

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FYNDOUNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Sacrison, Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114289

Headteacher: Mr A W Rand

Reporting inspector: Mr C Sander  
4151

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> September – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 194331

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Findon Hill  
Sacriston  
Durham

Postcode: DH7 6LU

Telephone number: 0191 3710277

Fax number: 0191 3712269

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Rowell

Date of previous inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4151	Mr C Sander	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the college The college's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Key issues for action
12775	Ms J Goodchild	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
27416	Mr T Howard	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1085	Mr J Laver	Team inspector	English	
31159	Mr C Simmonds	Team inspector	Science	
22906	Mr B Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
31690	Mr P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design	
20588	Mr I Hodgkinson	Team inspector	Design and technology	Leadership and management
17530	Ms M Cureton	Team inspector	Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language	
30888	Mrs L Walsh Nelissen	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
30128	Ms S Stanley	Team inspector	Music Religious education Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd  
National Westminster Bank Chambers  
Victoria Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset TA8 1AN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the college	
How good the college is	
What the college does well	
What could be improved	
How the college has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the college	
How well the college is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the college	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The college's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>38</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE**

Fyndoune Community College is a comprehensive school for boys and girls in the 11 to 16 age range with 447 pupils on roll. It is much smaller than the average size of other schools nationally and has reduced by nearly one-fifth since the previous inspection in 1997 because there are fewer children living locally and it no longer has a sixth form. The college has strong links with its local community through its shared-use scheme, providing a centre for community activities and life-long learning. The number of boys and girls is broadly similar. Nearly all of its pupils live in the local villages of Sacriston, Langley Park and Witton Gilbert. Their socioeconomic circumstances are well below average. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is above the national average. Eighty-two pupils have special educational needs, a proportion broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. Over 98 per cent of the pupils are white and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Overall standards on entry since the previous inspection have been well below the national average. They improved greatly this September when just over two-thirds of pupils reached the national expectation in the national tests at the end of primary school. Two-thirds of its pupils continue their education beyond the age of 16 at local colleges.

### **HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS**

The overall effectiveness of the college is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. There is a strong commitment to raising the standards of all pupils. Nearly all pupils achieve well because they are well taught in nearly all their subjects. Standards rise by the age of 14 and again by the age of 16 but remain below the national average on both occasions. The college is hitting the challenging targets set by the governors. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good but some aspects of their personal development are unsatisfactory because they do not show enough initiative. The circumstances and standards of the pupils are well below average when they start at the college at the age of 11. When their achievements at the age of 16, their good behaviour, the good teaching they receive and the satisfactory degree of improvement since the previous inspection are weighed against the above average unit costs of their education, Fyndoune Community College gives satisfactory value for money to its pupils, their parents and its wider community.

#### **What the college does well**

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in mathematics and religious education.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- In 1999, standards in GCSE English, mathematics and science were well above the average for similar schools nationally.
- It successfully develops positive attitudes in nearly all of its pupils.
- The quality and range of the curriculum after the age of 14 is good, particularly for lower attaining and less well-motivated pupils.
- It is developing an effective arrangement to set individual targets for its pupils in order to raise standards.
- It provides very good information to parents.

### What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough in design and technology and also in history between the ages of 11 and 14.
- The way pupils learn does not provide sufficient opportunities for them to develop initiative and personal responsibility, make decisions and use their information and communication skills to raise standards in the subjects they study.
- Strategic planning is unsatisfactory and the evaluation of management decisions is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Statutory requirements are not met fully in design and technology and in the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- Attendance is still below the national average.

