

INSPECTION REPORT

Dawlish Community College

Dawlish

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113518

Headteacher: Roger Kirk

Reporting inspector: Paul Sadler
OIN: 1611

Dates of inspection: 1-4 October 2001

Inspection number: 194160

Full 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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
College address:	Elm Grove Road Dawlish Devon
Postcode:	EX7 0BY
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Susan Samuel
Date of previous inspection:	12-16 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the college care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the college work in partnership with parents?</p>
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23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18584	Martin Davis	Team Inspector	Science	
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15606	Christine Humphreys	Team Inspector	Art Equality of opportunity	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Dawlish Community College is a medium sized mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16. There are 864 on roll, 442 boys and 422 girls. The college has grown considerably since the previous inspection in May 1997 when there were 606 pupils on roll. The college is situated on a pleasant site – most of the buildings date from the 1930s. There has been considerable internal refurbishment in recent years and this continues, including the building of a new teaching block containing two laboratories and a library/information centre, which is due for completion shortly after the inspection.

Dawlish is a small town on the South Devon coast. Although outwardly affluent, there is some deprivation: the town attracts single-parent families who live in rented holiday accommodation during the winter months. In 2000, 11.1 percent of pupils claimed free meals, below the national average of 17.8 percent. Evidence supplied by Devon Local Education Authority (LEA) suggests, however, that up to 30 percent of families whose children attend the college may be entitled to free meals. The college has very few pupils who speak English as an additional language, are of ethnic minority origin or are travellers. There are no refugees on the college roll. 16.3 percent of pupils are on the college's register of special educational needs and 2.5 percent have statements of SEN; these figures are close to the national averages of 19.3 percent and 2.5 percent respectively.

The pupils live in the town of Dawlish and in villages mainly to the north and west. To the south are another comprehensive school with a sixth form and selective schools; there is evidence that a higher proportion of more able pupils from the area attend these schools. Evidence from pupils' National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2, and from standardised tests administered by the college, confirms that overall the attainment of pupils on entry to the college is below the national average.

The college provides a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities for the local community, hence its designation as a community college.

In 2001, the serious outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Devon was confined to the north and west of the county and had little impact on the college.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

Dawlish Community College is an effective college providing very good value for money as it achieves outcomes that are satisfactory or good by efficient use of limited resources. Standards of attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 improved considerably in 2001 after a period during which they slipped back slightly relative to national averages. They are now in line with national averages at both ages; this is good achievement by the pupils as they enter the college below the national average. This success is achieved by good teaching across the college in almost all

subjects. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Leadership and management are sound and have good features, especially in the training and induction of new staff and student teachers, the action taken to meet the college's targets and the application of the principles of best value. The main weaknesses are the limited availability of resources for learning, provision for and standards achieved in information and communications technology (ICT) and in pupils' behaviour out of lessons.

What the college does well

- Teaching is good
- The achievement of pupils in most subjects
- The provision for and progress made by pupils with special educational needs
- The action taken to achieve targets
- The induction of new staff and the training of student teachers
- The reflection of the college's aims and values in its work
- The college's application of the principles of best value

What could be improved

- The quality and range of learning resources, especially for ICT
- Standards of attainment in art, religious education and ICT
- Pupils' achievement in ICT
- The behaviour of pupils out of lessons and their respect for other people
- The links between the college's priorities and the raising of standards of attainment
- The delegation of tasks to staff with management responsibilities

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

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in May 1997. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good. This is mainly due to improvements in the quality of teaching, especially in design and technology, music and physical education. The use of time has improved, although lack of time for ICT and, for some pupils, design and technology, remain. A homework timetable and new, more effective, pupil planners have been introduced. The college makes greater use of data to analyse its own performance and to set targets, both for the whole college and for individual pupils. These developments are evident in good achievement by pupils and, in 2001, rising standards of attainment.

The college still fails to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, although this policy has been endorsed by the governing body. It has taken little specific action to improve provision for pupils' spiritual development, although this is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all colleges			similar colleges
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	C	C	D	D

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

In 2000 in English, 53 percent of pupils attained at least the national average of level 5, compared with 66 percent nationally, and 16 percent attained the higher level 6, compared with 28 percent nationally. Attainments in mathematics were more in line with national averages; 63 percent attained level 5, compared with 66 percent nationally, and 38 percent level 6, where the national figure was 42 percent. In science, attainments were below national averages; 53 percent attained level 5 and 20 percent level 6, compared with national figures of 62 percent and 29 percent respectively. Preliminary figures for 2001 show considerable improvements in English and science. In English, 71 percent achieved at least level 5; in science the figure was 68 percent and those attaining level 6 also increased to 34 percent. Over time, differences in attainment between boys and girls have reflected the national picture although in 2001 girls outperformed boys by a greater margin than nationally. Pupils at Key Stage 3 achieve well. This is evident both from scrutiny of their work and through observation of lessons. For instance, pupils' attainments in written English, which are below average when they enter the college, are average by Year 9. Similar achievement was noted in mathematics and science, again especially in written work in which pupils show pride. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with learning difficulties, also show good achievement. In a few ICT and art lessons achievement is less than satisfactory.

At Key Stage 4 as with Key Stage 3, pupils' attainments showed a decline when compared to national averages between 1996 and 2000. The proportion achieving five or more higher grade GCSE passes (grades A*-C) in 2000 was 38 percent, below the national average of 47 percent. As with Key Stage 3, results improved significantly in 2001 when 47.2 percent achieved five or more higher grade passes. This is likely to be broadly in line with the national average. Lower attaining pupils consistently perform well. In 2000, GCSE results significantly exceeded national averages in English literature, geography and Spanish and were well below national averages in history and physical education. In 2001, the results in these latter two subjects appear to have improved but results in ICT were poor.

Pupils' achievements at Key Stage 4 are good. In most subjects, pupils with special educational needs who receive support achieve well.

Standards of literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum are satisfactory. Standards of ICT skills are unsatisfactory. This is due to lack of practice and access to resources. Pupils have few opportunities to develop ICT skills in any subject

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. The majority show enthusiasm in most lessons and are involved in a range of activities
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. In most lessons it is good but around the college it is unsatisfactory
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships are generally good and personal responsibility satisfactory, but some pupils lack understanding of the impact of their actions on others
Attendance	Satisfactory. Authorised absence is somewhat high but unauthorised absence is low.

In lessons, behaviour is generally good thanks to good teaching. Small groups of pupils attempt to disrupt lessons and the learning of others but teachers generally handle this well. Outside the classroom, behaviour is unsatisfactory. Pupils are sometimes rude to adults and each other. Some are frequently late to lessons. Generally, there is an absence of deliberately oppressive behaviour but some pupils have limited understanding of the effect of their actions on others, or respect for their feelings, especially when acting in a group. At an individual level, relationships between pupils and staff, and with other pupils, are generally good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	good	good

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

Teaching is good across in all year groups and in most subjects. In English, mathematics and science it is good at both Key Stages. Particular strengths include teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, their planning, expectations of pupils and their use of time, resources and homework. In ICT teaching is satisfactory only; in art it is variable. Pupils' learning is satisfactory but teachers frequently have to call on very good skills of classroom management to keep a minority of pupils at their work and minimise the impact of their behaviour on others' learning. In most cases they do this successfully so that those who want to learn can achieve well. It is on the small minority of occasions when teachers lack these skills that teaching, and hence pupils' learning and achievement, are unsatisfactory.

Literacy and numeracy are taught to a satisfactory standard. The teaching of literacy in science is a notable strength. The college endeavours to meet the needs of all pupils; it is particularly successful with those with special educational needs caused by learning difficulties, who are supported very well. Pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding well through the confidence of teachers' knowledge. Some, especially at Key Stage 3, lack an understanding of their own achievements and hence lack confidence in learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 it is good, although a minority of pupils lack teaching of ICT and design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, especially for those with learning difficulties. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are less well supported
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils do not experience a daily act of collective worship although those that take place are of good quality.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good, but those for monitoring and

	promoting good behaviour out of lessons are currently unsatisfactory, although improving.
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At Key Stage 4 the college offers a good range of courses including vocational subjects, but pupils not studying ICT or design and technology to examination level do not get their full entitlement to these subjects. There is a good range of activities available outside the curriculum, including a daily out of college hours club. A weakness is in girls' sport, although this is improving rapidly. Pupils do not experience a daily act of collective worship although the governing body has formally approved this policy. Provision for cultural development is a strength, including theatre, overseas travel and opportunities to study the range of cultures present in British society. The college's work in partnership with parents is satisfactory.

The college's monitoring of attendance and follow-up to absence is a strength. Currently, procedures to ensure consistent behaviour around the college are unsatisfactory although the college is aware of this and is working to improve consistency of approach. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support assistants work effectively to help pupils with learning difficulties.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the college. Delegation to senior staff is currently unsatisfactory; subject managers are effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are hard-working and well organised.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There is good commitment to improve and to raise pupils' attainments. Understanding of the college in a wider context is limited, for instance in researching ways other colleges have raised standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good, given the limited resources available. Resources have been well used to develop staffing and accommodation, less so in respect of learning resources, especially for ICT.

Overall the adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is unsatisfactory, however staffing resources are good, and are well matched to the curriculum. Accommodation is improving rapidly, especially for modern foreign languages, drama and science, but remains unsatisfactory for PE, music and ICT. The adequacy of learning resources is poor, especially in ICT, where the number of

computers is half the current recommendation for secondary colleges, and also in music, science, art and the library. Plans are in place to improve ICT resources in the near future.

Other strengths in leadership and management include the reflection of the college's inclusive aims and values in its work, especially through the quality of provision for pupils with special needs and the low number of permanent exclusions; its strategy for appraisal and performance management and the action taken to meet its targets. Arrangements for the induction of new staff and support for trainee teachers are very good. The college applies the principles of best value well in making decisions about the use of resources.

A weakness in this area is the current arrangements for delegating responsibility to senior staff. Due to the long-term absence of a member of the senior management staff some staff have an excessive workload and there is confusion over some responsibilities. The college's priorities for development lack explicit links to strategies to raise pupils' attainments.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the teaching • The expectations of hard work and high achievement • The progress made by pupils • The positive values and attitudes it develops • The commitment of staff • Support for pupils with special needs or particular talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for parents • Greater consistency in homework and its monitoring • More extra-curricular activities for girls • Teaching of study skills

The inspection team supports the positive points made by parents, although the college's support for those with special needs is stronger than for those with special talents and abilities. It also agrees that parents have correctly identified areas that could be improved although homework generally is used well and extra-curricular opportunities for girls are improving rapidly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Over the period between the last inspection in 1997 and 2000, there was little apparent improvement in pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 overall. This was mainly due to a relative decline in attainments in English from a position well above the national average in 1996, to below that average in 2000. In that year, 53 percent of pupils attained at least the national average of level 5, compared with 66 percent nationally, and 16 percent attained the higher level 6, compared with 28 percent nationally. Attainments in mathematics were more in line with national averages; 63 percent attained level 5, compared with 66 percent nationally, and 38 percent level 6, where the national figure was 42 percent. In science, attainments were below national averages; 53 percent attained level 5 and 20 percent level 6, compared with national figures of 62 percent and 29 percent respectively. However, preliminary figures for 2001 show considerable improvements in English and science. In English, 71 percent achieved at least level 5; in science the figure was 68 percent and those attaining level 6 also increased to 34 percent. Over time, differences in attainment between boys and girls have reflected the national picture although in 2001 girls outperformed boys by a greater margin than nationally. This was reflected in teachers' own assessments of pupils' attainments which, in science particularly, reflected a considerable difference when compared with test results and, in particular, underestimated the attainment of boys. In most other subjects attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national averages. The exceptions are in art and ICT, where standards are below the national average.
- 2 Pupils at Key Stage 3 achieve well. This is evident both from scrutiny of their work and through observation of lessons. For instance, pupils' attainments in written English, which are below average when they enter the college, are average by Year 9. Similar achievement was noted in mathematics and science, again especially in written work in which pupils show pride. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with learning difficulties, also show good achievement, especially when skills are carefully taught as in a science lesson where such a pupil developed the ability to draw plants accurately, modelling a technique demonstrated by the teacher. In geography, very good use of questioning demonstrated pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding of the Earth's crustal plates. In music, pupils in Year 9 can use correct fingering when playing keyboards, write flowing compositions and sing well. In a few subjects, however, achievement is less than satisfactory. In ICT pupils in Year 9 cannot use databases and spreadsheets to process and present data and their skills in design and control are limited. In art, few pupils show substantial achievement although

in some individual lessons good gains in knowledge were observed. It was not possible to judge the attainment and achievement of the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language as these had only been at the college for a very short time.

