used. Resources are adequate and attractive displays enhance the learning ethos.
71. Since the last inspection, regular practice in numeracy has helped to raise standards at Key Stage 3 and the scheme of work now includes regular non calculator work at all key stages. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved. Although there has been sound progress in the use of assessment and marking, there are still inconsistencies and procedures are insufficiently used to inform all teaching. The use of computers has improved and the department recognises that the provision of software programs requires further development.

SCIENCE

72. In the year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, results were close to the national average. The proportion reaching the higher levels was in line with the national average. The average point score was slightly below the national average, but was above average for similar colleges. Boys achieved considerably better results than girls at this stage. In the GCSE examinations, the proportion of students gaining grades A*–C was broadly in line with the national average. Boys achieved better results than girls. The results in 2000 have declined since the last inspection. In the GCE A-level examinations, the small number of students entered make national comparisons inappropriate. Very few of the students achieved the A-B higher grades, although the majority achieved pass grades.
73. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly similar to national expectations. These standards reflect the results in recent tests. The majority of students are acquiring scientific knowledge and vocabulary at a satisfactory rate, although a minority of higher attaining students underachieve. This is mostly a direct consequence of non specialist teaching. For instance, in a class investigating dissolving, most students could explain what happens when sugar dissolves in water, but did not know what a saturated solution was, nor were they able to explain the factors that affect the rate of solubility. Lessons taught by specialist teachers generally show students of all abilities making good progress. For example, a Year 9 group made very good progress in understanding the effects that forces can have on objects and could explain why balanced forces produce no change in movement. The development of good investigative skills was evident, when they were devising experiments, using wooden spools as girders to make different shaped structures. Many were able to devise suitable tests to find which structure was the most rigid and able to withstand movement without collapsing. Overall, students make satisfactory progress in developing experimental and investigative

skills. They are good at carrying out experiments planned by the teacher, can record observations, take reasonably accurate measurements and present data in the form of charts and graphs. Graphical skills are satisfactory, overall. Students' ability to make their own predictions, to define problems based on scientific knowledge and understanding and to plan their own investigations is not so well developed. Most middle and lower attaining students, including those with special education needs, are achieving average and sometimes above average standards in relation to their prior attainment. The same is true for those students with English as an additional language. Generally, the improvement of students' literacy skills is supported, with most having a satisfactory and sometimes a good understanding of basic scientific terminology. Numeracy skills are satisfactory, but the students' computer skills are not well developed.

74. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are in line with national expectations. Students understand the concepts of plate tectonics and can differentiate between volcanic and plutonic rocks. Others can recall facts such as the structure of the atom, they understand that some metals react more vigorously with acids so forming an order in their reactivity and they can also explain the displacement reactions of the halogens. Practical skills improve and students can draw conclusions that are consistent with the evidence. Their explanations show scientific knowledge and understanding. Investigative skills and planning and evaluating their own investigations are not so well developed. Most middle and lower attaining students, those with special education needs and with English as an additional language, achieve standards that are in line with or better than might be expected of them. A significant number of above average students underachieve as the tasks they are set are not sufficiently demanding. For instance, some students, having copied copious notes about the structure of the heart and blood circulatory system, cannot explain why mammals need a double circulatory system. Their depth of knowledge and understanding is often insufficient to enable them to achieve the higher grades of GCSE. Overall, students attain equally well across the three attainment targets: life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Attainment is weaker in Attainment Target 1, experimental and investigative science.
75. In the sixth form, students are achieving in line with national expectations in A-level biology and physics and above in chemistry. Students make good progress, often from a low base. They compile and mostly keep their notes carefully and contribute well in lessons. They carry out practical work carefully, for example, as seen in a chemistry lesson, where students were measuring the enthalpy change of combustion for ethanol.
76. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good, overall. In Key Stage 3, they are generally co-operative. Whilst they are keen to answer questions, they are not often forthcoming in posing their own. They are enthusiastic experimenters, willing to try out new ideas and techniques. Good relationships lead to effective collaboration in practical groups. In Key Stage 4, a minority of students have less positive attitudes and some lack real enthusiasm, though the will to broaden their knowledge and skills is high. Sixth form students contribute willingly in lessons and the level of mutual respect is evident in the open way they interact with one another and the staff.
77. The quality of teaching is good, overall. In a small minority of lessons it is very good and is very occasionally unsatisfactory. Teaching is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, where some lessons are taken by non-specialists. In Key Stage 4, teaching is at least good or better in 60 per cent of lessons. In the sixth form, teaching is always good or better. The range in quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 3, means that not all students have the same experience of science as they pass through the College and standards and response vary. In the most effective teaching, the teacher's good knowledge and expertise combine with high expectations, enthusiasm and effective planning. This gives the students confidence; they respond positively and try hard. In these better lessons, teachers share the lesson's aims with the class, challenge the students with carefully constructed open-ended questions to explore understanding and to make them think critically, for example, in a Year 11 class exploring the characteristics of waves and the electromagnetic spectrum, where students having done their research to a set of criteria, prepare and present demonstrations to the rest of the class. The pace of work is high, learning effective and progress good.

Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by low expectations, ineffective planning and failure to check students' prior knowledge and understanding. In some satisfactory lessons where students are quiet and compliant, learning is often passive and insufficiently demanding. Questions are not used sufficiently to check for understanding during tasks or at the end of lesson and students are not encouraged to think critically and write carefully at length about their experiences. There is too much emphasis on copying by rote, particularly at Key Stage 4.

78. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, overall. The department lacks clear objectives and an understanding of how to achieve them. There is no overall head of science, it being part of a larger faculty which includes maths and physical education. There are two science co-ordinators for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 who are working extremely hard in very difficult circumstances. There are insufficient science specialists to share responsibilities with and assist in development work. In addition, some teachers have significant management responsibilities outside the department. There is insufficiently rigorous emphasis given to the development and implementation of departmental planning, monitoring and evaluation of the subjects performance which would lead to improvements in standards. The technical staff provide good support to the teaching staff.
79. Overall, there has been unsatisfactory progress made since the last inspection. Standards have not risen, with some underachievement, particularly among higher attaining students. The quality of teaching shows satisfactory improvement. Curriculum time in Key Stage 4 and the overall provision of resources are limited, restricting students' progress. The use of computers, to enable all students to gain first hand experience of data logging and other applications, is underdeveloped. The teaching of Year 12 and 13 physics and chemistry courses runs concurrently, so that it is difficult to maximise the potential of A-level and AS level students.

ART

80. GCSE examination results in art and design continue to be above the national average at grades A* to C, with girls outperforming boys and performing better than the national average for all girls. In GNVQ Foundation examinations, the majority achieve merit and distinction grades and in the most recent media examination, 45 per cent of students achieved grades A* to C, with boys outperforming girls. In the 6th Form, A level examination students in art and design and students in media achieve above average standards.
81. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are above national expectations. Students can draw accurately from direct observation in both line and tone and can draw imaginatively and from memory. When painting, they understand how to mix and blend colour to achieve specific effects and also how to use colour expressively. This is because teachers present the work in such an interesting manner that students' attention is held and enthusiasm directed to a clear objective. This approach was notable when students successfully explore raw emotions in order to understand abstract expressionism and express themselves in colour, shape and texture. Students can produce orthodox pencil studies of heads, developing their initial work into portraits made of wire and then developing their work into a new media of surface printing where they overlap colour to create new effects. Working with textiles, students can create vibrant multi-colour batiks and can transfer reverse typographic designs onto fabric so that they can be read when printed. Progress in this craft is hindered by the lack of sufficient resources for the group sizes. Good standards are also achieved when modelling imaginative small scale figurines in clay and exploring different textural techniques.
82. These standards are maintained throughout Key Stage 4 and, by the end of the key stage, are above national expectations. Students are successful in using new techniques, such as pastel, to blend colour. Opportunities for individual work on a large scale result in bold, expressive sculpture in wire and plaster in the style of Giacometti. Team teaching is particularly effective in GNVQ art and design, when students make individual verbal presentations of their visual research for art in public places. In addition to explaining the aesthetic and design qualities of their work, students give well considered responses to moral and social issues raised by art. Awareness of local culture is promoted well in photographic

studies of elements of the New Forest. Good use is made of sketch books. All students can manipulate digital photographs to create new imaginative images and combine image and text in graphic projects. Students are confident speakers and writers about art, expressing personal opinions and judgements derived from regular discussion and research, but standards of writing are below expectations. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress as a result of the effective support that they receive. All groups show positive attitudes to work in what is a visually stimulating environment.

83. In the sixth form, students often produce work of a quality associated with a higher level. They can produce animated computer-generated graphic images, such as in one student's design of a rotating three-dimensional medieval castle, incorporating surface textures taken digitally from the local church. Working as part of a drama team, another student produces a video film based on study of the work of Spanish playwrights, incorporating audio recording and creative post-production manipulation of imagery. Students have sound technical knowledge of the photographic process, controlling shutter speeds to capture movement and developing and printing good black and white photographs. Building on their good craft skills, painting, drawing and sketchbook work is of a high standard because of the students' experimental approach and enquiring attitude.
84. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and often very good. This leads to the distinct progress being achieved, enhanced by the clear focus for all tasks spelt out at the beginning of every lesson and the good quality individual attention to need shown by all teachers. A good knowledge and use of the art vocabulary is fostered in all lessons and reinforced by the provision of key word lists. New technology is well used at all stages. Students are kept well informed of what to do in order to improve. Teaching is particularly effective in encouraging students to achieve. There is a very strong 'can do' approach to all tasks and students respond very positively. The detailed analysis of the student's performance is extremely thorough, providing an exemplar database which is used to inform planning and teaching. Students have a good understanding and awareness of a wide range of art, particularly European artists' work, although improvement is required to develop a wider range of cultures at Key Stage 3. Homework is regularly set at all stages and is generally effective in contributing to good standards by developing classroom tasks, but, at Key Stage 3, too many students do not meet their deadlines for completion. Whilst the marking of art work is generally good, the correction of mistakes in students' written work is inadequate.
85. The subject is very well led and there is a very effective team who share ideas and practice. This is a very good department that continues to be a strength of the College consistently delivering good standards at all stages. Many students arrive with very low abilities, demonstrating poor basic observational recording skills, but by the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of students are achieving to national expectation and beyond. At all stages, boys and girls demonstrate comparable good standards of work. Since the previous inspection, progress has been made in the successful introduction of advanced level courses, with students demonstrating high qualities of creativity and good technical skills. Opportunities to visit galleries have lessened, but visiting artists, such as an African artist working with clay, continue to provide broader experiences for Key Stage 4 students. The standard of teaching has risen and is now never less than good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. The proportions of students achieving grades A*-C and A*- G in the GCSE examination in 2000 were broadly in line with national averages in resistant materials, graphics and food courses. Results were significantly above those obtained by students at the College in most other subjects. There is no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls. Three students sat the first year of GCE A- level examination in 1999, but two failed to complete the course in 2000. In both years, each student gained a pass, but the numbers are too small to make valid comparisons with national data.