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

### HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college has shown a satisfactory degree of improvement since it was previously inspected in January 1997. The biggest improvement has been in the quality of teaching and learning. This is now good and is starting to raise standards, particularly by the age of 16. The weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have generally been dealt with satisfactorily through the effective action plan of the governing body. Attendance has got better but remains just below the national average. The research and study centre has been established but it is not yet used enough and there is still not enough opportunity in lessons for pupils to find things out for themselves and organise how they will learn things successfully. The governing body has addressed all those issues where the college was previously not meeting legal requirements except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. The priority to raise achievement has resulted in good arrangements to set targets for individual pupils. Standards reached by boys in national tests for English, mathematics and science at the age of 14 in 2000 showed significant improvement after previously getting worse. GCSE results have improved and lessons for Year 7 pupils are now more challenging. Targets for each subject have not been set and standards remain inconsistent.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16-year-olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	E	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged 14, standards overall were below the national average for all schools. They were below it in mathematics and well below it in English and science. Standards were broadly in line with those of similar schools nationally. They were above them in mathematics and below them in English. The trend of improvement between 1996 and 1999 has been close to the national trend. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the national expectation and above rose by ten per cent in English, by 15 per cent in



science and by 19 per cent in mathematics. The proportion reaching standards above the national expectation is rising. Pupils of all abilities achieve well.

GCSE results have risen since the last inspection and in 1999 were the best ever at the college. Thirty-seven per cent of pupils obtained five or more GCSE grades A\*-C at the age of 16. This was below the national average but in line with the challenging target set by governors. Nine out of ten pupils obtained five or more GCSE grades A\*-G, a proportion broadly in line with all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C and five or more A\*-G grades in 1999 was above the average for similar schools, with results in English, mathematics and science well above. The average points score was broadly in line with similar schools nationally. Standards remain inconsistent across those other subjects that pupils can choose to study. Poor attendance affects adversely the achievements of a small minority of pupils. Thirty-four per cent of pupils obtained five or more grades A\*-C in 2000. This was in line with the target set by the governors.

In the pupils' work at the age of 14 and at the age of 16 seen during the inspection, standards were broadly in line with the test and examination results. They were above expectations in religious education and science, broadly in line with expectations in mathematics, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In modern foreign languages they were in line with national expectations at the age of 14 but above that standard at the age of 16. In art they were below national expectations at the age of 14 and well below that standard at the age of 16. Standards in English, history, geography and design and technology were below national expectations between the ages of 11 and 16.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the college	Good. The vast majority of pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. This helps them to learn well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards are generally good. A very small minority of pupils in Years 9,10 and 11 occasionally distract the rest of the class. Movement around the college is good and behaviour at lunchtime is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good across the college but pupils' personal development is, overall, unsatisfactory because there are not enough opportunities for them to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Despite a three per cent improvement since the previous inspection and much effort by the college, it remains below the national average.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 11-14 years</b>	<b>aged 14-16 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons seen. In seven out of ten lessons teaching was good or better. In a third of lessons at Key Stage 3 and a quarter of lessons at Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching was very good or better. It was excellent in seven per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent of lessons. It was very good at both key stages in mathematics and religious education and good in science, geography, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. Teaching in English was satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. In history it was satisfactory at Key Stage 4 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. Teaching was good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4 in design and technology. The teaching of food technology was particularly good.

The strengths of the good and very good teaching that helped pupils to learn well include the clear setting of objectives so that pupils knew exactly what they were going to learn; the presentation of good subject knowledge in a way that pupils could quickly understand so that they made good progress; high expectations that challenged and supported pupils of all abilities to do their best; a good range of activities that held pupils' interest throughout the lesson and, in the very best lessons, the use of questions and discussion that encouraged pupils to think for themselves. In the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons pupils were left unclear about what they were meant to be doing and some teaching was satisfactory rather than good because there was too little use made of questions to make pupils think. The main weakness in pupils' learning was the degree to which they were able to plan, organise, research and develop their work for themselves.

By grouping pupils of similar capabilities in each subject and in the improved match of work, the needs of all pupils are generally now well met. Overall, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. In much of the good teaching it was a strength. The skills of literacy are not taught consistently across all subjects although there is a good degree of care taken to teach the key words in each subject. The skills of numeracy are well taught within mathematics and are applied well in geography. Opportunities are not fully developed in subjects such as history and music.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Much of the provision is good but legal requirements for design and technology are not fully met. The provision for lower attaining and less well motivated pupils beyond the age of 14 is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Day-to-day arrangements are well managed. Individual education plans are very good. The increasing level and quality of additional support in class is good. The legal requirement to evaluate the provision in the annual report to parents is not fully met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not fully met.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There are good arrangements for child protection, promoting good behaviour, encouraging regular attendance and individual target setting but the monitoring of health and safety is unsatisfactory. There is a strong