- 3 At Key Stage 4 as with Key Stage 3, pupils' attainments showed a decline when compared to national averages between 1996 and 2000. The proportion achieving five or more higher grade GCSE passes (grades A*-C) declined from slightly above the national average in 1996 to 38 percent, below the national average of 47 percent, in 2000. However, again as with Key Stage 3, results improved significantly in 2001 when 47.2 percent achieved five or more higher grade passes. This is likely to be broadly in line with the national average. Lower attaining pupils consistently perform well. For instance in 2000 92 percent of pupils attained five GCSE passes and only three percent attained no passes. These figures, which are better than national averages, were maintained in 2001 and reflect high attainment by pupils with special educational needs. As in Key Stage 3, differences in the attainment of boys and girls broadly reflect the national picture. In 2000, the proportion gaining higher grade passes in science, 48 percent, was in line with the national average of 49 percent. In English Language, at 45 percent, it was below the average of 56 percent and in mathematics at 42 percent it was a little below the average of 47 percent. However the proportion passing in the three core subjects exceeded national averages and in each case was close to 100 percent. In 2000, GCSE results significantly exceeded national averages in English literature, geography and Spanish and were well below national averages in history and physical education. In 2001, the results in these latter two subjects appear to have improved but results in ICT were poor, problems having been encountered with a new syllabus.
- 4 Pupils' achievements at Key Stage 4 are good. In English, higher attainers especially can, for instance, argue the motives of Macbeth or the moral issues raised by 'The Crucible'. In design and technology, pupils show good achievement in planning and designing their work, which is annotated well with explanations of specific features and processes. In modern foreign languages, higher attaining pupils can read and write at length in the foreign language. In most subjects, pupils with special educational needs who receive support achieve well.
- 5 Standards of literacy throughout the curriculum are satisfactory. In some subjects, such as science, literacy is good. Pupils learn the spellings of key words associated with the subject, for instance in a Year 7 lesson words such as 'carnivore' and 'invertebrate', and read aloud to their classmates. In history, techniques such as the use of writing frames improve pupils' writing. Standards of numeracy are also satisfactory, although there is currently no college policy. In modern foreign languages, pupils answer sums orally in the target language. In geography, they use scale to estimate distance and construct bar charts based on observations. Standards of ICT skills are unsatisfactory. This is due to lack of practice and access to resources. Pupils have few opportunities to develop ICT skills in any subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 6 Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to college and their work; this is not as high as reported at the last inspection. Throughout the college relationships are good overall and teachers are using a variety of strategies to foster more positive attitudes in the pupils. For example the head of the English department has introduced books for the pupils to write up their work rather than loose-leaf folders and this has given pupils more pride in their work. In physical education lessons there is good interaction between peers and teachers that creates a positive learning environment. However, there is a significant minority of pupils who have negative attitudes to college and work. This was evident in a Year 11 science lesson when the pupils were studying electroplating, a significant number of boys exhibited attention-seeking immaturity. In other lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory when they are listening to teacher expositions but when they have to organise themselves for independent work some do not have good work habits and this can result in only satisfactory standards of learning even though the teaching may be good. This was seen in a Year 9 information communication technology lesson when the pupils were preparing materials for use on computers.
- 7 Pupils who were interviewed during the inspection expressed enthusiasm for the college and they would recommend it to friends and relations. Science and physical education came through as two favourite subjects and the pupils feel that the tutors support them well.
- 8 The majority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that behaviour in the college is good. However, the inspection team judges behaviour to be satisfactory overall. As reported at the last inspection, a significant minority of pupils do not move around the college sensibly, they shout and push others in corridors and when walking up and downstairs. This results in some pupils who are not in the right frame of mind for learning when they enter a classroom. Some pupils do not show enough respect for the college buildings; some lockers have been damaged and there is litter around the site and graffiti on some classroom walls. Behaviour in lessons ranges between excellent and poor and is often dependent upon the expectations of the teacher. In lessons where teachers have high expectations of behaviour, the pupils learn well. For example in an excellent Year 9 geography lesson on volcanoes, the teachers' very lively exposition ensured that the whole class was involved and interested and the pupils' behaviour was very good. As a result of the teachers' confident delivery in a Year 11 English lesson on 'The Crucible', the pupils behaved very well and they made very good progress in their learning. In other lessons tasks not well planned or a lack of urgency on the part of the teacher means that the rate of learning and pupils' behaviour varies between satisfactory and poor. For example, unsatisfactory behaviour was observed in a Year 9 art lesson when the pupils were producing pencil drawings from a

still life picture by Cézanne. Pupils who misbehave do not appreciate that they are disturbing the learning of others in the class.

- 9 The number of fixed period exclusions has increased slightly since the last inspection. Permanent exclusions remain at a low level. The college works hard to support pupils before exclusion, but uses the sanction of both internal withdrawal and external exclusion as part of its disciplinary procedures. Given the care taken to support pupils the present figures are reasonable.
- 10 The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. The college offers opportunities to take part in sporting, music and drama activities. The inspection team does not support the view of a significant number of parents that the college does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Historically, few pupils have been involved in these due to staffing problems particularly with sporting activities for the girls. However, recent staff appointments are addressing this need. In lessons, pupils are not always well prepared and organised, often they enter classrooms noisily and take too long to settle and be ready for learning. For example, in a Year 8 personal and social education lesson pupils arrived five minutes late and exhibited immaturity when fellow classmates mispronounced words when reading a play about bullying. Some pupils find it difficult to work successfully in groups. This was evident in a Year 8 English lesson, the pupils talked so loudly when discussing their work that the noise level of the whole class became too high and the resulting performances were not well prepared.
- 11 Younger pupils act as receptionists and each Year 11 pupil is asked to undertake prefect duty. In all year groups there are trained peer listeners to whom pupils can go for advice and support. The college has a Student Council, which is made up of representatives from every year group. The council meets regularly and discusses issues they feel are important, for example prices in the canteen and lunchtime arrangements. The council also works closely with governors through the Student Welfare Committee. Most pupils complete homework successfully but due to the building works they are currently unable to further develop their independent learning skills through the use of the library. There are also too few opportunities to use information communication technology across the curriculum to promote independent research skills.
- 12 At 92.79 percent attendance this term is in line with the national average but authorised absences are higher than national averages. In the main this is due to parents taking their children out of college for term time holidays. As reported at the last inspection the rate of unauthorised absence is low. The satisfactory rate of attendance is not impacting negatively on standards.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 13 The good quality of the teaching is a strength of the college. It is good at both Key Stages and overall. In lessons observed, over two-thirds of the teaching was at least good, with a significant proportion very good or excellent. The proportion of unsatisfactory or poor teaching seen was low. There is little inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the Key Stages and, largely, across subjects although in ICT the quality of teaching is only satisfactory and in art it is variable, in some lessons being excellent and in others barely satisfactory. The main strength is in teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Other strengths are found in their expectations of their pupils, especially those of lower attainment and with special educational needs, their management of pupils, their use of time, resources and homework and in the effectiveness of their planning and teaching methods. No aspect of teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- 14 In an inspirational science lesson, Year 7 pupils learned very well in response to excellent planning; they were able to infer the impact of salt water boiling at temperatures higher than 100 degrees Celsius on the time taken to cook potatoes. In a Year 9 art lesson there was excellent teaching of drawing skills using pencil. The purpose of the lesson was made clear to the pupils and the teacher placed responsibility on them for their own learning. These and many other examples of high quality teaching are characterised by high expectations and inclusion of all pupils, including those with special needs and others who might show signs of disengagement. Objectives are clear and skills, knowledge and understanding are taught well. Similarly at Key Stage 4, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson with lower attaining pupils calculating distances and bearings on a grid, the pace of the lesson was brisk with excellent support for all pupils from the class teacher, a student teacher and a support assistant. All pupils learned quickly and with enthusiasm. In a Year 10 French lesson, the use of games to promote rapid learning of vocabulary was greeted with enthusiasm by the pupils. In this lesson links between French and English literacy were made, for instance in the use of the word 'premiere'.
- 15 In some lessons the teacher is required to use strong classroom management skills to control small groups of pupils intent on disrupting the learning of others. Usually this is successful, for instance in a Year 8 science lesson on photosynthesis where the teacher continually refocused the attention of a small group of girls and in an excellent Year 9 geography lesson where the teacher sensibly moved potentially disruptive boys to the front of the class. However, the overall impact of such disruptions is that the quality of pupils' learning, although satisfactory, is somewhat less than the quality of the teaching. However, in such lessons, most pupils achieve the purpose of the lesson and achieve well. When the teacher lacks the skills to keep the class or groups of pupils within it on task, this leads to unsatisfactory teaching. Examples include a Year 9 design and technology lesson in which a group of boys started arguing and throwing equipment; the teacher lacked the strategies to return them to their work. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson on enlarging triangles to scale, pupils did not understand the work and became very noisy, banging rulers on their tables. Common features of this small

minority of lessons include weak planning and a failure to build appropriately on the previous learning of the pupils.

- 16 Teachers use opportunities to develop and reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well, for instance in a Year 11 GCSE PE lesson on netball the teacher continually reinforced the correct use of technical language and developed skills of mental numeracy through quick recall of changes in the score. Skills of ICT are much less well developed as in most subjects access to the necessary resources is very limited, for instance in music there is no opportunity to use ICT for composition.
- 17 Pupils with special needs, especially those with learning difficulties who are helped by support assistants, receive good teaching, for instance in a Year 7 science lesson where three such pupils were well supported to develop a good plan to separate pure salt from rock salt. As a result these pupils learn well, developing new skills and independence. In some lessons, however, lack of independent learning skills impedes progress, for instance in a very good Year 11 drama lesson where pupils needed to be continually supported by the teacher in order to take responsibility. It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning of the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language.
- 18 In most subjects, homework is used well and teachers have good strategies to reinforce it. For instance, notes on a board in most classrooms act as a continual reminder to pupils of homework requirements.

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

- 19 The quality and range of the curriculum provided by the college is sound overall. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance. It is enriched by extra language provision and drama at Key Stage 3. However there is insufficient time for information and communications technology.
- 20 At Key Stage 4 the college has introduced a good range of extra subjects including media studies at GCSE, business GNVQ and an outdoor pursuits qualification is well-established. In some subjects pupils can now enter for the Certificate of Achievement alongside their GCSE if this is deemed appropriate.
- 21 The governors are actively involved in reviewing and developing the curriculum and receive regular reports on all subject areas.
- 22 The provision of information communications technology at Key Stages 3 and 4 does not meet statutory requirements. In Key Stage 4 pupils are not given specific lessons unless they take ICT at GCSE and coverage of skills is not provided within other subjects. Within the curriculum as a whole the provision for ICT lacks consistency and coherence. The college also fails to make full

provision for design and technology in years ten and eleven.

- 23 The requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met and all pupils take either the full or the GCSE short course in religious education.
- 24 Although the curriculum contains the full range of subjects and has some enrichment there is no obvious curriculum rationale, although current work is addressing this. The college recognizes that it is in a period of change and development and that the curriculum is evolving to meet the changing requirements of its pupils. It is actively introducing a variety of vocational options. However there are anomalies in timetabling and within the setting of pupils in relation to their ability, which impact on both curriculum planning and equal opportunities. There are differences in the time allocated for some subjects, particularly history and geography and there is a shortfall in the time available for mathematics. The two- week timetable means that some pupils have long gaps between lessons in foundation subject and this adversely affects their learning.
- 25 The programme of extra curricular activities provided by the college is good. It includes sport, music and drama and creative activities such as jewellery making. Pupils are able to join in lunch-time activities and after college clubs which are also available. Some activities are in the form of classes to support work in academic subjects such as design and technology. Individuals learn to play a variety of musical instruments and many are involved in creative arts activities for example the drama production. Each year there are activities which involve many pupils for example: the commemoration of the Holocaust. The college offers both the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Young Enterprise. Pupils go on a variety of visits in the local area and further afield. They go to theatrical productions and on residential visits in each year. The out of college hours learning centre provides help with study skills and for facilities for those who have limited access to computers or libraries. However there has been little provision for girls to take part in out of college sport or competition with other colleges in recent years because of staffing difficulties, now resolved.
- 26 Careers provision is sound and is well managed. Pupils have careers guidance and interviews through the careers service and a biennial careers convention; careers education is part of the PSE programme. They are provided with information about opportunities for study at other colleges and in college sixth forms but they are also made aware of training options such as Modern Apprenticeship through support, for instance, from the Rotary Club. However during the inspection no careers library was available for their use because of the building programme.
- 27 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The college has not responded to a recommendation at the last inspection to meet the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship. Instead the governing body has formally sanctioned the existing policy. Also,

there was no structured response to a recommendation to improve provision for spiritual development although this is now satisfactory, with good examples in science, drama, RE, English and geography. Assemblies, especially those led by the headteacher, are good and contain a significant spiritual element. Provision for moral and social development is also satisfactory. Sex education meets legal requirements and is supported by a project involving external agencies. Pupils are given an understanding of right and wrong, although some do not take enough responsibility for their actions. Teachers provide good role models Residential visits, outdoor pursuits and work experience all contribute to pupils' social development and there is a range of opportunities for pupils to become involved in the life and work of the college. As stated earlier, there are many opportunities for cultural development and provision is good. Activities such as those organised on Holocaust Day, together with work in art, geography and RE, enable pupils to learn about other cultures, including those represented in British society.

- 28 Pupils have the opportunity to go on planned work experience in year ten. There is an innovative programme of vocational education, for years ten and eleven, which allows pupils to choose to take GNVQ in college or to begin a course which will lead to an NVQ by working with a further education college and gaining experience in the building industry. The newly introduced Three Steps to Adventure, for years seven and eight, has a vocational element in that it provides challenge and the opportunity to develop self reliance on the same lines as the Duke of Edinburgh Award which is available for older pupils. The manufacturing and business-planning element of the highly successful Young Enterprise provides vocational development for those who choose to join in.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 29 The college's procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory, which is not as high as reported at the last inspection. The governing body carry out risk assessments but there are some areas of the college that concerned the inspection team. Some toilets are in poor condition and the music department is dirty and in urgent need of its planned refurbishment. Pupils reported that some toilets are locked during lessons and although they can ask staff for keys to them this is not conducive to a supportive environment, particularly for the girls. The college has adequate numbers of qualified first-aid staff and satisfactory arrangements are in place for the management and reporting of injuries occurring to pupils. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The named responsible person has been trained for this role, but the college needs to ensure that all staff have received appropriate training.
- 30 The college has a good pastoral system based on year teams. Tutors and heads of year have a good knowledge of the pupils' individual circumstances and the challenges they face which may affect their learning. Tutors meet with pupils for academic tutoring to discuss progress and target setting. The students are encouraged to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses. There are informal procedures in place for monitoring personal development and they are satisfactory. The tutor comments on the annual reports to parents show that tutors know the pupils well. Student services are well managed and through a wide range of agencies are helping to keep a number of pupils in college and motivated in their learning. Retracking is supporting pupils mainly in Years 7 and 8 who are having difficulties settling

into college; student support helps older pupils keep up with coursework and come to terms with emotional problems and the Chances Project, based in Newton Abbott, works with small groups of pupils who are at risk of exclusion from college. The Connexions Service has recently provided a personal adviser to work with pupils at risk of exclusion.