87. By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation, reflecting the National Curriculum assessments undertaken by teachers. Students' skills and knowledge are above average in both designing and making. The quality of research, analysis, the development of ideas and the organisation and presentation of work are of a high standard. Practical work is above average, with good application of knowledge, use of tools and equipment and an emphasis on the production of high quality outcomes in almost all materials.
88. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is broadly average. Progress is satisfactory and often good. The structured approach, used across the department, enables students to successfully build upon Key Stage 3 work and produce projects in all the required areas for the GCSE examinations. The deficiencies in earlier design have been corrected by the age of 16 so students are carrying out careful analysis of their designs and results of testing before and during the making of projects. Many have a good understanding of the topics they study. The quality of course work in folders is at least satisfactory, with a significant proportion of good work. The content is mostly well researched and well presented in each of the subject areas. The students possess a sound knowledge of different processes and are careful in measuring, marking out, cutting and joining a variety of materials and show an awareness of efficiency when doing so. Much of the graphics work is well presented with regard to accuracy and when refining a product, such as a CD-ROM drive suitable for a young child. In GNVQ Hospitality and Catering attainment is average. Students interrogate a database to find out and then compare the recommended daily average of fat in a recipe; the higher attaining students draw judgements from the information.
89. At both key stages, the quality of practical work in textiles is the weakest and standards are lower, reflecting the outdated machinery and equipment. In the Scantek 2000 room, students gain good knowledge in construction, pneumatics, basic electricity, mechanisms, robotics and automation, industrial control and alternative energy and navigation, using computer simulations and control to learn about manufacturing. Students make good progress over time with well planned extension tasks to increase their understanding. For example, Year 7 students make a four-wheeled toy with extra movement provided by simple linkage. In a Year 8 food technology lesson, students select and use equipment properly to make and modify the recipe for a creamed sponge mixture. They are accurate when weighing and selecting appropriate oven temperatures. Almost all lower attaining students including those with dyslexia learning difficulties, and special educational needs, achieve standards in line with national expectations and make good progress, helped by the support they receive in class. Year 7 students demonstrate good knowledge of electronics vocabulary and are developing good practice in soldering the power rails of the circuit. Progress is good for all students. It is slightly better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4, because, by the end of Year 9, students have benefited from the subject modules in place.
90. Attainment in Year 12 and 13 is well in line with course expectations and students' good progress is reflected in some of the design and practical work which show flair and imagination. They demonstrate noteworthy skills in fault finding and correction of large scale work, such as the design for a shed alarm, a secret combination door lock and a church candleholder, reflecting the theme of radiating light. Students show a good awareness and understanding of new technologies associated with manufactured products.
91. Students have good attitudes to work. They concentrate for long periods of time and are well motivated. They are especially keen to carry out practical tasks and work enthusiastically on their projects. Behaviour is good in lessons. Relationships between students and with adults are consistently good and they usually cooperate well with others as appropriate. At Key Stage 4, a small proportion of students show little sense of urgency in their attitudes.
92. Teaching is good, overall. It successfully influences standards and increases students' progress, including those with special educational needs. The quality of teaching remains consistently high, as in the previous report. Target setting for students is under way and this is one reason for successful teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and re-training in the different subject areas is proving effective. Students are well managed and little time is lost through disruptive behaviour. There is a consistent high

quality approach to planning which incorporates teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Access to information and communication technology is very good, helping standards to rise. The use of computers is well taught, although there are inadequate facilities in textiles. Risk assessments and appropriate control measures are in place. The quality of support from the dyslexia and special needs units is of high quality. Occasionally, there is too much teacher talk, usually at the beginning of lessons and students lose concentration. Homework is generally set and teachers' marking is helpful in showing students what to do next. Teachers have a good knowledge of what students can do and use recorded information to plan the next stage of learning. The quality of assessment, both the procedures and record keeping, is good; it is manageable for staff and understood by the students. The inclusion of spirituality in planning promotes students' self-confidence and provides opportunities of awe and wonder "when things go right" – the wonder moment.

93. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place on both an informal and a formal basis. The draft stage of the departments' assessment routine is already well received by students because they can have up to date information on how they are doing and make comparisons with their peers. When this is completed, it will give parents greater insight into standards and offer them an increased opportunity to become more involved in their children's learning. Staff are positive in their approach to teaching and are committed to improvement. They are well deployed to make use of their strengths. Many give unstintingly of their time for extra curricular activities, including links with local industry, such as manufacturing companies and the Neighbourhood Engineers of Applemore College. There is an ethos which promotes an expectation of high standards in all aspects of work of the department.
94. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The curriculum is broad and well planned, with the exception of the place and status of textiles in the department, where there is a shortfall in appropriate resources, the accommodation and specialist staff.