	commitment to build effective partnerships with parents.
--	--

### HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher works closely with his senior team to promote successfully the aims and values of the college. Teamwork is good. There needs to be a clearer long-term plan for the development and further improvement of the college.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the college. Some legal requirements are not currently fully met in the provision made by the college.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The college reviews regularly what has happened but the college development plan does not include statements that will help it to judge whether it has been successful. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate teaching are unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Overall the accommodation, staffing and learning resources are adequate to meet the needs of the college. Shortages remain in design and technology.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• The good teaching.</li> <li>• The college is well led and managed.</li> <li>• It is easy to approach the college with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount and frequency of homework set is inconsistent.</li> </ul>

The parents' and carers' views of the college reflect the findings of the inspection team. The team agrees with parents that pupils make good progress because they are expected to work hard and are well taught. The friendly atmosphere and welcoming attitudes across the college are immediately apparent to those visiting for the first time. The small number of concerns expressed about homework are valid. Whilst in most subjects it is set and marked regularly, this is not consistently the case right across the college.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The college's results and achievements**

1. Standards had been well below average when pupils start at the college until this September when they rose significantly with approximately 70 per cent of the new Year 7 pupils reaching the national expectation in English, mathematics and science at the age of 11.
2. In 1997, just after the previous inspection, the results of nearly half of the pupils at the age of 11 in standardised tests in reading comprehension were well below average. Less than one quarter were above average and no pupil did better than this. Standards were only very slightly higher in mathematical understanding.
3. The main themes of the results and achievements since the last inspection in the national tests taken by all pupils at the age of 14 and in the work seen at Key Stage 3 are:
  - Standards below the national average but with a significant improvement in the 2000 national tests.
  - Pupils of all abilities achieving well and making good progress by the age of 14.
  - The proportion of boys reaching the national expectation Level 5 or above in English and mathematics improving over the last four years and exceeding the county average in 2000.
  - Standards that are not high enough in design and technology and in history at Key Stage 3.
  - Not enough use being made of information and communication technology to raise standards.
4. Taken as a whole, standards by the age of 14 are below the national average. However, nearly all pupils make a good degree of progress in order to achieve well, particularly in mathematics between the age of 11 and 14. They also achieve well in religious education and in information and communication technology. This is because there is very good teaching in mathematics and in religious education in all years, and in information and communication technology when it is taught as a separate subject.
5. Results overall in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the national expectation Level 5 or above it was below the national average in mathematics and well below in English and science. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the national expectation was well below the national average in English and below it in mathematics and science. This reflects the fact that very few pupils achieved above average standards when they started at the college in 1996. The average points score per pupil at the age of 14 in 1999 was broadly similar to what it was in 1996, just before the previous inspection, in English and mathematics and slightly better in science. Boys have done less well than girls over the past four years.
6. In 1999 pupils did best in mathematics. Approximately one-half of them reached the national expectation or better in English and mathematics. Almost one-third did so in science. However, a comparison with how pupils did nationally in each of these subjects shows that the gap between the college's results and the standards reached nationally is significantly narrower in mathematics than in science and English.