- 31 Overall, procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' work and progress are satisfactory. Most work is marked conscientiously, often with comments helping the pupil to improve. Grading systems do not routinely help pupils and parents to understand progress through the National Curriculum or towards particular GCSE grades, although this is better at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Reports to parents meet statutory requirements but often lack detail of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual pupil. Arrangements for consulting parents were criticised by some parents; as none occurred during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on their effectiveness.
- 32 There are effective procedures for monitoring attendance, which give the college good information to monitor individual pupils' attendance. The attendance clerk contacts parents if there are concerns on pupils' whereabouts. The education welfare officer visits the college regularly and he meets with heads of year to discuss issues and track patterns of low attendance. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and at the start of every lesson. A number of lessons do not start on time because some pupils do not move purposefully between lessons and some take too much time fussing and talking before teachers can start teaching.
- 33 The procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. A working party in the college has recently reviewed sanctions to ensure that behaviour is handled in a consistent manner. A system of rewards and sanctions is in place, but it is not applied consistently throughout the college. Students are in agreement that bullying is not a significant issue in the college, and they are confident that any bullying is tackled positively by teachers and discussed in personal and social education (PSE) lessons. They are also clear that racism and sexism are not issues in the college. The college's satisfactory programme for PSE makes a satisfactory contribution to the overall provision for ensuring the pupils' welfare.
- 34 The college is committed to a policy of inclusion and this allows some pupils to remain in college despite significant behavioural problems. A high proportion of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are happy that the college is encouraging their children to become mature and responsible young people.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 35 The college has a satisfactory partnership with parents; this is not as good statistically as reported at the last inspection. There was a low response to both the pre-inspection questionnaire and to the parents' meeting and overall parents and carers expressed less satisfaction with the college than they did at the time of the last inspection. However, nearly all agree that their children are working hard and making progress, and said that they feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or problems.

- 36 A significant percentage of parents do not feel they are well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection team supports this view as information provided for parents about the progress their children are making is satisfactory. Annual reports to parents need to be more sharply focussed on what pupils have achieved and what they need to do next to improve their performance. Meetings between parents and teachers are generally well attended and help to keep parents aware of the progress their children are making.
- 37 Generally, good use is made of the pupil planner as a regular means of communication between teachers and parents. While a few parents feel some teachers do not always regularly look at the planners, many parents value the planner as a link with the form tutors and heads of year. Twenty seven per cent of parents who returned questionnaires said their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home and at the meeting, some parents thought that the quantity set is variable. The inspectors do not support these negative views as good amounts of worthwhile homework were seen to be set during the inspection. The key stage guides provide parents with appropriate information about what they can expect in terms of homework. The Year 7 pupils interviewed during the inspection said teachers do set homework regularly, pupils are expected to complete it and it is marked. Homework was raised as a key issue of the last inspection and the college has addressed it successfully.
- 38 There is satisfactory information provided for parents through the newsletters entitled 'Partnerships' and the prospectus. The prospectus and the governor's annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. Meetings are held for the parents of children transferring from primary schools and on work experience for the parents of Year 10 students. The college has produced the required Home/College Agreement; it is issued to new parents as part of a welcome pack and is printed in the student planner. Parental returns of it have been very low. There are some opportunities for parents to be directly involved with the life of the college; for example classroom painting at weekends. The college also benefits from parents and friends of the college who support and raise money for the college through events organised by the Dawlish Community College Association. These factors show that the college is making satisfactory efforts to establish a partnership with parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the college is having a satisfactory influence on standards of learning.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

- 39 Overall, leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the college and these are reflected well in its work. There is an inclusive ethos in which all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties, are supported well. Although there is an average level of fixed-term exclusion, permanent exclusion is rare. There is a commitment to raising standards of attainment but this is not sufficiently explicit in the published aims and priorities. The college aims to provide education for 16 to 18 year-olds in the future. Although this is an understandable and in many ways laudable objective, there are signs that it is deflecting the college from some of its current priorities.

- 40 At the time of the inspection the long-term absence of a senior member of staff had given rise to temporary management arrangements. Some members of staff have an excessive workload and there is confusion among staff about other responsibilities, particularly in the area of pupil support. As a result, the delegation of responsibilities is currently unsatisfactory. Subject leaders are generally effective, as evidenced by the good teaching and recent improvements in standards of attainment in most subjects. There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff. There is a good policy for the management of staff performance, negotiated with care to ensure wide acceptance and ownership. The college has very good systems for the training of student teachers, in partnership with the University of Exeter, and for the induction and training of new staff including newly-qualified and supply teachers. Professional development is linked both to the college's aims and priorities and to the individual's personal needs. Although performance management is at an early stage, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are currently satisfactory and have the potential to be good.
- 41 The college acts well in order to achieve its targets. For instance, poor performance in the 2000 Key Stage 3 tests led the college to carefully analyse the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and to take appropriate action to raise their attainment in Key Stage 4.
- 42 The limited financial resources are used well. Budgets are carefully planned using an audit of needs and priorities rather than historical cost. Principles of best value are applied well; the most cost-effective sources of supplies and services are continually sought. For instance, the catering contract was renegotiated to provide better value and a menu attractive to the pupils. The use of specific grant is satisfactory, as is the use of new technology in the administration of the college. Apart from routine administration, ICT is used to analyse assessment results and to set targets. In this respect time could be used more cost-effectively as data is entered by a senior member of the teaching staff. However, overall staff are well matched to the demands of the curriculum.
- 43 The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily. It has a well organised committee structure and individuals with specific responsibilities where appropriate, such as for special educational needs. There is a clear understanding of the division of responsibilities between college staff and governors. Although individual staff and governors have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses this is not shared by all. Presentations to governors, for instance on pupil attainment, are beginning to improve their understanding.
- 44 Recent and current developments are improving the accommodation of the college. New facilities for drama, the dining hall which can also be used as a large space for teaching and other activities, and the refurbished classrooms for modern foreign languages, have been an effective use of resources. Two new science laboratories and a library and information centre were nearing completion at the time of the inspection. However some of the accommodation, for instance for music and physical education, remains poor so overall accommodation is unsatisfactory. Provision of learning resources is poor overall, although there are variations between subjects. It is inadequate in science, music, art and physical education, and the number of computers for pupils to use is half that currently recommended, although the current building programme will partly resolve this.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45 In order to further raise standards and improve the quality of education provided, the senior management and governing body should:

- Improve the provision of learning resources, in particular for ICT, art, science, music and in the library, meeting current national guidelines where appropriate;
(paragraphs 44, 83, 87, 122, 140)

- Raise pupils' achievements and attainment in Information and Communications Technology at both Key Stages by:

- Ensuring all pupils receive sufficient teaching and access to resources
- Improving provision across the subjects of the curriculum
- Selecting appropriate courses that meet pupils' needs
- Clarifying responsibility for monitoring and coordinating this aspect of the curriculum

(paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 115-123)

- Raise standards of attainment in art and RE at both Key Stages, and in history at Key Stage 4 by ensuring teaching of consistent quality through monitoring and professional development of staff.

(paragraphs 1, 3, 84, 87, 103, 107, 152, 153)

- Improve behaviour out of lessons by:

- Rigorous monitoring and implementation of a consistent policy for pupil behaviour
- Raising the expectations of staff and pupils of acceptable behaviour
- Improving punctuality to lessons

(paragraphs 8, 10)

- Improve the focus of the college on raising attainment by:

- Ensuring that published plans and priorities make such links explicit

- Ensuring that senior staff have appropriate, manageable and well-understood portfolios of responsibility
(paragraphs 39, 40)

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	148
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	63

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	36	58	38	7	2	0
Percentage	4.7	24.3	39.2	25.7	4.7	1.4	0.0

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

Information about the college's pupils

Pupils on the college's roll	Y7-Y11
Number of pupils on the college's roll	864
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free college meals	83

Special educational needs	Y7-Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22
Number of pupils on the college's special educational needs register	141

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

Pupil mobility in the last college year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	9.4
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	95	81

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	55	53
	Girls	55	56	48
	Total	94	111	101
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	53(66)	63(70)	57(64)
	National	63(63)	65(62)	59(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	16(34)	39(48)	26(32)
	National	28(28)	42(38)	30(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	55	45
	Girls	68	60	48
	Total	119	115	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	68(68)	65(71)	53(69)
	National	64(64)	66(64)	62(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	22(40)	38(45)	20(39)
	National	31(31)	39(37)	29(28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	73	72	145

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	23	68	71
	Girls	32	65	69
	Total	55	133	140
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	College	38(43)	92(93)	97(98)
	National	47.4(46.6)	90.6(90.9)	95.6(95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	College	35
	National	38.4

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	837
Any other minority ethnic group	23

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	29	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	43.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.52

Education support staff: Y7-Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	449

Deployment of teachers: Y7-Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73
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Average teaching group size: Y7-Y11

Key Stage 3	22.6
Key Stage 4	20.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	10.8
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	17.9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2134998
Total expenditure	2129724
Expenditure per pupil	2663
Balance brought forward from previous year	19990
Balance carried forward to next year	25264

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	804
Number of questionnaires returned	216

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	17.6	63.9	11.6	3.2	3.7
My child is making good progress in college.	23.1	60.2	6.5	1.4	8.8
Behaviour in the college is good.	17.6	50.9	11.6	5.6	13.9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17.1	44.4	19.0	8.3	10.6
The teaching is good.	18.1	58.8	4.6	1.9	16.2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16.7	44.9	17.6	8.3	12.5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	38.9	41.2	9.7	2.8	6.9
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35.2	50.5	5.6	1.4	7.4
The college works closely with parents.	19.0	39.8	23.1	7.4	11.1
The college is well led and managed.	24.1	47.7	9.7	5.1	13.9
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	21.3	56.9	8.8	2.8	9.7
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16.7	35.6	16.7	6.9	24.1

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well. Below average pupils reach higher standards than are indicated by their earlier results.
- Pupils learn well because of the very good subject expertise of their teachers, especially in Years 10-11.
- The acting head of department is providing good leadership. Her colleagues are supportive of her in trying to improve standards further and ready to implement new methods to help them do that.
- The department evaluates itself. This is leading to new developments in teaching and curriculum materials from Years 7-11.
- English lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' personal development.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment information and procedures in the raising of standards. For example: clear setting of targets and close monitoring of progress towards those targets.
- Planning: for higher attaining pupils (both potential and actual) in Years 7-9; to ensure the best use of time in lessons; and to secure better concentration when pupils work independently.
- Standards of boys' writing, especially organisation, accuracy and expression.

46 In the year 2000 national tests the pupils' standards were below average and not as high as in 1999 and 1998. However, this was satisfactory achievement given the pupils' standards when they entered the college. Standards were also below average in comparison with pupils from similar backgrounds. The pupils did better in their mathematics and science tests than in English. Girls did significantly better than boys in English, repeating the pattern of 1998 and 1999. Results improved significantly in the 2001 tests: 70% reached Level 5 or better. However, girls continued to do significantly better than boys.

47 In the year 2000 GCSE English examination the proportion gaining grade C or higher was average for pupils nationally and for those from similar backgrounds. Achievement was satisfactory given the standards achieved by these pupils at the end of Year 9. However, the pupils tended to do less well in English than in their other subjects. Girls did significantly better than boys. In 2001 there was an increase in the proportion gaining a grade C or better. In English literature the college enters fewer pupils than most colleges. In 2000 the proportion achieving grade C or better was average and fell from the above average level of 1998 and 1999. Pupils tended to do better in

literature than in their other subjects. Results improved in 2001: over 80% gained grades A*-C.

- 48 Standards in the current Year 9 are average. This overall good achievement is apparent in the good progress made in writing by pupils whose standards were below average when they entered the college. Teaching is well matched to the needs of these pupils who are in a majority when they enter the college. As a result, they secure consistent improvements in paragraphing, punctuation and expression and reach average standards. Standards of speaking and listening are above average. Pupils across the attainment range make sustained contributions during whole class discussions. Reading skills are average. Most read fluently. Well targeted support has helped pupils with special educational needs become effective, independent readers. Other pupils show they can make deductions independently about a range of texts. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The writing of a number of boys lacks the organisation and accuracy required to reach average standards, even though many are articulate speakers and thoughtful readers. Some higher attaining pupils are not achieving the standards they could. Although they write with a reliable accuracy, their expression and style lack the range required for higher levels. The texts they study and the tasks they do are not as consistently matched to their needs as are those for middle and lower attaining pupils.
- 49 Standards in the current Year 11 are average. This is good achievement. These pupils were below average at the start of Year 10 and they have made good progress, especially in writing. Standards of speaking and listening are above average. Confident contributions were made in a number of lessons on a variety of texts. Reading standards are average. However, higher attaining pupils make better progress than in Years 7-9. The work they do in their ability based groups is well focused on their needs in terms of challenging texts and tasks. More are showing grade A*-B standards than earlier attainments would suggest. In particular they apply knowledge and understanding well to support or argue a point of view about, for example, the motives of Macbeth or the moral issues in 'The Crucible'. Pupils across the attainment range have a good knowledge of the texts they study, but those whose standards are below average are less skilled in relating their knowledge and understanding to the demands of the title. Writing skills are average. More than half the pupils are producing course work at grade C or better. Higher attaining pupils have developed greatly in confidence and ambition. Their vocabulary and sentence construction are more varied. Whatever the task they try to interest the reader. Those at the C/D range have sound paragraphing but sometimes lack the consistency of accuracy and range of phrasing of the higher attainers. A very small number are well below average. Their work contains a number of errors. Even so, they are making good progress. Assignments are longer, focused well on the title – some have produced some compelling reflective writing – and they are developing better organisation such as paragraphing.