GEOGRAPHY

95. Results for the GCSE examination in 2000 show that the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C has declined significantly since 1999, from well above the national average, to well below. It was also lower than at the previous inspection. There was a marked decline in the performance of girls between the two years, while the boys' results were in line with the national average. The average ability of the candidates was lower than those of the previous year and many of the more able girls did not select geography as one of their optional subjects. The College first entered candidates for the GCE A-level examination in 1999. In both that year and in 2000 results were better than the national average; indeed in 2000 all candidates passed and 75 per cent gained grade A or B.
96. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards for the majority of students are in line with national expectations. Most students can extract relevant information from a range of sources to write clear notes, although a small number with weak literacy skills find difficulty in writing at length. Higher attaining students can draw reasoned conclusions from statistical evidence, as when interpreting graphs of changing employment structure in different countries. Lower attaining students can describe, but not explain, the changes on these graphs. All students have good basic map reading skills.
97. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards for the majority of students are below national expectations, but with significant minorities in line with and above these expectations. This reflects the prior attainment of the students who choose to take the subject. Most students produce good coursework, while that of the higher attainers is very good, employing hypothesis testing to good effect, and using computers to improve the appearance of text and graphs. They have a good grasp of geographical models such as those concerned with the layout of urban areas. Effective use is made of fieldwork. The progress of a minority is impeded by weak literacy, but all students can attempt the short answers required for data response questions with confidence.

98. The attainment levels of students in Year 13 are in line with national expectations. They produce very detailed notes and annotated maps and diagrams of good quality. They have a good knowledge of geomorphology, as seen in a lesson on coastal erosion and deposition, and of models in human geography. Their course work, in which they use advanced statistical methods to analyse their fieldwork data, is of a very high standard. They have yet to develop the fluent essay writing style which would enable them to gain the very highest pass grades at A-level.
99. The overall standard of teaching is good. All sixth form teaching is very good. In the best lessons, teachers' good knowledge of the subject is reinforced by brisk pace and sensible time allocation to a variety of challenging activities. For example, in Year 11, students respond well to the challenge of preparing a report on the suitability of Jamaica for tourism, using the detailed resource pack prepared by their teacher very well. Students respond to these qualities by behaving well and settling down to work quickly. Lessons frequently start with a review of recent learning, during which students readily recall and consolidate what they have learned before, followed by a clear statement of aims of the current lesson. In comparatively less successful lessons, tasks are not well matched to the needs of individual students. Teachers rely too much on the use of textbooks and work sheets, instead of using the wide range of available additional resources. Very good classroom management and control create an atmosphere conducive to good learning. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. Teachers know them well and recognise their needs and in this work are ably assisted by special needs support staff. Students take advantage of the frequent opportunities offered them to organise their own learning, as evidenced by the good quality of enquiry work on display. Work is marked regularly, but the marking carries insufficient comment as to how students might further improve their work.
100. All the points for improvement raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed. Management is sound. A new management structure, which places the department within a humanities faculty, gives staff much clearer job descriptions and is beginning to bring about improvements in the monitoring of teaching and learning, staff appraisal, assessment and target setting. There is a wealth of data on student performance. The careful analysis of this data for precise targeting of individual students' needs and a subsequent improvement in examination performance is underdeveloped.

HISTORY

101. Examination results at GCSE are below national averages, but they are in line with College predictions based upon the prior attainment of each incoming year group since 1997. In 2000, both the A*-C and A*-G grades were below the national average. Average point scores did not significantly differ from the national average in 2000. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations, reflecting the slightly higher prior attainment of the students. .
102. By the end of Key Stage 3, students can identify the causes of historical events, for example, in relation to The English Civil War. They can effectively organise research into Slavery in the British Empire, and develop well informed opinions about contemporary historical issues, for example, the morality of the British Empire. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are in line with expectations. Most students can use historically specific terms with confidence, as seen in their study of The American West and can tackle issues of chronology and significance in the Ancient World in The History of Medicine. Students with special educational needs make good progress across both key stages. Students at GCE A-level are working in line with national expectations. They can offer clear and informed opinions upon the development of the American constitution and successfully analyse late twentieth century issues.
103. Students have a positive attitude and persevere with both oral and written tasks. They are confident in their approach to independent research and they collaborate maturely with each other in pair and group work. They show interest in each other's ideas, as seen in several plenary sessions at the end of lessons in both key stages.

104. Teaching is good. It is consistently good and stronger at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. The best lessons are those which immediately engage students in a key question to be addressed and which maintain a brisk pace while building in time for reflection, as in a Year 11 role-play preparation. Teachers make effective use of brainstorming techniques, enabling students to build upon prior knowledge and to plan future research. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use time or set tasks which consolidate planning and learning sufficiently. Key elements are clearly addressed in regularly assessed work: the skills of interpretation are particularly well developed at Key Stage 3. Assessment arrangements are well established and there is increasing use of data to track pupil progress, although the use of National Curriculum teacher assessments in Key Stage 3 is underdeveloped. Teachers use the full range of College rewards to encourage students. The teaching makes a satisfactory contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of students and a good contribution to their social experience.
105. The department is ably led. Satisfactory use is made of resources, including the library, and in the development of information and communication technology which was noted as an area of under-development in the last inspection. Teachers now alert students to relevant Internet websites, use video conferencing, and encourage the use of CD ROMs for research and word processing for assignments. Regular fieldwork has been developed, including an able students' weekend within the Humanities faculty. Lower attainers and particularly those needing literacy support benefit from consistent application of the writing frames, glossaries, targets and other strategies currently being introduced to support learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

106. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3, are above national expectations. By the end of Year 9, they achieve national accreditation in basic computing skills. The students use computers with practised familiarity. For example, they use the Internet and interactive CD ROMs for independent research on their various topics of study. Where modern technology is embedded into other subject areas, the students' work is good and sometimes excellent, as in design technology. For example, the students create toys using Computer Aided Design programs and manufacture these through instructions to an attached lathe. They modify their instructions to obtain different effects. They create and produce T-shirts using a range of control techniques to design and produce a variety of products.
107. At Key Stage 4, all students follow syllabuses leading to the GCSE examinations. This has only recently been introduced and, as yet, there are no examination results. Attainment is in line with national expectations. Much work is governed by examination syllabuses. The teachers' imaginative and effective use of the Internet, e-mail and video conferencing provides good technological opportunities and reinforces the students' knowledge and experience. They extend their basic skills, using desktop publishing presentations for a range of purposes. For example, they take pride and care in creating eye-catching designs and advertising literature for College use, which emphasises the relevance of their learning. Community links provide opportunities for higher achieving students to build professional web-pages for local establishments such as the Seamen's Mission and this promotes the students' social and personal development as well as an awareness of their own culture. In design and technology, they modify computer commands to control the speed of descent and ascent of model lifts, while, in geography, they take satellite weather readings, using the Internet to check and confirm their findings. Students with special educational needs successfully integrate into lessons and thus improve their skills and self-esteem
108. In the sixth form, students study computing as part of their key-skills training in connection with their vocational studies. Currently, students take national accredited key skills examinations in computing. The College is currently considering offering extra vocational examinations in computer maintenance. The students refine their presentation skills, using scanned and digitised photographs and desktop publishing. They make good use of Internet research to develop their vocational studies, while higher achieving students write programmes for simple games and create databases for local businesses.

109. In specific lessons at both key stages, the quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes excellent. Well-planned modules of work ensure that all students develop good basic computing skills. The teachers use effective teaching strategies to build on the students earlier learning. For example, in Year 7, the students use their knowledge of word processing to create animated personal web pages, importing images and manipulating fonts to complete the desired effect. The teachers have high expectations and well-paced lessons are appropriately challenging. At all times, the students are encouraged to use computers to enhance their presentation and spelling or enter, analyse and amend information. There is good use of technology in geography and history, linking Colleges in Britain and abroad through the College's video conferencing facilities, supporting the students' cultural development. Relationships between the staff and students are good, engendering a good learning ethos, with the students keen to discuss their work.
110. The use of computers as a learning tool is inconsistent across the College. It is insufficient in English, mathematics, science, religious education and modern languages. They are used very well to promote learning for the students with special educational needs, but in music, although staff have the expertise and interest, a lack of resources impedes the effective use of modern technology.
111. Departmental procedures for monitoring and recording the students' achievements are unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 3, the students work is recorded against National Curriculum target levels, while at Key Stage 4, progress is measured against completed examination assignments. Nevertheless, there is inconsistency in practice and the acting head of department has identified assessment as a priority area for development and is currently addressing the issue. The subject is monitored through termly meetings with curriculum leaders to highlight priority needs. Although these are linked to the College improvement plan, costings are inadequately identified.
112. Currently there is no permanent subject co-ordinator and a teacher shortage has led to considerable timetable rescheduling. The majority of staff have good subject knowledge, reducing the impact of this problem. The provision for information and communication technology meets statutory requirements and is good, overall. Accommodation for the four computer suites and the library reference area is satisfactory. Most computers are networked and linked to the College's Intranet system and there is a good range of peripheral hardware, with individual departments responsible for purchasing their own software. The video conferencing resource is currently expanding to create an E-pals link with America. Many students make good use of computer and homework clubs for independent research or careers information.
113. The previous report praised the College's provision for information and communication technology. There is satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, with the recent introduction of examination courses at Key Stage 4 and the ongoing development of resources. In some subject areas the resources for modern technology are insufficiently developed and this is an issue to be addressed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

114. In the year 2000 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in French and German was close to national expectations. They have improved significantly since 1998. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, the proportion of students gaining grades A*-C was above the national average in French and substantially higher in German. The results are similar to those of 1999. The proportion of those gaining the highest grades was also higher than nationally. Boys perform substantially better than boys nationally and in 2000 they performed better than girls. Results for the small numbers who start Russian in Year 10 have been very good. No pupil has failed over the last six years; more than half have obtained A grades. Modern foreign languages is one of the strongest departments in the College.
115. Standards seen during the inspection are consistent with the above results. By the end of Key Stage 3, in both French and German, most students understand short passages and spoken

dialogue on a range of familiar topics. Pronunciation and intonation are satisfactory, but speaking skills are limited to short statements, usually in response to questions from the teacher. In both languages, students have a sound grasp of the grammatical structures covered and written work is usually accurate, though mostly confined to grammar exercises. The extended writing of high attaining students in Year 9 and the descriptions of a day out in French and the account of a journey in German are of a good standard, containing a variety of tenses and structures.

116. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are good. The standard of written work is good in both languages. Higher attaining students are not always challenged sufficiently to extend the range of their writing. Pronunciation and intonation in the prepared speaking test in French are good and the best students are fluent. In both French and German, students do not have sufficient opportunities to take part in longer unprepared exchanges. Reading skills, which are sound in Key Stage 3, are insufficiently developed in Key Stage 4 by the reading of longer extracts or for pleasure. Standards observed in French in the sixth form are below average in all four skill areas.
117. Attitudes and behaviour are good in French and German in both key stages and in Russian in Key Stage 4. Students enjoy their language lessons, have good relations with their teachers and are motivated to succeed. In Key Stage 4, they take care over the redrafting of their work and, as a result, they make good progress and achieve well. Low attaining students and students with special educational needs react well to the encouragement they receive and they too make good progress.
118. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in both French and German and the one lesson seen in Russian was good. Half the teaching was good or very good; two lessons were unsatisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned, though teachers do not always make clear the objectives in terms of what the students should know and be able to do by the end of the lesson, nor do they always check that the objectives have been met. Teachers conduct the lesson in French or German; they make good use of visual aids and have a variety of activities. The strength of the teaching in both languages lies in the ability of the teachers to encourage and motivate the students, so that they believe they can succeed. Marking is regular and encouraging in Key Stage 3, though, for the most part, it is not analytical and not related to National Curriculum criteria. In Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form marking is exemplary; there is a detailed analysis of the work which indicates its strengths and weaknesses in relation to GCSE and A level criteria, with suggestions as to how it can be improved.
119. Whilst the day-to-day running of the department is efficient, the responsibilities for the leadership and management are inadequately structured because the role is shared between three staff. The subject co-ordinator does not monitor the teaching of all members of the department. This causes some tensions and is conducive neither to harmony nor to consistency of approach. The department makes very good use of the considerable amount of assessment data in order to follow students' progress and set targets. The information is shared with the students and serves to encourage and motivate them. The curriculum for French and German is appropriate for the students and is enhanced by exchanges to those countries. Russian is a successful option in Year 10 and, there too, an exchange is organised. These exchanges make a valuable contribution to the social and cultural development of the students. There is no departmental handbook containing essential policies. The departmental development plan is insufficiently detailed; it does not allocate responsibilities, indicate time-scales and costings, or state the criteria for success. Resources and the accommodation are both good. The use of ICT has declined, at least in part because the department is still waiting for its computers to be re-installed. The decision to discontinue the policy of having two equal languages, French and German, limits students' options. It is unsatisfactory that ten of the 28 classes from Years 7 to 11 are shared between two teachers.
120. Since the last inspection, the good standards have improved slightly, particularly for the average and lower-attaining students; there is some improvement in the teaching; the use of assessment has made considerable advances. The lack of challenge for the higher attaining remains. For further progress to be made, the College should review the management and

curriculum arrangements for modern foreign languages and the teachers should look at ways of extending the language skills of the more able.

MUSIC

121. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national standards. All students learn to play the keyboard, which is effective in raising standards of performance and in helping students to be involved in other aspects of music. Most students can play simple pieces in time with backing rhythms and most can read simple notation correctly. Some have difficulty in forming chords accurately. Students compose in a variety of styles, demonstrating understanding of the musical elements, and they can also improvise on keyboards and vocally. The very limited resources for music technology restrict the development of skills in composition and students do not have opportunities to 'create, manipulate and refine sounds' as stated in the National Curriculum. Listening skills and the correct use of musical terminology are developing appropriately, with most students accurately describing their world music composition. Students of all abilities achieve well and make good progress throughout the key stage. Below average students and those with special educational needs are particularly well supported by their teachers and by material specially developed by the department.
122. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are above average, with results in GCSE examinations being well above the national average for the last 3 years. Performing skills are particularly good and the few compositions heard are in line with national standards. The lack of recording equipment and limited sequencing facilities in the department restrict the standard of work that can be achieved in composing. Standards in listening and appraising are good for most students and at least satisfactory for all. Students listen attentively and most can respond to a variety of musical styles. Students' achievement, including progress over time, is good, with recent examination results comparing music favourably with other subjects.
123. Standards in the sixth form are in line with national standards, although they vary across the different elements of the course. Performing skills are very good, with some students entering the recital option, but aural skills need more practice to develop the depth of response required.
124. Standards in instrumental lessons and in the extra-curricular activities are good. There is a wide variety of instruments learned and various ensembles rehearse regularly. A musical production is also being prepared. The chamber choir and 'Jazz Band' particularly perform to a high standard.
125. Students arrive for their lessons in good humour and settle to work quickly. They take pride in their work and are eager to demonstrate to others. Most behave well; they work hard, listen attentively and co-operate well with each other in paired work.
126. Teaching is good, overall, often very good and excellent and is leading to rising standards. The teachers have very good subject skills and use them to promote good quality music making in their lessons. Good relationships with students alongside good classroom management help to ensure students' involvement and also encourage student confidence in their work. Lessons are well planned, with a variety of progressively difficult tasks linking the attainment targets. The pace of lessons is usually good. For example, in one Year 7 lesson studying 'Swing', students listened carefully to recorded examples of the style and then created their own version of a Glen Miller band starting with a 'walking bass' and then adding some instruments and scat singing in parts. This was an appropriate breadth of study for the topic and a good rate of learning. Teachers' expectations are appropriate. Their very good on-going assessment of student skills means that they challenge all students appropriately, supporting them as they work. Tasks are clearly explained and questioning is usually well used to check, consolidate and extend learning. More rigour is needed in some sixth form marking.
127. The subject co-ordinator is providing effective management. There are appropriate revisions of the curriculum and assessment procedures to ensure a closer match between the level of