7. Taken as a whole, standards in the 1999 national tests were broadly in line with the national average for similar schools. They were above the average in mathematics, broadly in line with it in science and below it in English. These results reflect the slightly higher standards in mathematical understanding when these pupils started at the college and their initially significant weaknesses in reading and writing.
8. Results in the 2000 national tests point to a significant recent rise in standards, reflecting considerable recent improvements in the quality of teaching across these subjects and more careful preparation for the tests.
9. The proportion of pupils reaching the national expectation Level 5 or better in 2000 was again highest in mathematics where more than two-thirds of the pupils did so. Science remained the weakest of the three subjects with just half of the pupils reaching the national expectation but there was a good level of improvement on the previous year. The proportion of pupils reaching the national expectation was higher than in 1999 by 19 per cent in science, by 15 per cent in mathematics and by ten per cent in English. At the time of the inspection, national comparisons could not be made because the national statistics have not yet been published.
10. Over the last four years, the overall trend of improvement in these subjects has reflected the national trend. During this time, standards have been below the national average in English and mathematics and well below it in science. However, over the last three years, the proportion of boys achieving the national expectation Level 5 or better in English has increased by more than 15 per cent and is now slightly above the average for the county. Girls' performance in English has fluctuated slightly but remained close to the county average during this period. In 1997, nearly six out of ten boys reached the national expectation or better in mathematics. In 2000, more than seven out of ten did so, a proportion greater than the county average. Boys' results in science have fluctuated over this period but improved by almost 20 per cent in 2000, moving from well below to being broadly in line with the county average.
11. There is a rising trend since the last inspection in the proportion of pupils reaching standards above the national expectation in all three subjects but these results remain below the county average, again reflecting the very small proportion of higher attaining pupils who join the college at the age of 11. This summer, nearly one quarter of the boys exceeded the national expectation in English, a dramatic improvement and ahead of the county average where previously it had been behind. Girls have done consistently better than boys but the gap in English is closing. They reached slightly higher standards than boys in mathematics in 1999 but this summer the proportion of boys who reached above the national expectation rose significantly and exceeded the girls' performance, a further indication that the boys are starting to do better. Between 1997 and 1999 the proportion of boys who exceeded the national expectation in science declined significantly. However, in 2000 it increased greatly to produce results that were better than the girls'.
12. Raising the standards reached in science in particular and by boys in general were key issues identified in the previous inspection. The rate of improvement over time at Key Stage 3 has been satisfactory. Improvements in science have been slower than in the other two subjects but there are strong indications, confirmed in the work seen during the inspection, that most recently the corner has been turned decisively.
13. Taken as a whole, standards in the statutory teacher assessments at the end of 1999 in the other subjects at Key Stage 3 were below the national average. Boys did consistently less well than girls, and particularly so in design and technology, history, geography and music. Standards overall were slightly lower than in the national tests

for English and mathematics. Both boys and girls achieved above the national average in art and physical education. Boys' standards were in line with the national average and those of the girls were above it in music. Standards were below the national average in all subjects. They were particularly low in information technology and in design and technology. The inconsistent standards across subjects, identified at the time of the previous inspection, were still evident in 1999 but were less marked in the 2000 statutory teacher assessments. This is because teaching has improved and there is now a clearer understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

14. The most recent statutory teacher assessments made in these subjects for summer 2000 indicate a significant improvement in design and technology and in modern foreign languages. Boys improved their standards in history and in geography whereas the girls' standards were lower in both subjects. Girls continued to do better than boys in art, music and physical education.
15. Taken as a whole, standards in work seen at Key Stage 3 during the inspection were below national expectations. In approximately two-thirds of lessons standards were broadly in line with national expectations or better. They were above national expectations in one in five lessons. Overall, the standards reached by pupils at Key Stage 3 indicate that they are achieving well and making good progress in many subjects.
16. Standards above national expectations were seen in science and in religious education. Pupils do less well currently in national tests for science than in lessons because, over time, they are less good at remembering scientific facts and weaknesses in reading and writing let them down in the national tests. In lessons, they respond well orally to the snappy questions that characterise the good teaching. High expectations breed confidence and pupils understand well at the time. There are good arrangements for revision classes to help pupils prepare for the tests but pupils are still less successful when completing the longer answers required in the tests.
17. High expectations in the very good teaching are the main reason why standards are above expectations in religious education. In this subject, weaknesses in literacy are addressed well, pupils are expected to write at length and the marking of their work encourages them to do so.
18. Standards in work seen during the inspection were below national expectations in English, art, design and technology, history and geography. Standards were in line with national expectations in mathematics and all other subjects.
19. In English this is because many pupils, particularly the boys, are not accurate enough in their writing and lack the confidence to speak at length.
20. Standards in art are currently well below those recorded in the statutory teacher assessments. The assessments were not checked carefully enough against the standards described in the National Curriculum. Pupils are not taught to express themselves in a wide enough range of textures and styles, sketchbooks are not used well to develop ideas and lower attaining pupils in particular have very limited knowledge of the work of other artists. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology and pupils are not taught painting skills.
21. The standards seen in design and technology are broadly consistent with the below average statutory assessments. This is because pupils' poor drawing skills, weaknesses in designing skills and their narrow approach to research are not addressed sufficiently in the teaching of this subject.