- 50 Standards of teaching and learning are good at both key stages, but there is better consistency of challenge for higher attaining pupils during Years 10-11. During Years 7-9 the department is effective in improving the overall below average standards of the pupils. This reflects well on the teachers' expectations and aspirations and the subject expertise that they show in the selection of materials and teaching methods. As a result learning is good. Pupils are required to think in all lessons about a text and they make good progress in writing because they are given clear structures and guidance. This good practice for low average and below average pupils continues in Years 10-11. The teacher's inventive techniques helped Year 10 pupils to understand how characters in 'Of Mice and Men' are perceived by others. Their thinking was constantly challenged and their ability to recall and apply previous learning confirmed the consistency of previous good teaching. In Years 7-9 there was not enough consistent evidence of tasks being adapted to meet the needs of higher and potentially higher attaining pupils. This is in contrast to Years 10-11. Pupils in the highest set in Year 10 are already producing standards above those indicated by their Year 9 results because teaching matches their needs and attainments.
- 51 Pupils of all attainments in Years 10-11 know and understand their texts well because of the subject expertise of their teachers. They also receive accurate and helpful marking that acknowledges strengths but shows them how to improve. Consistently set homework extends and consolidates their attainments. Marking in Years 7-9 is not as precise and informative. Teachers and pupils are not making enough use of National Curriculum criteria so pupils do not know enough about their potential and how to achieve it. In Years 7-11 there were some lessons where not enough planning had been given to managing time effectively. In these lessons pupils did not do as much as they could have – either taking too long in group discussion or lacking urgency and concentration when doing individual writing. In most lessons pupils responded with interest to whole class discussions. When led by the teacher they engage well. Working independently in class is less strong. They need more structured and rigorous opportunities to improve this aspect of their response.
- 52 The department has achieved satisfactory improvement since the last report. A new acting head of department provides good leadership. She is clear sighted about how the department needs to develop to improve standards further. For example, she and her colleagues are developing a more explicit approach to using assessment information to set targets and monitor closely the pupils' progress towards them. Her team is also committed to raising standards. The response in Year 7 to the National Literacy Framework is positive and is clearly having an impact. It is also having an impact in the teaching of other year groups. The interest that the teachers create in lessons means that they make a good contribution to the pupils' personal development, through effectively focusing on moral and social issues.
- 53 Overall arrangements for the development of literacy are satisfactory. There has been a number of effective initiatives through the literacy strategy group.

The main emphasis has been on the development of subject specific vocabulary. This is having a satisfactory impact in most subjects. English teachers have received training with regard to the new national initiative and others are scheduled to receive their training. The strategy is already having an impact in lessons in Year 7 onwards.

- 54 During the inspection the best practice seen was in science. In addition to helping the pupils become confident and accurate in their use of key words, there is a stronger emphasis on correct spelling and a number of opportunities for reading. Elsewhere, the emphasis on the systematic development of literacy is uneven. History makes good use of techniques such as writing frames to support the pupils' work. Pupils also write in a range of different formats. In geography teachers are developing more sustained pupil writing.
- 55 The college is in the process of appointing a new whole college literacy coordinator for the further development of literacy. This is a sound course of action. At the moment there is no medium to long term literacy strategy. There is also no policy to guide teachers' further development or monitoring. The library/learning resource centre has been closed this term because of new building works. This has a detrimental effect on opportunities for independent learning. The librarian has a lot of expertise in the fields of study and research skills which the pupils need. There are courses in Years 7 and 10 but the librarian has not been involved in the literacy strategy group. This is a shortcoming given the learning resource centre's key role in the development of literacy.

Drama

- 56 No lessons were seen in Year 9.
- 57 In the 2000 GCSE examination standards the proportion reaching grade C or better and the overall standards based on the average grade were each below average. Results improved in 2001: there was an increase in A*-C grades and the average grade improved significantly.
- 58 In the current Year 11 standards are average. The higher attaining pupils are extremely confident and comfortable in their use of dramatic techniques. Their development of a silent tableau in which the whole class cooperated to create some powerful representations was of a very high standard. Those pupils who are at an average or below average standard are less in tune with what is required in drama. This is reflected in some self conscious responses when asked to work with or in front of others.
- 59 In Year 11 the teaching is very good. Standards are average because the college enters considerably more of its pupils for drama than most colleges. Therefore some pupils enter the examination who would not have the opportunity elsewhere. 30% of the current Year 11 will enter the examination

– twice the usual national figure. This reflects well on the aspirations and expectations of the college and the teacher.

- 60 In the lessons observed the teacher worked with two very different groups of pupils in terms of their standards and confidence. With one he used music, space, blackout and lighting to great effect. He created a secure atmosphere for committed and successful work. With the other group, he matched his methods to suit their overall lower standard. Tasks were shorter and well supported. Basic requirements such as focus and concentration were consistently practised and reinforced. Despite their lack of confidence the pupils achieved well.
- 61 Results and standards are improving because of the high standard of teaching. Not enough use is made as yet of assessment information to set precise targets for the pupils or to monitor and guide their progress towards them. At the current time boys are underrepresented in GCSE groups. The subject makes an effective contribution to the pupils extra curricular and cultural development through Shakespearean workshops, a public performance of an improvisation based on 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and a performance on the Holocaust.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good.
- Pupils respond well to challenging questions, helping to maintain the brisk pace of lessons.
- Pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding, by the age of 14, are good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- National test and examination results show marked improvements in 2001 compared to the previous year.

Areas for improvement

- The quality and range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils' self-knowledge of their learning.
- Equality of access and opportunity.
- Addressing the needs of the gifted and talented pupils.

- 62 In 2000, the standards of attainment of pupils in mathematics were in line with the national average for all pupils at the age of 14 and below average for all pupils at the age of 16.

- 63 The proportion of pupils at the age of 14 achieving level 5 or above is in line with both the national average for all colleges and the average for similar colleges. The proportion of pupils at the age of 14 achieving level 6 or above is in line with the national average, including a significant number of pupil's achieving level 7 or above and above average when compared to similar colleges. Pupils' test results correspond closely with teachers' own assessments, with boys performing as well as girls. The levels in mathematics are similar to science and better than English. The average points scores are close to the national average for all colleges and above average when compared to similar colleges. The average points scores are similar to science and better than English.
- 64 In 2001, results were above average for all pupils at the age of 14 and at the age of 16 when compared to the national average. The proportions of pupils at the age of 14 achieving level 5 or above and level 6 or above are higher than the national average for all colleges. Overall girls performed better than boys. The levels achieved in mathematics are as good as science and better than English. In terms of average points scores. Over the last three years there has been a steady improvement, with boys performing as well as boys nationally and girls performing better than girls nationally.
- 65 In 2000, the proportion of pupils at the age of 16 achieving GCSE mathematics grades A* to C is below the national average, with boys performing better than girls. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE mathematics grades A* to G is close to the national average with boys performing equally as well as girls. The average points scores in mathematics are similar to science and better than English. In 2001, the proportion of pupils at the age of 16 achieving GCSE mathematics grades A* to C is above the national average. Over the last three years there has been a steady improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining GCSE mathematics grades A* to C.
- 66 Given that levels of prior attainment in mathematics by pupils entering the college are below average and that attainment in mathematics by pupils leaving the college is average, the department is adding good value.
- 67 The standard of work seen of pupils at the age of 14 is satisfactory with some good and some unsatisfactory aspects. The scheme of work covers all four National Curriculum attainment targets. Pupils work well in lessons as a result of effective teaching that demands much of them. Many lesson activities focus on the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding, although there are few opportunities for pupils' personal development through group work and investigation. There is insufficient emphasis on writing and recording key statements and words that would empower pupils in their learning. The quality of written work by the highest attaining pupils is good. Pupils are encouraged to use a variety of means of recording and conveying information such as graphs, tables, statistics and diagrams. The work of higher attaining pupils contains clear examples and full exercises which enable them to practise new skills. The quality of written work by the average

and lowest attaining pupils is unsatisfactory with poor work often going unchallenged. There are few recorded examples with an over reliance on the published worksheet. Many exercises require answers only and are not marked. Pupils make limited use of ICT across the key stage.

- 68 The standard of work seen of pupils at the age of 16 is satisfactory overall, with some good and some unsatisfactory aspects. Pupils cover a range of topics in line with the GCSE schemes of work. Written work by the highest attaining pupils is good. The work that is well above the level expected nationally is legible, with a concern for accuracy, layout and appearance. Pupils persevere with difficult tasks until complete, for example Year 11 pupils investigated thoroughly the amplitude and wavelength of a trigonometrical function before recording their findings to support and reinforce their learning. Written work by average and lower attaining pupils is of insufficient quantity and quality to aid learning. Pupils make limited use of the various ways of recording and conveying information and key statements and words that would empower the pupils in their learning are overlooked. Work is often inaccurate and incomplete and without the concern for layout and appearance that is demanded of the higher attaining pupils. Pupils make very limited use of ICT.
- 69 The standard of literacy in mathematics is satisfactory. Investigative teaching approaches in lessons, involving pupils developing speaking and listening skills through discussion and group work are more evident at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. Pupils across both key stages respond well to challenging questions consolidating good use of a technical vocabulary and knowledge of concepts. Pupils' positive attitude to learning, particularly the highest attaining pupils creates an ethos where many feel secure in volunteering answers and opinions and contributes well to their overall achievement. Reading and writing skills are not strongly enforced. Formal opportunities for developing literacy skills in lessons other than through planned coursework included in the scheme of work are limited. A written record of learning objectives at the start of lessons is not consistently applied. Key statements, words and hypotheses are uncommon in exercise books.
- 70 The standard of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, in geography, pupils were observed using scale measurements to estimate distances from the epicentres of earthquakes and construct bar charts showing the results of chemical weathering on gravestones. In modern foreign languages pupils were observed using flashcards to calculate the sums and products of pairs of numbers using the target language. In design and technology the standard of numeracy is good at both key stages. In science the standard of numeracy is good at Key Stage 4 where pupils were observed applying the rules of algebra to velocity, frequency and wavelength formulae. In mathematics there is a comprehensive numeracy policy designed to support the National Numeracy Strategy and assessment data is interrogated to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are limited with regard to strategies for improving pupils' numeracy skills. There is no whole

college policy on numeracy, its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. No audit has been conducted across the curriculum and there is no guidance and support regarding keywords, definitions, methods and timing in order to raise staff awareness. Library books to support coursework or sustain pupils' interest, learning and curiosity are currently unavailable.

- 71 Achievement in mathematics is good overall, given the below average levels of attainment on entry to the college. This is the case for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. In 2000, pupils' achievements at the age of 14 were good. Their achievements at the age of 16 in relation to their prior attainment at the age of 14 were satisfactory. In 2001, the achievement of pupils at the age of 14 was very good. Pupils' achievements at the age of 16 in relation to their prior attainment at the age of 14, is good. The commitment of specialist mathematics teachers and quality of teaching is improving pupils' level achievement in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 3. Opportunities for extending gifted and talented pupils are not evident in the scheme of work and lesson plans, which undermines the achievement of these pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy into the scheme of work has had a positive impact on progress, but the inconsistent use of 'mental starters' to lessons limits the opportunity for pupils to refine and improve their numerical skills. Pupils make only limited use of ICT to support their learning, owing to difficulties in access to the college's computer facilities. High attaining pupils' numerical skills are good but they lack an appreciation of the power of estimation, prior to using the calculator and establishing hypotheses. Average and low attaining pupils lack confidence in applying basic numerical skills and there is scope for more systematic and rigorous setting out of calculations in exercise books. High attaining Year 9 pupils can complete the inverse of problems involving percentage figures well. Average attaining pupils could divide fractions by fractions from first principles. Low attaining pupils identified the inverse of dividing by 0.01 and applied their skills successfully to a variety of questions. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the rules of algebra is satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measurement are good. For example, average attaining Year 11 pupils applied their knowledge of trigonometry successfully to work on bearings. Low attaining pupils were observed in a single lesson completing a variety of tasks appropriate to their prior attainment and using powers of concentration in a brisk and purposeful fashion on bearings, time and distance and reading tabulated data. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of handling data and probability is good. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers, particularly when supported by Special Needs Assistants.
- 72 Teaching is overall good and ranges from excellent to poor. There are many examples of very good teaching at both key stages. Learning is good overall but the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding are undermined at Key Stage 4 by the wide range of ability in a number of classes, which is not catered for in some teachers' lesson plans. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and is a strength of the department. The teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient teaching

of ICT applications for all pupils. Teachers' planning is effective and learning objectives are almost always shared with pupils at the start of lessons. Teachers often do not include a plenary session for pupils to confirm what they know understand and can do at the end of lessons. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are high. Good use is made of open and closed questions, which challenges pupils' thinking, involves intellectual effort and deepens understanding. Teaching methodologies that reflect pupils' capacity to concentrate and draw on previously taught skills are not well thought through for the average and lower attaining pupils at both key stages. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, instant work on enlargement confused a number of pupils, whereas conceptual development from the start with many opportunities to review and practise the processes involved would have captured pupils' interest and given them confidence. Opportunities for small group work, independent learning and work at the whiteboard that enhance pupils' personal development are uncommon. Where lessons are good and very good, teachers use time and original resources very effectively to promote learning and good behaviour. Available resources are used well but emphasis remains on the published worksheet. The absence of graphic calculators and interactive software undermines the pace of learning. Homework of an appropriate standard is regularly issued, but work marked by pupils is not monitored. There is a lack of diagnostic annotation identifying pupils' weaknesses. Pupils are unaware of the National Curriculum level at which they are working or what to do to improve. Pupils' self-knowledge of their learning at the age of 16 is satisfactory with GCSE targets for improvement established early.