difficulty of tasks and the prior attainment of students. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are rising. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection with the new Yamaha Music Suite providing another music classroom, although small practice rooms are limited, inhibiting opportunities for group work. Currently peripatetic lessons take place in small practice rooms within the main teaching room which disturbs the main lesson. Resources are unsatisfactory, overall. Although the keyboards in the department are good, other resources have declined since the previous inspection and are very limited. This has an adverse effect on standards. The department urgently needs computers with sequencing packages, recording equipment, microphones, headphones and headphone splitters, much more tuned and untuned percussion – particularly those instruments linked to world music - and music and teaching resources for class and ensemble use.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. This is due to consistently sound teaching and because students have a responsible attitude and approach towards learning. Students can perform gymnastic activities where body tension, spring and control are demonstrated. Some students have developed these techniques so that they are performing at an above average level. Students develop knowledge of techniques and can work with each other and suggest improvements. They know that it is important to prepare for strenuous physical activities and perform well during warm-up activities. Students make sound progress up to the end of Year 9. Sound teaching makes sure that basic skills are acquired and that students work productively with one another. Good progress is being made in learning a basic gymnastic vocabulary of movement in which quality of performance is emphasised. Good progress is also being made in the development of skills in swimming. Confidence in the water and knowledge and understanding of correct arm and leg actions improve as students move through Key Stage 3. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but links with specialist teachers are underdeveloped.
129. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is below national expectations, overall. This partly reflects the limited amount of teaching time. The percentage of students following the GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in 2000 was below national averages. Where a minority of students have good basic knowledge and understanding of techniques they are performing well, as in GCSE volleyball where good body positioning and correct hand control produce above average volley shots. However, many students are lacking basic knowledge and understanding of techniques in most aspects of the subject. They lack alertness around court and field and do not have a learning culture. The learning of students following the GCSE course is restricted by a lack of opportunity to develop skills of observation, analysis and feedback. Some students achieve good standards in extra-curricular activities at local and county levels and this makes a good contribution to the overall standards in physical education. A minority of students do not attend lessons because they take two foreign languages and, thus, they are not taught a full programme of study. This has a negative effect on their learning.
130. Attitudes to learning are sound. Participation rates are high and standards of kit are good. Most students work well together in pairs and small groups and show sound levels of concentration. Levels of sporting behaviour are in most cases good and good play is appreciated and celebrated. Some students take the opportunities provided to exercise responsibility both in lesson time and through extra-curricular activities, which include a range of competitive fixtures.
131. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and is, occasionally, good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and organisational skills. They have positive interaction with students, make effective explanations and demonstrations and their example is developing a good moral and social culture. However, teachers are not always clear about what they have to do to improve achievement in knowledge, understanding and performance of techniques and skills. Lesson planning is not always clear enough about intended outcomes so that teaching strategies can focus on raising achievement. Assessment procedures for monitoring the progress of students are now in place and are beginning to have a positive effect on standards at Key Stage 3.

132. The decline in standards since the last inspection reflects a period of senior physical education staff change, which has had a negative effect. Leadership and management are now good and have the potential to ensure further improvement. The new management structure was put in place in September 2000 and the subject leaders have a clear vision for the development of the department. They have assessed the decline in standards and extra-curricular provision and put in place an appropriate development plan. Good teamwork is a feature of the department. This leads to a consistency of expectations in terms of dress, participation and behaviour. The expertise, commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers are ensuring that, already, progress is being made.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Results in the year 2000 GCSE for the full course were in line with the national average for those gaining grades A*-G. The percentage of students gaining the higher grades A*-C was significantly below the national average. Results in the GCSE short course were in line with the national average. More boys than girls take this course. In the sixth form, results at GCE A-level in Religious Philosophy and Ethics were above the national average for A-E grades, with no A-B grades for three students, all girls. This is a new course.
134. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3, are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and students are underachieving; the same as the last inspection. Most students have increased their knowledge of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism, but their awareness of the differences and similarities between these religions is unsatisfactory. Their understanding of the range of beliefs and practices within Christianity is not reflected in their approach to all the religions they study. Their learning remains at the level of facts and information, rather than being able to apply religious principles to the challenging social, political and ethical facing individuals and communities. They demonstrate a willingness to ask appropriate and probing questions about religions, but have a limited understanding to make sense of the ideas about the nature and purpose of human existence which the common concerns of religions highlight. Generally, the students have positive attitudes.
135. Standards, by the end of Key Stage 4, are in line with expectations and students' standards benefit from structured examination syllabuses which identify the areas of Christianity and Islam which impact on selected moral issues. The standards improve quickly as their level of knowledge and understanding of what is important for each religion is illuminated by their introduction to what motivates and guides the different attitudes and behaviour of members of faith communities. Students enjoy the opportunity to develop their own views on moral issues, selecting ideas from a range of viewpoints. A significant number are still at an early stage of understanding the need to identify and bear in mind all the possible approaches to moral issues to be confident in their decision making.
136. Most students demonstrate a positive attitude to learning about believers and their behaviour improves when they are studying contemporary examples of individuals and communities in religions. Students with special educational needs make the same progress as others up to the age of 14 and between 14 and 16 they make better progress than expected.
137. The sixth form provides religious education through A-level General Studies. In Year 12 there is a specific module on Beliefs, Values and Moral Reasoning and, in Year 13, students look at ethical issues in Science. Statutory requirements are not met for students between 14 and 16 who follow a Triple Science course and for students in the sixth form who do four A levels, other than religious studies.
138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is occasionally good, but in a minority of lessons at both key stages, teaching is unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, teaching is less secure and is provided mainly by non-specialists whose subject knowledge is inadequate; this affects students' progress and standards. Teachers provide good role models and establish good relationships with students in all classes. Assessment is carried out regularly. Marking for high attaining students includes helpful comments, telling students what needs to be done to improve, but is less effective in assessing of the work of students at all levels of achievement.