22. Standards in history are below national expectations in lessons because enquiry skills are not taught with sufficient rigour and there is insufficient emphasis on the interpretation and evaluation of evidence. Pupils do not come to lessons with a firm grasp of these reading skills. These are not taught explicitly.
23. Standards are below expectations in geography because there is still insufficient emphasis on geographical enquiry before the age of 14 and too few opportunities to use information and communication technology.
24. Overall, in those subjects where standards are below expectations, insufficient progress has been made in addressing the key issue of the last inspection to improve pupils' confidence and skills in finding out things for themselves.
25. Pupils make good progress overall by the end of Key Stage 3. They achieve well in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Their good progress in these subjects is directly related to the well planned teaching which gives pupils confidence. However, pupils of all abilities still have too few opportunities to apply and develop further their skills in information and communication technology within other subjects. Standards are not high enough and progress is unsatisfactory in history and in design and technology because pupils are not challenged enough to develop the enquiry and design skills so vital to success in these subjects.
26. Standards overall remain below the national average by the end of Key Stage 4 but have improved since the previous inspection. The main features of the picture since the previous inspection have been:
  - An overall improvement in standards since the previous inspection from well below to below the national average.
  - Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
  - The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C in 1999 was above the average for similar schools, with well above average performance in English, mathematics and science.
  - The college is hitting the challenging targets set by governors.
  - Boys are starting to do better.
  - GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average in information technology religious education and in French.
  - GCSE results in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics and only slightly below it in science.
  - GCSE results in 1999 were below the national average in music, all aspects of design and technology except food technology, art, geography and physical education.
  - The inconsistencies in standards seen across subjects at the age of 14 continue up to the age of 16.
27. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results were below the national average for all schools. Thirty-seven per cent of pupils obtained five or more A\*-C grades. These were the college's 'best ever' results. They were ten per cent higher than the average for the previous three years but remain nearly ten per cent below the national average. Approximately nine out of ten pupils obtained five or more A\*-G grades, a proportion close to the national average.
28. In the summer 2000 GCSE examinations, 34 per cent of pupils obtained five or more A\*-C grades. This met the challenging target set by the governing body. Just over nine out of ten pupils obtained five or more A\*-G grades. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils

obtained one or more A\*-G grade. This exceeded the target set by the governing body. These results indicate that the college is fulfilling its aim to meet the needs of all its pupils well.

29. Over the last six years the trend of improvement in standards at Key Stage 4 has been below the national average. However, there has been a satisfactory degree of improvement overall since the previous inspection less than four years ago. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more grades A\*-C has risen by eight per cent, moving from well below to below the national average. The proportion obtaining five or more grades A\*-G has remained steady and close to the national average.
30. The boys' results have risen steadily and in the summer 2000 examinations, the proportion obtaining five or more A\*-C grades was ten per cent higher than in the GCSE examinations following the previous inspection. The difference between the performance of boys and girls at the college was no greater than the county average. In 1997, the gap had been twice as great. The college has achieved a good degree of success in raising the standards of boys overall since the last inspection but there remain inconsistencies across those subjects which pupils study by choice.
31. The average of all the results obtained by pupils at the college in the 1999 GCSE examinations was broadly in line with the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils at the college who obtained five or more grades A\*-C and A\*-G in 1999 was above the average; the proportion obtaining one or more grades A\*-C was broadly in line with it. This figure is slightly less favourable than the others because a small number of pupils within a small year group continued to be poor attenders despite the best efforts of the college.
32. The proportion of pupils who in 1999 obtained grades A\*-C in English and mathematics was close to the national average for all schools but below it in science. Results in all three subjects were well above the average for similar schools. When comparisons are made with the standards these pupils achieved at the end of Key Stage 3, their performance was well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Raising standards in science was a key issue identified in the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C had almost doubled by 1999 but fell back to below the national average in 2000, indicating a satisfactory degree of improvement over time. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C in 2000 also declined in English and mathematics.
33. There was a significant improvement in the 2000 GCSE examinations in the previously very low standards in art and German but results dropped dramatically in history and business education. There was a striking improvement in the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C in physical education. Given the relatively small numbers in the year group, and particularly in some of the subjects that pupils can choose to study beyond the age of 14, a small number of pupils can influence significantly the overall pattern of results one way or the other. For this reason, a degree of caution should be exercised in evaluating trends over time.
34. The main aim in the college development plan is to set each pupil an individual target for their examinations at the age of 16 in order to raise achievement overall. However, overall targets for each subject have not been set for the end of either key stage and there remain significant inconsistencies across subjects. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, pupils did much better in English, French, mathematics, English literature, religious education and information technology than in their other subjects. They did significantly less well in art, geography, German and physical education than in their other subjects. Improving the results of higher attaining pupils in geography,