- 73 Leadership and management of the subject are good. National test and examination results show a marked improvement in 2001 compared to the previous year. Statutory requirements are met. The department has made good progress in addressing the issues raised since the last inspection, however, upper and lower ability blocks on the timetable undermine pupils' equality opportunity when they are capable of working at a higher level than others in the lower ability block and vice versa. Subject specialists work well together and there is a clear commitment to raising standards. The department's handbook is both comprehensive and succinct; it is supported by good supplementary material. The analysis of data is very good, identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses, based on good procedures for assessment. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good. However, opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, such as extra-curricular activities, numeracy across the curriculum, celebration of pupils' achievement through extensive displays of their work, sharing of good practice, lead lessons, the use of the library and ICT are not yet in place.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Teaching by knowledgeable staff is good, resulting in pupils' good achievement;
- A significant minority of teaching is inspirational which is stimulating a high level of interest in science;
- The most recent data shows rising standards of attainment;
- The science department is very well led and is well managed;
- A significant improvement in accommodation is about to be completed.

Areas for improvement

- The frequency of the monitoring of teaching and learning;
- The match between teachers' expectations and pupils learning needs in a small minority of lessons
- The department lacks resources. There are too few textbooks and insufficient electronic equipment to enable pupils to learn about the use of computers in making measurements in science.

74 Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were close to the national average for all colleges and for similar colleges. The results improved in 2001. In most of the past five years standards of attainment have been maintained slightly above the national average. Girls have done better than boys, reflecting the national trend, in most of the past five years.

75 Results at the higher grades at GCSE have been average in recent years, with just under half of boys and girls reaching at least grade C in 2000. The proportion attaining grade A or A* was close to the national averages for boys and for girls. Compared with similar colleges, A*-C passes were well above average. The proportion of pupils attaining at least grade G was above average. Standards of attainment have been sustained in recent years. The A*-C passes in 1996, reported in the previous inspection, was particularly good because an unusually large group of able girls were then in Year 11.

76 The standard of work seen in Years 9 during the inspection was average. Pupils reach similar standards in physics, chemistry and biology. High attaining pupils have a good understanding of, for example, respiration and how it is linked to digestion. When investigating they can devise a fair test and take and record measurements accurately. These pupils are developing good research skills into, for example, the effects of smoking, drugs and alcohol abuse. Teachers are using imaginative methods to improve pupils' understanding and spelling of scientific words. Pupils whose knowledge of science is average usually produce work of a satisfactory standard. By the end of Year 9 they know, for example, how to recognise the three main types of rock and how to interpret evidence of the slow movement of the continents. The presentation of written work is often good, and sometimes very good, showing pupils' pride in their work. Lower attaining pupils are well taught, receiving good individual attention, but standards are often below average. However a special needs pupil had learned good drawing skills to illustrate features of plants because the teacher used these same skills effectively.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct a fair test in simple situations, but have difficulty, for example calculating the energy content per gram of food in an investigation. The attainment of boys and girls in lessons is similar.

- 77 Boys' and girls' attainment at the end of Year 11 is average overall. The proportion of pupils aiming to attain at least grade C at GCSE in 2002 is improving. This is the result of well-planned steps by the science teachers to raise attainment. Pupils are also learning better how to evaluate the match between the evidence gathered in scientific investigations and their predictions. In lessons higher attaining pupils can apply their knowledge of waves to explain refraction and diffraction well. Understanding by these pupils is above average, for example, when calculating speed, acceleration or the costs of running different electrical appliances. Standards in pupils' scientific investigations are above average and rising.
- 78 Standards by boys and girls of moderate attainment in Year 11 are average – work on studying how force affects the length of wires is good but does not cover other materials. In biology much use is made of worksheets, which limits the development of pupils' drawing skills, although the work shows an understanding up to grade C standard. These pupils produce reports of investigations that are satisfactory, but predictions are not always firmly linked to scientific knowledge. The analysis of experimental work is often below average but is improving in the current Year 11. Standards for lower attaining groups are below average. There is a reliance on copied notes as pupils' ability to write accurately is limited. Pupils' own writing often lacks the clarity needed for later revision. These pupils' ability to apply their understanding of science is limited because their recall of earlier work is often weak. When carrying out investigations, pupils make simple predictions but many are unable to link this to science learned earlier. Graph plotting skills vary from good to poor.
- 79 Boys and girls achieve well in both key stages because they make good progress over time in lessons that are carefully planned, enabling them to learn effectively in class. Achievement is similar across all the branches of the science curriculum. The careful attention given in lessons to special needs pupils ensures that their good achievements do not lag behind those of others. Particularly talented pupils are identified. Their needs are met in the top sets, where they make satisfactory progress.
- 80 Pupils learn well, making good progress in lessons because good teaching by knowledgeable staff is effective. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes inspirational and is equally good in lessons for pupils in all years. Learning is good and well paced because teachers plan lessons carefully to enable all pupils, including those with special needs, to learn well. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They learn in well-managed classes where good behaviour and interest contribute to good achievement over time. In an example of inspirational teaching every Year 7 pupil in the class was fired to learn enthusiastically about how salt changes

the boiling temperature of water. A particular feature was the thorough and effective planning that included spelling and meaning of important words, measurement and recording as well as acquisition of new scientific knowledge. In another meticulously planned lesson in Year 11 pupils worked hard, discovering the rules of genetic inheritance using an imaginative game. Although no lessons were judged unsatisfactory, certain features of a few lessons need to improve. In two classes of high attaining pupils in Years 9 and 10, the expectations were not sufficiently high because time was not well used. In another lesson in Key Stage 3 low attaining pupils were asked to do calculations that were too difficult for them. Learning by pupils with special needs is good because they are helped well by their teachers and support staff. In most lessons, boys and girls learn equally well. Two exceptions were noted in key stage 4, where boys' interest was disappointing. Appropriate homework is set regularly. Pupils' work is marked helpfully. This contributes well to their learning.

- 81 The leadership of the science department is very good. There is very clear educational direction to raise attainment, which is beginning to yield results. Management in the department is good, but at present the Head of Science does not have sufficient time allocated to raise standards by monitoring the quality of teaching and learning effectively. A new more appropriate curriculum has been introduced. Pupils are tested regularly and their results are recorded in individual Science Profile books. This keeps them well informed of their progress and achievement. Teachers make very good use of their assessment of pupils to guide their planning, for example, analysis of pupils' scientific investigations in 2000 was used to improve a weakness in their ability to analyse and evaluate their results. Invaluable support by two technicians enables teachers to use equipment well to support learning.
- 82 The good provision for special needs pupils could be better if learning support assistants become more involved in the planning of lessons. At present it is not usual to have pupils' individual educational plans available in lessons. As a result their impact on pupils' learning is not as good as it should be.
- 83 Improvements since the 1997 inspection are satisfactory. New procedures to assess how well pupils progress are in place and pupils are better informed. Science revision work is now posted on the computer network to support learning. The quality of textbooks has improved with the introduction of a new and more appropriate well-planned curriculum. Two new laboratories, very close to completion, are of good quality, flexible and with good space for displays. Certain features criticised in the 1997 inspection report have yet to improve. The department still lacks resources in certain areas, which adversely affects learning. There is only one computer in science, no dataloggers to enable pupils to use computers for measurement and not enough textbooks to help pupils with their homework. There is a shortage of microscopes, power packs and oscilloscopes.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The range of learning opportunities has increased for 15-16 year olds.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of departmental documentation to include clear targets for developing the subject and for raising standards
- Standards of attainment for all pupils at the end of both key stages.
- Standards of achievement for pupils in some lessons.
- Broaden the range of media and materials used in both key stages.
- The use of artists in residence to extend pupils' knowledge of art and design.
- The quality of teaching so that it is not so variable.
- Assessment procedures and their use to inform all teaching.
- Monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress.

84 The overall standards of work in art are well below average, a significant drop on the standards reported in the last inspection. The results for 16 year olds are significantly below results nationally and the results for 14 year olds are consistently below results nationally and have been for the last three years. All pupils use drawing skills and are competent with the media and materials they use. What they cannot do is use the higher levels of drawing skills and increase their levels of competence across a broad range of media and materials. They look at the work of other artists and designers and learn about them but they do not learn from them to inform their own work. There is limited evidence of pupils combining different styles and patterns researched from the works of other artists. They show an understanding of the use of colour but not enough about using layering effects and materials to create textures and special finishes to their work. The poor level of resources, especially up to date textbooks and stimulus materials, has the biggest impact on standards overall. There are no opportunities for pupils to learn how to create 2D and 3D work by interpreting and manipulating images on the computer.

85 The observation of work during the inspection confirmed this. At the end of both key stages pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall, with few pupils showing any substantial achievement in comparison with their previous attainment. However, direct observations of individual lessons showed, that with good to excellent teaching, pupils of all ages and abilities, including pupils with special education needs, make good progress in learning and achieve satisfactory to good standards in their work. Older pupils can use Aboriginal drawings to inform their pattern making and produce combination Gargoyle drawings and paintings, which are textured, from a limited palette. Younger pupils can develop their understanding of conflict Picasso style in his work called Guernica. They use the knowledge gained to inform their own portrayals of modern day conflicts. Drawing and painting skills are good and some pupils produce good quality work. 12 year olds, in only their third lesson, can complete sketches of a pattern painting using pencil that shows a good tonal range. They can experiment with their colour palette to produce

different patterns based on the work of Victor Vasarely. However, in all years, the use of sketchbooks to inform pupils' artwork is underdeveloped and the production of stimulus materials is dependent upon the teachers' own initiative.

- 86 Teaching is good overall but the quality ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. At the time of the last inspection the teaching was invariably good. In the good to excellent lessons basic skills are taught to a high standard, behaviour is very well managed and expectations are high. Planning is well thought through and what pupils are expected to learn is made very clear. Opportunities to refine work are built into the planning and there is a strong emphasis on concentration to improve the quality of pupils' work. Resources are limited but presented and used well. On the occasions where there is one-to-one tuition this is very effective because teachers show good knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and plan activities geared to their individual needs. In the unsatisfactory lessons learning needs are not met because there is not an accurate scheme for assessing what pupils know and can do. Basic skills are not well taught and expectations are often too low for both learning and behaviour. Pupils are not given the depth of knowledge they need to inform their work and the learning is not assessed and monitored. Artists-in-residence are not used and there are no planned visits to galleries to extend pupils' knowledge of art and design. Pupils respond very positively to the better teaching, use the allocated time well especially in the excellent lessons where high levels of concentration are maintained through carefully thought out prompts to keep pupils focused; like, 'Make sure your pencil is doing the right thing!' and 'I want you to work because I want you to be rewarded'. They take more responsibility for their own work using and understanding a good range of vocabulary. As their confidence increases so do their decision-making skills.
- 87 The management of the department is unsatisfactory. The department has gone through changes of staff. At the time of the inspection, two part-time teachers are being used to meet staffing requirements. They are making a considerable contribution to the work of the department and their employment in the department has been well managed. The art curriculum is now broader for 14-16 year olds but the range of learning opportunities that enrich pupils' experiences in art has not increased. The management of assessment is unsatisfactory. Not mentioned at the last inspection, improvements are now needed to enable clear starting points to be established for each pupil on entry to the college. Assessment is not used to inform the teachers' planning and to monitor the pupils' progress. Monitoring of the teaching is needed to ensure that the quality is consistent. As at the last inspection the departmental documentation still needs further development to indicate a targeted development plan and a vision for the future. The lack of a broad range of quality resources is a serious issue in the department because it is affecting standards in both key stages and limiting the development of pupils' skills of independent learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- The GCSE results in design and technology were well above the National Average in 2000.
- Management of the department is good.
- Teachers work well together as a departmental team.
- Curriculum Planning has improved.
- There is a good level of accommodation.

Areas for improvement:

- Standards in GCSE in some aspects of the subject
- Curriculum needs to meet statutory requirements.
- Monitor teaching and learning to share good practice and plan more effectively for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- Increase the range of ICT resources and use ICT more effectively to raise the levels of achievement

88 In 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A* to C was in line with the national average and with similar colleges. Girls outperform boys. Results in 2001, have improved, with girls continuing to outperform boys. Students achieved better results in design and technology in 2000, than they did in most other subjects. Pupils also achieve better results in food technology than they do in other examination options in design and technology. Not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 study a design and technology subject. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2000, indicates that pupils are working well above the national average with girls outperforming the boys. This did not match the level of work seen during the inspection, which was broadly in line with the national average.