The quality of teaching is influenced by how much lessons build on each other and make use of what students already know and understand. Where lesson objectives are clear, students settle down to work quickly and are eager to work. Teachers invite students to share what they already know through the effective use of questions, and then continue to check progress. Time is used well to organise activities which stimulate students to engage with the subject and to take part in discussion and learning at a level which matches their needs. Students' questions and answers inform progress and their willingness to contribute their own views to the learning process is encouraged and valued. Links which are made to students' experiences help them to understand how to investigate the resources from the religions being studied and teaching is effective, because students do not depend solely on the teacher for information and understanding. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers dominate and impose their views, treating students' contributions as interruptions and do not provide prompts or support materials for different needs of students.

139. Students' learning benefits from visits to synagogues in Year 8 and a mosque in Year 10 to see religions as they are practised today and there are plans to make better use of examples of religions among support staff and in the local and wider area. The department is making a substantial contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of students, without sufficient opportunity for this to be extended in collective worship.
140. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed subject coordinator is providing a clear educational direction for a large number of non-specialist teachers through informal support. These teachers, whilst committed, do not have the required subject knowledge and expertise. Schemes of work do not enable the overall development of students' knowledge. At Key Stage 3, they do not give sufficient time for students to study each religion, as they are practised today, in breadth and depth, as required by the agreed syllabus. There is a humanities handbook, with relevant policies. The policy to support attainment in religious education and to demonstrate links to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is underdeveloped. The responsibilities of the coordinator in relation to sixth form general provision are not clear and the range of resources is unsatisfactory.
141. Since the last inspection, the sixth form courses have been successfully introduced. Curriculum time has increased at Key Stage 3 and the introduction of the GCSE short course means that more students, particularly boys, can gain a recognised qualification. However, there are issues relating to curriculum requirements which have not been effectively resolved.

VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

142. The College offers five subjects – art and design, manufacturing, leisure and tourism, business and hospitality and catering - at GNVQ which are taught within the overall Key Stage 4 and sixth form curriculum under the management of related subject areas. Results in these subjects show that the majority of students achieve pass grades, with a significant minority achieving merits, and in art and design and in hospitality and catering, a similar proportion of these students gain distinctions.
143. The standards being achieved during the inspection reflect these previous results. Students in art and design display good standards as they develop their all round skills, which they apply well in their projects. Students undertaking the manufacturing course achieve good standards in their overall knowledge and in its application to problems. In leisure and tourism, students are developing a good awareness of a wide range of issues which reflect how areas provide for tourists and the problems which this brings to both the environment and the business success of an area. In business, students can apply their knowledge and understand concepts such as accounts, profit and loss and, through their project, understand how companies are organised. Students in the hospitality and catering course are effectively developing their knowledge and understanding as to how business and companies operate and in the practical aspects of catering. Students have good attitudes in their work.
144. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers are well prepared and plan lessons so that students understand their work and make good progress. Resources are effectively used.

They support the students well and encourage independence in their learning so that they can evaluate their own progress.

145. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in that the duplication of GCSE and GNVQ courses undertaken has been eliminated. The extension of the college day enables sufficient time to teach these courses alongside the normal pattern of GCSE subjects. Good plans are set to develop a GNVQ ICT course in September so that all students will have the opportunity to take an appropriate examination. This will be made possible by the planned provision of additional computer facilities, particularly laptops.

The Dyslexia Support Base

146. The quality of education provided by the Dyslexia Support Base is outstanding. It currently caters for 24 students with specific learning difficulties, some of whom have additional needs and have been referred late to the College. The students enter the Base with well below average attainment in reading, writing and spelling skills. They often have low self-esteem and lack confidence and additional needs may include communication, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They receive skilled teaching support, on a withdrawal base, and guidance from learning support assistants in lessons.
147. The nature of the students' special educational needs means that their levels of attainment in literacy remain low. However, the achievement made over time by the students is very good. During their first term in the College, students are able to make progress in spelling, although inaccuracies remain, and in clarity of writing. Significant progress in gaining self-esteem and confidence, in accessing the curriculum and in passing examinations results from continuing input. The students become keen to learn, behave well in subject lessons and in an exemplary manner in the Base.
148. The teaching by the specialist teachers in the Base is excellent. Detailed and consistent planning arises from systematic monitoring of achievement and progress. Specific literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal development targets are well addressed. Lessons are intensive and make excellent use of time, available resources, including optimum use of computers and a full range of teaching strategies. There is persistent concern to nurture learning and positive, supportive relationships that flourish and reflect the mutual regard between teachers and students.
149. As a result of the high quality teaching, the students become very interested and productive. Taking account of their needs, they show exceptionally high levels of sustained concentration and application of intellectual effort. Work is marked with the students and they gain knowledge and understanding of how they are doing and strategies to improve.
150. Support by able learning support assistants in subject lessons facilitates the students' access to the broader curriculum and inclusion in College life. This is furthered by the care taken to promote confidence, study skills and organisational skills. Base staff provide support for homework. Strong links with parents add to the impact of the provision.
151. The Dyslexia Support Base was praised in the previous inspection. Achievement and progress by the students at that time was judged to be good. It is now very good. Similarly, the teaching has improved from good and very good to excellent.
152. The sharing of good practice under the strong, consultative leadership in the Base has resulted in these improvements. There is effective and equitable delegation of responsibilities that has led to a very positive and well-deployed whole team approach.
153. Classes and comprehensive documentation are very well organised. The accommodation is utilised to full effect which, together with the positive ethos, creates a welcoming, calm and highly productive learning environment. The Dyslexia Support Base is a strength of the College.