history and modern foreign languages was a key issue identified within the previous inspection. There has not yet been a sustained, significant improvement.

35. The need to raise the standards of boys across all subjects by the age of 16 was identified as a key issue when the college was previously inspected. There has been satisfactory improvement but the overall picture is inconsistent. Since 1997, improvement has been most marked in those subjects studied by a high proportion of the year group, namely English, mathematics, science and English literature. Standards have also improved in business studies, German, religious education and design and technology. There has been a particularly marked improvement in boys' results in French, geography, history and information technology. Boys' results have declined in art, music and design and technology.
36. Taken as a whole, standards in work seen at the age of 16 during the inspection were below national expectations. They were above national expectations in modern foreign languages and religious education. There was strong evidence in science that the improving trend has continued apace and standards are now above national expectations. They remained below national expectations but reflected the 2000 GCSE improvements in design and technology and geography. Standards were also below national expectations in history and English and well below them in art. In mathematics, information technology, music and physical education they were broadly in line with national expectations, indicating an improvement in music and in physical education.
37. Overall standards in literacy are below national expectations. Good teaching is helping many pupils to improve these skills within English and also in religious education but weaknesses in the technical aspects of writing remain and there is insufficient opportunity in many lessons for pupils to develop the skill of speaking at length and to see the full meaning of what they have read. Since the previous inspection, there is now more emphasis on teaching the technical words in each subject, a good feature in the teaching of science. However, this practice is inconsistent across the college because it is not monitored closely by heads of department or the senior management team. As a result, in design and technology, pupils find it difficult to talk about their designs and annotate them. The modern foreign languages department has not yet begun to implement a consistent policy of promoting literacy throughout the subject.
38. Standards in numeracy are broadly in line with national expectations and this helps them to make good progress in their other subjects. Pupils have a satisfactory range of opportunity to apply these skills across their other subjects. In geography, pupils of all abilities have opportunities to develop their graphical skills and in art, to measure accurately. In design and technology, many pupils can measure and make estimations with confidence by the age of 16. Higher attaining pupils reached standards above national expectations in business studies where they were able to construct break-even graphs and use them to identify profit and loss.
39. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. The very well written individual education plans and the increasing levels of additional support are strong features of the current provision.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

40. Pupils' attitudes towards college are good. The majority display a keenness and eagerness to work. They demonstrate an enthusiasm for college, work hard when required to do so, are co-operative and generally learn well.
41. During lessons observed, most pupils were interested in their studies, motivated to learn and responded well when given challenging tasks. In the majority of lessons, they

settled quickly to written tasks when requested to do so. They were able to sustain good levels of concentration when their attention was engaged by the teaching.