89 In work seen during the inspection, attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the standard expected of pupils nationally. This represents a good level of achievement. In the lessons seen pupils show skills of analysing a range of existing products. When pupils enter the college, they have a varied range of experience of design and technology. In years 7 to 9 pupils are introduced to a range of materials and develop basic skills in designing and making products in food, graphics, resistant materials, textiles and electronics. A good range of knowledge underpins and increases their understanding of the products they design. In graphics, students are taught a range of two- and three-dimensional drawing skills and apply these skills well to their work in other specialist areas within technology. All pupils design and make products that are designed for particular commercial purposes. During this process pupils research consumer preferences and apply the results of this research well to the development of their products. They use a good range of hand and machine tools safely when making products in all material areas. All students make satisfactory use of information technology in their work. For example, students use information technology to calculate the nutritious value of foods and use a computer aided sewing machine. However, not all pupils gain this experience and more extensive use is planned for pupils this year. The college also plans to introduce new software to increase computer aided drawing and manufacturing. In all specialist areas pupils use numerical data well to plan

and produce products and models which are often designed to scale. They present the results of surveys in the form of charts, graphs as well as calculating the nutritional value of food products.

- 90 In the work seen of pupils in Years 7 to 9, including those with special educational needs, achievement is good at the end of Year 9, when compared to the levels they achieve when they enter the college. Pupils use the full design process well and as a result they are beginning to work more independently. Pupils are guided by the structure that teachers provide in the lessons; this is often in the form of structured worksheets and notes to guide them in the stages of the design process. Pupils gain experience of assembling simple electronics circuits in Year 7 by following simple instructions. Pupils know and understand the knowledge that underpins their work on circuits. In Year 9 pupils in resistant materials design a range of storage products giving a good level of detail in the planning. Design portfolios show evidence of an improving standard of planning. Pupils use a suitable range of isometric and assembly drawings to communicate the development of their ideas at each stage of the process. In food technology pupils work at a particularly high level and demonstrate a good range of skills involving market research techniques and product testing and development skills.
- 91 In the work seen during the inspection, attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is above the level expected of students at this stage nationally. This is reflected in the results achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 and 2001. This improvement on standards in 2001 is as a result of the work within the department to raise standards. Teachers provide examples of work to enable pupils to ensure they cover all aspects of the examination marking criteria. All pupils use a wide range of investigation and research skills, and evaluate strengths and weaknesses effectively as they progress with their design ideas. They develop work of good quality, including a range of making skills that involve them in considering methods of large-scale manufacturing processes. In graphic products, pupils develop a good range of drawing skills and work methodically through each stage of the design process. This was seen in a Year 10 resistant materials lesson where pupils were guided in their work by following a basic structure when making a mechanical toy.
- 92 In the work seen of pupils in Years 10 and 11 achievement is good. Pupils increase their skills in using the design process to produce good quality coursework. The work pupils do in food technology is of a particularly high standard. The department is beginning to use a wider range of strategies to develop the quality of work produced by boys, many doing resistant materials. There is a good mix of constraints which enable pupils to follow standard processes and at the same time give them enough opportunity to include features of their own design ideas. Folders show a good level of graphic skills in all areas of the subject. The work is well annotated with explanations and details of specific features and processes to be included in the work. Pupils use a good range of presentation techniques and application of rendering to apply colour and texture to both 2-D and 3-D drawings. Higher attaining pupils produce designs well supported with accurate, well-developed plans and their work is guided by detailed specifications. Folder work includes testing and modelling. Higher attaining pupils apply accuracy and show a good level of designing. Lower attaining pupils design products well suited to the courses and are supported by their teachers to produce work that reflects the basic requirements of the examination.
- 93 The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 is good overall. Some very good lessons were seen. In lessons where teaching was good, teachers provided a good structure to the lesson with clear objectives to guide and support pupils. Teachers plan their lessons well and have high expectations of their pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are often unchallenged by some of the tasks which are not always well suited to their needs. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported on a one-to-one basis and they achieve well in lessons. Some teachers succeed in stretching pupils of all levels of attainment, but this is not consistent across the department. Teachers use a range of strategies to enable pupils to develop the technical vocabulary associated with the subject. They also prepare of guidance which enable lower attaining pupils to structure their writing; this is having a positive effect on the development of the pupils' literacy skills.

This is developed further when pupils are required to write in a variety of styles such as making notes, writing work in sequence, when they give instructions of how to make their products and when evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the products they make. They use ICT well to process and present data they use to support their design work. A small proportion of pupils use design software to produce computer aided drawings. They use the Internet to research information in all year groups. ICT is particularly well used in food technology where pupils use spreadsheets to process information and present this in a range of charts and graphs. They calculate the nutritional value of the food products they develop. Good numeracy skills are evident also in both practical and written design tasks, when pupils measure and mark out the dimensions they require to make their products. In some projects for example designing a computer workstation, pupils work to scale. This was seen in a year 9 lesson where pupils used standard body measurements. They applied these elements of human scale using scaled down models of the human body to test how realistic the overall dimensions of their designs were. There is however a need to use ICT more effectively to raise the overall presentation and achievement of all pupils in design and technology. Pupils form good relationships with their teachers and work hard for them. Teachers have a positive approach with all pupils and as a result all pupils are included well in all the learning activities. They generally behave well because they know what standards are, and are not, acceptable.

- 94 The management of the department is good. The head of department has focused on raising standards and has introduced new schemes of work including strategies to enhance the use of the design process across all material areas. The department now benefits from a stronger team approach. There is an appropriate system in place to monitor and record the attainment of pupils and targets are set to help them improve. The information gathered from this however, is still underused. Although there were some examples of good marking particularly for Year 10 and 11 pupils, comments were not always sufficient to help students to improve.
- 95 Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Funding does not meet the need to provide sufficient ICT resources for computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing projects. There is now a need to provide adequate dust extraction systems in the resistant materials rooms. Schemes of work are now of good quality but still need to include more information for teachers to provide appropriate work for students who are gifted and talented. GCSE results have improved over the last three years. Teaching is now good but monitoring of teaching is still underdeveloped.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards at GCSE have consistently been above the national average, and the college overall average. Boys particularly achieve well at GCSE.
- A new Head of Department, well qualified and experienced, also Head of the Humanities Faculty, is developing a more enquiry-based approach to learning.
- Two full-time specialists with good subject knowledge and understanding and competent classroom management skills.
- Good accommodation for Geography, two large classrooms with attractive display, storage areas and a good resource base.

Areas for improvement

- Learning resources consist mostly of worksheets, with minimum numbers of text-books, atlases, and insufficient exercise books to change now from loose-leaf files.
- ICT requirements are not met, with no computers or software in the department and limited access to the computer rooms in college.
- Matching work to pupils' ability is not sufficiently developed, with more structured simple work needed for lower attainers, and more challenge for higher attainers.
- Attitudes of too many pupils can be poor, with low-level disruption wasting time for the whole class and slowing the pace of lessons for all.
- Targeting needs to be developed, so that pupils know the level they are at, know what to do to improve, and take greater responsibility for their own learning.

96 Pupils enter the college with below average attainment overall, most make progress through Key Stage 3, where assessments in 2001 were almost in line with national averages, showing a great improvement on 2000. GCSE results for Geography have been above the national average for the percentage of A* to C grades for several years, with 100% passing. The Certificate in Education qualification was taken by a few low attainers, and good results were obtained. Boys have consistently achieved well at GCSE Geography, a reverse of the whole college pattern, and boys do better in Geography than in many of their other subjects.

97 The analysis of last year's work for a sample of pupils from each year group showed barely satisfactory achievement, with many gaps and unfinished work in poorly organised loose-leaf files. Work seen in lessons during the Inspection was inconsistent in Years 7 and 8, and much improved, to national expectations, in Year 9. Some good work was seen in a Year 9 lesson on Volcanoes, where the teacher motivated the pupils by her lively and practical description of plate movements, and pupils' answers to her questions showed their gains in knowledge and understanding. This interest was followed up by some excellent answers to the structured worksheet. Year 10 pupils were re-visiting the topic of earthquakes; learning was consolidated by considering the damage caused to different countries and economies, developing correct geographical language. Human and physical geography were effectively combined in a case study of the Kobe earthquake in Japan, firing pupils' interest and imagination.

98 In Year 11 lessons pupils were preparing for fieldwork the following week in Exeter. They learnt about the Burgess and Hoyt models of urban growth and were able to relate these to what they knew of Exeter. The teachers' local knowledge stimulated pupils to contribute their own personal experience of a familiar place, and led to lively discussion. The skills of annotating diagrams are being developed well by the geography teachers, and the stress on higher level skills of explaining as well as describing helped the pupils develop better writing, which should improve examination and coursework grades.

- 99 The two full-time specialist geography teachers have very good subject knowledge, and understand how to adapt this to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Planning of lessons is good, although more structured materials for lower attainers and more challenge for higher attainers would improve learning overall. In many lessons pupils take a long time to settle down to listening to the teacher and being prepared for work. The pace of lessons is often held up by low level disruption, talking and lack of attention, despite the teachers' excellent classroom management techniques. When asked to settle down to their own individual work many pupils did not have the necessary independent learning skills, and they find it difficult to work in groups and paired discussion. Learning overall does not match the good teaching due to the poor attitudes of many pupils, and time wasting by low-level disruption.
- 100 The quality of teaching overall has improved since the last inspection. Resources are satisfactory, but there are insufficient text-books for homework. There has been no development in the provision or use of ICT since the last Inspection. The new Head of Geography, also the Humanities Faculty Team Leader, intends to improve assessment, to develop the use of National Curriculum levels for all assessments, to produce a pupil-friendly version of the level descriptors, and generally help pupils know where they are and how they can improve. This will address the criticisms in the last report. Time allowed for Key Stage 3 lessons is still too low to cover teaching all the skills, knowledge and understanding of places and themes described in the National Curriculum.
- 101 Leadership and management under the new Head of Geography are good and improving, being well qualified and experienced she has already begun to improve standards and learning by developing enquiry skills, and a variety of teaching and learning methods and activities. The accommodation is good, and should allow for greater display of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors, and the resource room is a benefit to teachers in the humanities faculty. .

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**

Strengths

- The teachers have good subject knowledge
- The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- The use of support staff and available resources is good

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough at Key Stage 4
- Resources are inadequate at both key stages
- The subject does not make sufficient use of computers
- Tasks and resources are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of individual pupils
- Assessment information is not sufficiently well used in the planning of lessons and setting of targets
- Continuity and progression are adversely affected both by insufficient time at Key Stage 3 and by the pattern of lessons across the timetable.

102 Attainment at age fourteen, in the college's assessment tests and as observed in lessons, is as expected of pupils of similar age nationally. Pupils show a sound level of knowledge and understanding although their skills in the study of history are not sufficiently well developed.

103 At GCSE the trend in has been for results to be below those of other comprehensive colleges and in 2000 results were well below the national average. Results in 2001 were much better with the majority of pupils entered achieving grade A*-C which indicates a broadly similar picture to that found nationally. In 2000 only 27 per cent achieved that level in comparison with a national figure of 57.5 per cent. There is no clear trend with the results of boys in comparison with girls, in 2000 few girls were entered and did not provide a statistically valid sample. The standards observed during the inspection indicate that standards are below the national average in the present year eleven and there is no clear trend of overall improvement in results at GCSE.

104 It is clear that attainment has been affected by the staffing difficulties experienced by the department in recent years. The long-term absence of a key member of the department and difficulty in finding supply staff clearly affected results in 2000 and is still affecting standards in other year groups. Overall attainment has also been adversely affected by low standards of literacy and the poor attendance and behaviour of a significant number of pupils. However standards are now showing some improvement and more pupils are choosing to continue to study history after year nine. Standards are similar to those found during the last inspection.

- 105 Achievement is satisfactory in relation to prior attainment at the end of both key stages. However assessment at the end of year nine 2000 was not completed by staff who were able to accurately assess pupils levels of knowledge and understanding and their progress has to be evaluated in relation to attainment in other subjects.
- 106 In Year 9 pupils are able to talk about the topics that they have studied and they have an understanding of some of the major events of the last century. Although their knowledge of key developments is often weak they are able to use a variety of resources including contemporary posters to form conclusions about the past. Pupils show a sound understanding of the use and purpose of propaganda in war. However a number show a clear lack of understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. Some written work is well presented and more able pupils are able to fit their studies into a wider context and to show how factors link together when they are considering aspects of the fighting on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. Most pupils do understand about the horrors of trench warfare but a number do not understand who Britain was fighting or why. Some pupils show lack of understanding of cause and effect and their poor reading comprehension limits their ability to use written sources of evidence in a text that is too difficult for them. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped towards a better understanding because they are well supported in class.
- 107 By the end of their GCSE course pupils have a broad knowledge of the topics that they have studied. All pupils including those with special educational needs understand the factors that influenced the westward expansion of settlement in the USA. Study of the life of Native Americans who lived on the prairies, especially their reliance on the buffalo, has given them a clear understanding of change over time. Although even the highest attaining pupils find some difficulty in understanding the concept of Manifest Destiny, they are generally competent in the use of documents and extracts. Some of them have produced well- presented course work in their local study of Totnes Castle, which shows their confidence in using a variety of sources of evidence about the past. Lower attaining pupils are able to talk about evidence for the factors that they observed on a visit to the castle and compare it with a plan of the castle in the valuable course guide produced by the department. However the majority of pupils are held back by lack of knowledge and understanding and they are not skilled in answering questions based on extracts or sources of evidence. There are some real weaknesses in their knowledge, skills and understanding particularly at the higher levels required at GCSE.
- 108 Pupils who are new to year eleven and have not followed the course are disadvantaged and at present no alternative work is available for them and there is no opportunity to make up the deficit in their knowledge. There is no marked difference from the national picture in the attainment of boys and girls. Boys often answer well in class and some show a real interest in the subject.

- 109 Attitudes to the subject are sound overall. Some pupils work hard and contribute well in lessons, they enjoy activities in class and find the work interesting and challenging. The response of those pupils who attend is usually at least satisfactory. The progress of a significant minority of pupils is adversely affected by their poor record of attendance and by their reluctance to give in homework or to complete course work properly for GCSE. Behaviour in class is sometimes unsatisfactory and time is spent dealing with disruption rather than the promotion of new learning.
- 110 Learning is soundly managed in history. Although there is no specific planning related to literacy or numeracy, these skills are used appropriately in the subject. There is some opportunity for the improvement of skills in writing especially in the use of key vocabulary and writing frames. Pupils also use graphs and statistical information to help their understanding. However tasks and resources are not always well matched to the attainment of pupils. In most lessons pupils use the same resources and attempt the same tasks whatever their level of potential attainment. There is no extra challenge planned for the higher attaining pupils or specific tasks or resources for those with learning difficulties. Because of this learning for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is sound rather than good. However where pupils with special educational need are supported in the classroom by ancillary staff they can achieve well. Their progress is less secure when such support is not available.
- 111 The majority of pupils are able to develop an understanding of chronology and the impact of change over time. Achievement is sound when pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in history as they progress through the college. The work of pupils at the beginning of year seven shows that they are learning to use a range of sources to find out about the past and they have the opportunity to build on these skills as they progress through the college. Pupils are often given the opportunity to work in pairs to discuss ideas but they do not have sufficient opportunity to work in groups for independent research learning. They rarely have the opportunity to use computers. Learning in lessons is mainly directed and led by the teacher. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning lower down the college and this affects their work in GCSE classes. The tasks set for homework link well with work in class and homework is set regularly. Although it is often finishing off work started in class, homework does contribute to the progress of those who choose to do it. However many pupils have unfinished work in their books and some clearly fail to complete homework tasks. Information technology is used rarely to support learning in history although some pupils use computers for their own research and to present their course work. At GCSE the majority make secure progress in the development of the skills that help them to answer complex source based questions and produce course work. However although targets are set the pupils themselves are not clear about them. Because of its content and variety of opportunities for discussion the subject makes a good contribution to moral, social and cultural awareness.

- 112 At present the subject is inadequately resourced. This adversely affects learning. There are insufficient numbers of textbooks for both for GCSE and for lower attaining pupils. Pupils do not have sufficient access to computers and the lack of blinds makes use of slides, video and overhead projectors difficult. However the department does make good use of trips and visits to extend the learning experience of pupils.
- 113 Teaching is sound. The quality of all teaching observed was at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Assessment information is readily available and work is marked regularly. However teachers are not using it to plan a sufficient variety of approaches to teaching and learning for the range of ability. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and they can use support staff and available resources well. However some of the lessons observed were not sufficiently well planned, managed and resourced to promote a good level of learning. The most successful lessons have clear objectives that focus on what pupils should achieve by the end of the lesson. Teaching is good or very good where there is a clear aim to encourage pupils to become active learners rather than passive listeners and to provide them with the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. This was particularly evident in a lesson in which year seven pupils considered possible reasons for William the Conqueror's actions after the victory at Hastings.
- 114 The history department has made sound improvement since the last inspection although issues such as the inadequacy of resources mentioned in the last report have not been addressed. The head of department has produced new schemes of work and made changes to the planning and teaching of history in years ten and eleven. Management is sound. There has been some monitoring of teaching and there is a clear understanding that both resources and some aspects of timetabling are unsatisfactory. However the situation of the subject is fragile given the present part-time nature of management in the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- There is good computer network provision
- Good relationships exist between staff and pupils
- Behaviour in the department is good.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure that the curriculum for ICT meets statutory requirements

- Develop schemes of work to ensure they provide teachers with strategies to plan suitable work for pupils at different attainment levels
- Develop marking and assessment procedures and report student attainment in ICT to parents
- Develop strategies for monitoring teaching and learning
- Increase the use of ICT to raise standards in specialist ICT lessons and in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Provide relevant training for technical staff

115 Standards are below average in the work seen at the end of Year 9 and well below the standard expected of students nationally at the end of Year 11. The college has not offered ICT as an examination option in previous years and the first groups of students were entered for GCSE Information Technology in 2001. The results are well below average when compared to the national data of the previous year. Standards are unsatisfactory as a result of the limited skills pupils develop both in specialist ICT specialist lessons in Years 7 to 9 and within the examination courses in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' skills are also undeveloped when they use computers to support their work in other subjects. The college has now invested in a new college-wide computer network, which provides a more reliable system compared to the resources previously available.

116 Teachers' assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2001 suggests that standards are above average. This does not match the level of work seen during the inspection, which was below average. Assessment procedures are not well linked to the work in class and are unreliable in identifying pupils' attainment levels. This results in unsatisfactory achievement when compared to the standards pupils achieve when they join the college. In Year 7, pupils are introduced to a range of ICT skills, for example word processing and the use of tables to produce a college timetable. They compare the benefits of computer and hand produced timetables. They acquire knowledge of health and safety issues linked to using computers and consider eye and back strain as well as using cables and electricity. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 develop basic keyboard skills, word processing, spreadsheets and databases through the use of a commercially prepared software package. In Year 9 pupils increase their skills of using scanners and design software to produce route maps. There is insufficient application of spreadsheets and databases however to enable pupils to collect, process and present data they produce themselves. They gain limited experience of computer aided control and computer aided design.

117 Achievement of pupils from Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Pupils make insufficient gains in the ICT skills. This is as a result of restricted time allocated to specialist ICT lessons particularly in Years 8 and 9 where pupils only have one lesson of ICT in every two-week period. This is insufficient time to assure opportunities for pupils to build on the ICT skills they acquired in primary school. At all levels of attainment, pupils including those with special needs achieve competence in the basic research skills using ICT but some boys lack the concentration to achieve good standards. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were planning a route. They were provided with a range of existing maps, some outdated. Pupils were required to produce an up to date version to support the route they were planning to the college. The majority of pupils in the group worked independently and

considered using a variety of ICT resources such as scanners and graphic design software to reproduce their own map. Several boys in the group lacked the level of concentration necessary to achieve their best and were not sufficiently challenged by the task. Lower attaining pupils including pupils with special educational needs participate well in the tasks.

- 118 Standards in the work seen in Years 10 and 11 are well below the national average. This is reflected in the GCSE results for 2001. All students, including those with special needs, achieve levels well below those expected of pupils at this stage nationally. Pupils following the GCSE Information Technology course use ICT to research their work and apply a range of skills to process and present their coursework. Folders show some evidence of using spreadsheets to process and present data. They are able to vary the data they enter and can analyse the resulting changes when they use formulae to perform calculations. They present the information in appropriate charts and graphs which increases their range of presentation skills. They can set up a database and retrieve the information in various forms. Many pupils use ICT effectively in their GCSE coursework. Particular good use was seen in GCSE food technology. They explain their work using a satisfactory range language, applied accurately. The use of computers to improve the quality and presentation of work and to raise standards further is not consistently in place across all subjects.
- 119 Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Pupils who follow the GCSE Information Technology course make very slow progress covering the course content. Pupils in Year 11 are only just starting one of the two major coursework assignments which leaves very little time to complete both assignments before the final examination. Evidence in their folders show that tasks are rushed, poorly presented and lacking in the depth needed to achieve a satisfactory grade at GCSE level. Pupils have an insufficient level of ICT skills when they start the GCSE course as a result of the limited lesson time given to specialist ICT lessons during Years 8 and 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have knowledge of their attainment levels nor the strategies with which to improve the quality of their work.
- 120 There is a good learning ethos in the department. In the main, pupils show mature attitudes to their work. They form good relationships with each other, the teachers and other adults within the department. This has had a beneficial effect on learning.
- 121 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory using evidence from the lessons seen during the inspection. Some good lessons were seen. It is unsatisfactory however, when comparing the achievement of pupils over the longer period. Teachers plan and prepare well and are well-organised. In lessons where the learning was good, teachers set clear targets that help students to be certain about what was expected and to work plan their work independently. Learning was good when teachers structured lessons well. Good teaching led to good learning. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson, where pupils were identifying safety hazards when using computers. The teacher covered the main facts by brainstorming the main points with the whole class and recorded the main facts on the board. Pupils were then able to apply the knowledge well to explain questions and scenarios on the worksheet prepared by the teacher. Teachers encourage the use of correct technical vocabulary and pupils use language related to the subject to a satisfactory level when explaining their work. This is particularly important for pupils with below average reading skills as this helps them to acquire a wide and relevant vocabulary. They also read from a range of texts when using books, CD ROMs and the Internet for researching their work. Pupils develop satisfactory numerical skills when they use spreadsheets. Teachers show good subject knowledge and generally use questions effectively to assess how much pupils understand. The majority of pupils show good levels of concentration as a result of this active questioning which increases pupils' participation in the lesson. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not always well challenged because teaching resources do not match their needs. Small groups of boys lack concentration when work planned does not challenge them sufficiently. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and encourage participation and inclusion in all classroom activities.

- 122 The use of computers in other subjects are unsatisfactory. Good application of ICT was seen in science where students are taught the use of spreadsheets, analyse data and use databases for revision. However, pupils were not always able to perform the tasks themselves due to lack of resources in the department. In design and technology, students use control technology with a computer aided sewing machine, use desktop publishing, spreadsheets and the Internet to research and present information. Their experiences are limited however by the low level of resources available for control technology. In English, students use ICT to draft their work, edit and redraft it. They also use desktop publishing to write newspaper articles, use CD ROMs and the internet as a source for research. With the limited number of computers in the college, the demands on ICT specialist rooms are high. The use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum as a result is inconsistent. The opportunity for students to apply their skills in other subjects cannot be assured.
- 123 Leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and as a result good teaching methods are not shared. There has been considerable investment to upgrade computer provision but it remains well below the national picture. In specialist ICT lessons some pupils share computers and this slows down their progress. Overall planning needs to reflect the National Curriculum requirements and assessment needs to be linked to this. Technician support is good; the technician makes a very positive contribution to the work of the department.
- 124 Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The increase in the number of computers has resulted in increased access. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but achievement is unsatisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **very good**

Strengths:

- Teaching is good; the foreign language is used extensively and lessons are well structured, with a range of communicative activities that effectively help pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of the foreign language.
- GCSE results showed a marked improvement in 2001 in both French and Spanish.
- Relationships are very good indeed. Pupils respect their teachers and work well for them.
- The recently refurbished modern languages' block provides an excellent learning environment, with attractive displays of pupils' work and helpful phrases to encourage pupils' use of the foreign language.
- Curriculum provision is good, the subject is well led and well resourced and good practice is shared by an enthusiastic team of subject specialists.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment now reflects progress through the National Curriculum levels but pupils need to be more aware of their own learning, to enable them to set themselves more rigorous and specific targets aimed at raising their attainment.
- The needs of pupils with different levels of attainment within mixed ability groupings are not being addressed.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use ICT in order to access the foreign culture.
- Greater analysis of assessment data would enable teachers to improve achievement across the Key Stages.

125 At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in French in 2000 was just below the national average, although the numbers gaining an A* or A grade were above. In Spanish, the numbers achieving grades A*-C in 2000, were well above the national average. Compared with other subjects in the college in 2000, French was above the average and Spanish was broadly in line. In French, girls performed as well as girls nationally but boys slightly worse. Girls performed much better than boys in French, following the national trend. In contrast, in Spanish, boys did as well as girls in 2000. In 2001, there has been a marked improvement in the numbers gaining grades A*-C in both French and Spanish. In Spanish, almost half those entered achieved an A* or A grade. Although only able pupils take Spanish, this is, nevertheless, particularly impressive, given that many of the most able pupils in the area attend other colleges. What is also very encouraging is that boys are now achieving even better results than girls in Spanish.

126 At the time of the previous report, pupils were achieving results well above the national average at GCSE in both languages. The apparent deterioration of standards in French coincides with the adoption by the college of the policy of including almost all pupils in the entry for GCSE in a modern foreign language. Twelve pupils took both languages at GCSE in 2001 and almost all performed equally well in both.

127 The written and classwork seen during the inspection, indicated that the majority of pupils are achieving average standards in both languages at ages 14 and 16. At Key Stage 3, pupils of all levels of attainment understand the spoken word readily and can answer spontaneously in short phrases. In reading, most pupils have little difficulty in understanding single words and short phrases. Most can write about their family or town, using a variety of adjectives and expression and by the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils can use past, present and immediate future tenses appropriately. At Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils are able to tackle longer reading texts satisfactorily and can write at length in the foreign language. For example, in Year 10, they can discuss their career aspirations and the advantages and disadvantages of living where they do, making good use of idiom and a range

of tenses. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty in recalling basic vocabulary when reading and their writing is more limited.