42. There were a small number of occasions when lesson content was not well matched to the needs of the group being taught and this led to poor concentration levels and some distracted behaviour. This led in turn to slower progress in learning.
43. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups where they encourage and support each other when encountering difficulties with their work. The majority of pupils are confident in talking about their work, readily answer questions and participate fully in discussions. In religious education lessons, for example, pupils were encouraged to look at the moral and ethical issues surrounding articles in the media and present their personal views to the class. These opportunities extend pupils' awareness of the wider community and help them to develop respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils are proud of their achievements and produce work that gives them personal satisfaction for their efforts. Pupils with special educational needs are interested in their work and play a full part in the college community.
44. The standard of behaviour is good. The college is an orderly community where pupils are courteous and welcoming towards visitors. There is a positive atmosphere. This has a good effect overall on how pupils approach their lessons with a willingness to learn and a readiness to make progress. The college has clear expectations of good behaviour and the majority of pupils conform to this. Movement around the college is orderly and the behaviour at lunchtime is good.
45. The standard of behaviour in lessons observed was usually good. The college has a small group of pupils who occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour, particularly in Years 9, 10 and 11. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers deal well with this and it does not interfere with the learning of other pupils. In a small minority of lessons, these difficulties arose because the class was not well managed or the work was not well matched to the needs of the pupils. As a result, they were unable to sustain their concentration due to distraction created by the level of noise and poor behaviour within the classroom.
46. Any incidents of oppressive behaviour that are brought to the attention of staff are taken seriously and dealt with effectively. The exclusion of pupils is only used when all other approaches have failed and the procedures appropriately involve the governing body at all stages. There has been a reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions since the previous inspection.
47. The personal development of pupils is unsatisfactory overall. There are insufficient opportunities provided by the college for pupils to develop their initiative and personal responsibility. A key issue for improvement identified at the previous inspection was the need for the college to increase opportunities for independent learning and research skills. This is still a weakness. Pupils have few opportunities to develop independent learning skills because their work is nearly always strongly directed by the teacher. Relatively few pupils, for example, used the college's Research and Study Centre to undertake independent study during the week of the inspection.
48. Pupils have too few opportunities to take an active role in the life of the college. The college council, for example, does not meet at present. Some pupils attend the Durham Youth Forum and represent the college in sports teams but these opportunities are limited to a few and do not increase as pupils get older and more mature.

49. Careers' lessons focus on raising pupils' awareness of further and higher education and the world of work, and pupils benefit from visits to colleges of further education, universities and places of work. These opportunities make a significant contribution towards raising pupils' aspirations about their prospects beyond the age of 16 and help them to set both realistic and more ambitious targets. The extra-curricular activities are well supported and there is a range of external visits to enrich the curriculum. The college football teams, for example, has played in a tournament in Spain.
50. The level of attendance of pupils is unsatisfactory and below the national average for 1998/99. Unauthorised absence was in line with national figures. At the time of the previous inspection, attendance was also judged to be unsatisfactory. The poor attendance of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, significantly affects their performance in GCSE examinations. The college has worked hard to attain a significant increase of three per cent in pupils' overall attendance but is aware of the need to raise levels further. The education welfare service supports the college by undertaking home visits but these are mainly to children who are persistent non-attenders. The majority of pupils are punctual in arriving at college at the start of the day but there are a few persistent latecomers. Lessons usually start promptly despite the distance some pupils have to travel across the site. The college complies with requirements for the registration of pupils.
51. With very few exceptions, pupils with special educational needs are eager to come to college. They are involved in the full range of activities the college provides, although this inclusion is not yet specifically monitored. Their personal development is encouraged well in Year 9 where pupils are enabled to discuss and solve their problems in a shared discussion with their teacher. Social skills appear in individual learning plans and are addressed in lessons and tutor time. Pupils with special educational needs behave well. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supported by specialist assistants. Pupils form positive relationships with teachers and their peers. There appears to be little or no bullying. Pupils with special educational needs are usually able to take responsibility for their course work in external examinations.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