- 128 In both Key Stages, pupils' achievement is satisfactory or better. In Key Stage 3, those in the upper band in Years 8 and 9 make good progress but pupils' progress is slower in the lower band. These pupils could achieve more if tasks were more closely tailored to their needs in Year 7. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress and the achievement of those who took their GCSE this year, was well above the national average, given their attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Some low attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 are working towards a Certificate of Achievement, and making sound progress, due to effective teaching and a good level of support. High attaining pupils in both key stages, make rapid progress from learning vocabulary to expressing their ideas in the foreign language.
- 129 Teaching and learning are good in both key stages, with many lessons containing very good or excellent features. At Key Stage 3, the majority of lessons seen were good, very good or excellent. At Key Stage 4, the teaching was satisfactory or better and on occasion, excellent. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use the foreign language extensively during lessons. As a result, the pupils' listening and speaking skills are above average and their accent is good. The teachers make effective use of a wide variety of enjoyable activities, such as songs, games, and surveys, to encourage the pupils to communicate in the foreign language. Team games are a regular feature, which successfully motivate pupils, whatever their ability, to try to recognise or produce the language they are learning. Pupils work at a brisk pace, concentrate well and make good progress, as a result of the teachers' lively delivery and the variety of tasks. For example, in a Year 10 French lesson with low attaining pupils, several flashcard activities in quick succession kept pupils on their toes and reinforced their knowledge of household chores vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils apply intellectual effort to work out the language for themselves, such as guessing verb endings and numbers in Spanish.
- 130 Teachers make very good use of resources and are highly skilled in the use of flashcards, props, the cassette recorder and the overhead projector, to add interest and variety to their teaching. The department is well stocked with course books and imaginative teaching aids and the French assistant is deployed well in the classroom. For example, in a Year 9 boys only French group, the boys eagerly participated in a café scene with the assistant and increased their independent use of the language by choosing what they would like to eat and drink.
- 131 Lesson objectives are routinely shared with pupils, which ensures they have a clear idea of the purpose and direction of their learning. Most lessons are planned effectively and are well structured, to provide a balance of speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. These are organised in a logical sequence to enable pupils to achieve the lesson's objectives. However, time to allow pupils to evaluate what they have learnt and thus experience a sense

of achievement, is not always built in. There is little evidence of work being planned to take account of the needs of differently attaining pupils, within groups of mixed ability. Learning support assistants support specific pupils well but would be more effective if there were greater liaison with the class teacher.

- 132 Teachers' management of pupils is very good. They rarely need to raise their voices and a simple warning is usually sufficient to bring pupils back on task. This is due to the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Homework is set regularly and draws on pupils' prior learning, as well as reinforcing work covered in the lesson. Teachers have high expectations and ensure that homework is completed, which enables pupils to achieve well. Books are marked regularly and the use of stamps to reward positive achievement is proving very effective.
- 133 Assessment procedures are developing in the department but more frequent reference to National Curriculum levels, both in class and in marking pupils' work, would increase pupils' awareness of their own learning. The use of assessment to set targets for groups of pupils or to inform planning for the next stage in pupils' learning needs further development.
- 134 The way in which both languages are taught makes a good contribution to the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through the explicit teaching of grammar and the use of mental arithmetic in the foreign language. Pupils' skills in ICT however, are less well developed. For example, the use of e-mail and the Internet would greatly enhance their access to the foreign culture. The department contributes well to the social and cultural development of pupils through its communicative approach, the French exchange and the presence of the French assistant.
- 135 The decision to teach two foreign languages to approximately one third of pupils in Year 9, is appropriate, although a very small proportion continues with two languages to GCSE. The department is well managed by a dedicated and enthusiastic head of department, who has been successful in developing a strong team spirit. Teachers have clear guidance on activities, resources and assessment tasks in schemes of work, although these need to be updated to reflect National Curriculum 2000.
- 136 Since the previous inspection, the Modern Languages' accommodation has been transformed. This year, GCSE results have improved in both languages and the number of pupils achieving A* or A grades has risen dramatically in Spanish. The achievement and attitudes of boys, mentioned in the last report, have also improved, with the successful introduction last year of single sex groups, in the lower band of Year 8. In Key Stage 4, boys are now performing better than girls in GCSE Spanish. Excellent progress has also been made in relating assessment tasks to National Curriculum levels. Reading was identified as being weak at the time of the previous inspection but this has now improved, although an agreed reading policy, would increase pupils' opportunities to read the foreign language for pleasure.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The quality of the teaching
- The enthusiasm of pupils for the subject
- The improving standards in all years

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation and resources including ICT
- The use of assessment to inform future planning

137 Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at 14 years of age shows the great majority of pupils to be achieving average levels. This is an improvement since the previous report. A small minority of pupils are achieving higher levels. These pupils are supported in their learning by instrumental tuition and extra-curricular opportunities. The college results in the GCSE examinations of the three pupils entered in 2001 were excellent. The three pupils gained grades A*, including one pupil from Year 9.

138 Standards of work seen during the inspection in all years are good. These standards are achieved because the teaching is very good. Pupils' attitudes also cause the quality of their learning in music to be good. The lack of resources and the poor accommodation prevent pupils from making better progress. Pupils' achievement overall in relation to their standards when they enter the college is good. A significant minority of pupils in all years make very good progress.

139 Pupils aged 14 have gained a satisfactory range of musical skills, with the majority attaining Level 4 and many working at Level 5 in composition and performance. Pupils do not have access to music technology and this limits their opportunities to compete nationally in this area. The majority of pupils use correct fingering when playing keyboards, and more capable pupils are able to write flowing, well constructed melodies, using the keyboards and adding correct major and minor chord sequences. Compositions are often based on pupil's own ideas for example, 'contrasts', and, 'the circus'. The quality of singing is good. Most pupils are able to sing in tune and in parts with others. There are breathing exercises and a vocal warm up before every session. Across all years the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of ethnic music, and this is revealed through their enthusiasm for the college Samba Band and their work on music from Indonesia and Africa.

140 In work seen during the inspection, pupils aged 16 revealed a wide range of musical ability. The focus of the course allows pupils to use their developing aural skills, and innate creativity to produce good standards in practical work,

so that even those with limited familiarity with musical literacy are meeting targets for GCSE grades at the end of the course. The quality of melody writing is notably good, with melodies being well constructed and often having flair and originality. Pupils do not have access to ICT and are therefore unable to develop computer skills. Recording equipment is shared with another department and it is mostly out of date. This situation is unsatisfactory because many pupils play electronic instruments and opportunities for making a good recording are limited. One Year 11 pupil has produced a composition on computer at home. Performances are always confidently presented and are given with spontaneity and conviction.

- 141 The quality of teaching is very good overall in all years. Teachers are fine practitioners themselves, and have a secure knowledge of music methodology. The head of department is fully acquainted with music technology and is ready to use this skill to full advantage in all years. The emphasis within the curriculum is upon practical work, and lessons are planned and prepared in great detail, with the aims of the lesson and any other information displayed at the beginning of every lesson. Most teaching groups are large and the department and pupils would benefit from having information projected in a better way rather than on the small white board provided. Expectations of what can be achieved are high. Provision is made through extension work for pupils of all levels of attainment. The pace and variety within lessons are very good. Assessment is successfully dealt with both through an on-going, oral approach and also at strategic points in a written form.
- 142 The department makes a valuable contribution towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The provision for extra curricular activities is good and is well attended by pupils. It includes samba band, orchestra, choir and various ensembles. The quality of singing and playing is good. Pupils perform at a variety of events in college and in the community. They play and study music from around the world.
- 143 The department is well managed and the recently appointed Head of Department has done much to raise the profile of music in a very short time and in difficult circumstances. The quality of the accommodation, which the college provides, is poor and contrasts to the clear and progressive vision to succeed held by the department. There are twenty-seven pupils in Year 10 GCSE this year and in lessons seen conditions for the pupils are already becoming difficult for them to manage. Pupils and staff are at present positive and although pupils have complained, they are continuing to support this good and improving department. The department is well supported by eight visiting instrumental teachers who teach twelve per cent of the college population on a variety of instruments.
- 144 Since the previous inspection, the level of improvement has been good. Areas of improvement are: standards and time allocation in Years 7 to 9, the increased uptake in Year 10, the quality of teaching and the increased provision for instrumental tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good; teachers use methods which cater for the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils work well together and share ideas freely; particularly when planning work and judging performance.
- Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT in physical education is not yet developed.
- The accommodation for changing and showering is unsatisfactory.
- The department has an insufficient number of full-time specialists.
- Girls have very little extra-curricular sporting opportunity, although this is improving.
- Curricular links with partner primary schools are not sufficiently developed to ensure pupils' smooth transition.

145 Teachers' assessments of pupils aged 14 in 2000 were broadly in line with national averages. In the 2000 GCSE sports studies examination, the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C was well below national averages. The 2001 A* to C pass rate is above the national average. A* to G passes remain constant at 100 per cent. Results since the last inspection; with the exception of 2000, have improved in line with national trends.

146 Standards achieved by 14 year olds, in the lessons seen, are in line with nationally expected levels. This represents good achievement and progress over this stage, given the below average standards of pupils on entry.

147 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, in both key stages. Teaching is well adapted to meet their needs. Most 14 year olds judge performance well; they understand fitness principles and show satisfactory skill. In Year 9 badminton, most pupils demonstrate effective footwork and overhead shot technique; show spatial awareness and use basic tactics to beat opponents. Lower attaining pupils in games have reasonable individual skills, but are ineffective in game situations due to lack of positional and tactical appreciation. High attainers use refined skills to consistently outmanoeuvre opponents.

148 Standards of work seen at the age of 16 are in line with nationally expected levels. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, making progress appropriate for their ability. Most Year 11 pupils can analyse performance and plan improvements. They understand the main aspects of health related fitness and use their knowledge of attack and defence principles to good effect in match

conditions. Lower-attaining pupils know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle; they understand basic tactics, but lack confidence and spatial awareness in game situations. High-attaining pupils use a variety of skills and tactics to beat opponents. The standard of work of GCSE pupils in Year 11 is broadly in line with the average expected in this examination. They show satisfactory practical skills, understand the components of fitness and are confident in discussion, their written assignments lack extended writing skills, the use of ICT and adequate research.

- 149 The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. Teachers are knowledgeable and manage pupils well. Schemes of work that build on previous learning, support continuity across both key stages. Work is planned to suit all pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. In a Year 7 hockey lesson, lower-attaining pupils progressed well because the teacher simplified instructions; modified tasks and used demonstrations. The learning of higher-attaining pupils is accelerated by extension tasks and appropriate grouping. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn independently in most lessons. For example, in Year 11 football lessons, pupils plan warm-ups, judge performance and organise match tactics; learning is good. Learning is less effective in the few lessons where teaching is more prescriptive. The subject contributes well to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, because they are given opportunities to co-operate in team situations, adhere to rules in games and study multi-cultural dance themes. Pupils improve their numerical skills due to teachers' emphasis in lessons. The subject makes a limited contribution to improving pupils' literacy skills and provides few opportunities to develop ICT skills.
- 150 The department is soundly managed, but the subject leader has additional and sometimes conflicting commitments, as head of careers. The staffing structure includes only two full-time specialists and therefore a significant amount of teaching is undertaken by teachers with responsibilities in other subject areas. This situation is reflected in the poor provision of extra-curricular sport for girls; they have few clubs and no inter-college matches. Major policies are in place and strategies are developing to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. Assessment systems are satisfactory, but data is not sufficiently used to help plan pupils' work.
- 151 Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, chiefly in raising the quality of teaching and improving the overall behaviour in lessons. The GCSE sports studies examination has been introduced and safety procedures tightened. The state of on-site PE changing and shower areas has deteriorated.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- There is a shared commitment between the faculty and senior management for improvement of the subject and action is being taken

Areas for improvement

- The department is aware of the need to improve all areas of the subject and has started to revise schemes of work and make plans to introduce assessment systems in the next half-term

- 152 In lessons and work seen, attainment at the age of fourteen is below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils enter the college with little prior learning in the subject. From this low start pupils' learning develops well and their achievement is satisfactory. In lessons seen, pupils with special educational needs make the same progress and are given appropriate support when additional classroom assistance is provided. Pupils acquire a broad basic knowledge of Christianity and all the major world faiths. They achieve well when learning the correct terminology and this is helpful to pupils' literacy skills. Orally they are beginning to respond appropriately although for a significant minority these skills are underdeveloped. A small minority of pupils have recorded information through spider graphs and have expressed their feelings through extended writing and poetry. There are a few examples of work processed using ICT. However, pupils do not have access to ICT in the department. Standards of pupils' skills in asking and responding to questions and understanding the significance of, for example, prayer, are below average.
- 153 Results of the GCSE full and short course in 2001 were poor. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 study the GCSE short course. There is now sufficient time allowed to deliver the requirements of the examination specification. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in lessons and work seen at 16 are below expectations but are seen to be improving along with more positive attitudes of pupils towards the subject. Attitudes were seen to be improving in one Year 10 lesson where pupils took part in a 'stilling exercise'. This opportunity gave pupils the opportunity to reflect. A few pupils were reluctant to begin with, but they eventually took part. This activity had a positive effect on the quality of pupils' concentration and achievement for the remainder of the lesson. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity and Judaism is satisfactory. Standards are lower in lessons where pupils are expected to work independently.
- 154 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In one Year 10 lesson seen, the quality of teaching was very good and it was good in one Year 7 lesson. All teachers have good subject knowledge and are encouraging pupils to concentrate by using a variety of different methods. For example, in one Year 7 lesson seen, pupils were given flash cards to hold up and use to respond to questions on the existence of characters from history such as Henry the Eighth, Robin Hood and Jesus. They then went on to record their findings, using a clear writing frame. The lesson had good pace and most pupils responded with enthusiasm. Those few pupils who lacked concentration in the first part of the lesson quickly became involved in the

activities. Where teaching is satisfactory, pupils learn less because the pace of the lesson is slower. Noise in the corridor, interruptions and late arrivals, are a contributory factor.

- 155 Positive relationships between pupils and the new teachers are helping to improve the unsatisfactory quality of attitudes in the majority of lessons. Homework is set regularly and the response is improving. Speakers from local religious communities have been invited into college to support the curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- 156 The department has made satisfactory progress during the last few weeks. The new head of faculty and the subject specialist meet regularly and are producing well-documented plans to improve standards of attainment. Immediate plans include thorough assessment and monitoring of pupils' work. Since the previous inspection, standards of pupils' work have improved, attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject are improving and teachers have higher expectations. There is now sufficient time allocated to religious education in all years to meet the demands of the Agreed Syllabus. The department now has a good range of artefacts. However, there is no ICT in the department nor is there a quiet area where pupils can work independently.