52. Taken as a whole, the quality of teaching is good. Across the college it is very good in mathematics and in religious education. It is good overall in English, science, information and communication technology, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and personal and social education. Teaching is satisfactory in music and art. It is unsatisfactory overall in history and in design and technology. Examples of excellent teaching were seen during the inspection in mathematics, religious education and English. The features of the good and very good teaching at the college that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning are:
- Objectives stated clearly so that pupils know what they are going to learn.
  - The presentation of good subject knowledge in a way that pupils can quickly understand and therefore use to make good progress.
  - A good level of expectation which combines a high degree of challenge with the necessary level of support so that pupils of all abilities achieve well.
  - A good range of activities that sustain interest over a long period of time and present an increasing degree of challenge.
  - Teaching methods that use questions well and, in the best lessons seen, encourage pupils to get involved in the lesson and think for themselves with confidence.
53. The quality of teaching was good or better in seven out of ten of the 97 lessons seen during the inspection. It was very good or excellent in a third of lessons at Key Stage 3

and a quarter of lessons at Key Stage 4. Examples of excellent teaching were seen on four occasions in mathematics, on two occasions in English and on one occasion in religious education. Teaching was unsatisfactory in three per cent of lessons, namely on one occasion in design and technology at Key Stage 4 and on two occasions in history at Key Stage 3.

54. There were no marked differences within individual subjects in the quality of teaching seen at Key Stage 3 and at Key Stage 4 except in history, where it was satisfactory at Key Stage 4 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in English, where it was satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but good at Key Stage 4.
55. Overall, the good quality of teaching is helping pupils to learn well. The matching of work in order to meet pupils' individual needs is much improved since the previous inspection but remains unsatisfactory in history. The consistently good quality of learning in Year 7 lessons indicates that lessons are now more challenging because there is a better understanding of what pupils have done previously in their primary schools.
56. In a small number of subjects, the quality of learning is not as good as the quality of teaching because pupils have insufficient confidence and opportunity to think and find out for themselves. This was a feature of some lessons in science and history at Key Stage 4. Very occasionally, a small number of boys distract themselves and others in class. This misbehaviour is nearly always well managed but very occasionally, for example in a lesson in modern foreign languages and also one in physical education at Key Stage 4, it can lead to only satisfactory learning and progress despite the best efforts of the teacher.
57. This overall picture indicates a good degree of improvement since the last inspection in 1997 when two out of five lessons at Key Stage 4 and one out of ten lessons at Key Stage 3 had been unsatisfactory. It confirms the views of those parents who completed the questionnaire or attended the meeting before the inspection that their sons and daughters are now well taught at the college. The proportion of good or better teaching has almost doubled. The overall quality of teaching is now more consistent between the two key stages, but there remain small pockets of unsatisfactory teaching and the policy for homework is not followed consistently across all subjects, confirming the concerns of a very small number of parents.
58. In some subjects, such as mathematics, English and religious education, questions are used well to capture pupils' interest and get them involved in the lesson. The previous inspection identified the need to improve this feature in other subjects. There are indications of some improvement in history but in other subjects such as art and design and technology, these techniques remain unsatisfactory. It remains a weakness in those subjects where teaching has shown only a modest degree of improvement. For example, in art, the help given in lessons to individual pupils shows a clearer identification of those who need support to make progress. However, this usually takes the form of advice that results in the directing rather than the guiding of their learning. There is insufficient use of questions in order to get pupils to think more and make their own decisions about how best to improve or develop their work. This reduces the progress made by higher attaining pupils in particular.
59. There has been only a slight improvement in the extent to which pupils are encouraged to find things out for themselves and make their own decisions about how best to develop their work. The creation of the Research and Study Centre is an important part of the college plan to help pupils to do this. However, many pupils remain very dependent on their teachers in subjects such as design and technology where they need to be challenged more to think and plan for themselves, particularly when

designing. In music, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their own ideas in composition. This is one of the reasons why the teaching of music is satisfactory rather than good. The poor completion of course work in design and technology results from pupils not learning early enough how to organise their time and meet deadlines. On the other hand, the self-study booklet for GCSE pupils in information and communication technology is a very successful resource in helping pupils to make good progress and manage what they are doing for themselves. One of the important improvements in the teaching of geography has been a greater emphasis on research and enquiry in the fieldwork arrangements at Key Stage 4.

60. A serious lack of books and equipment was reducing the quality of teaching and depressing standards at the time of the previous inspection. Generally, provision has improved and is not such a significant factor affecting standards. It remains a weakness in design and technology with the result that pupils do not get to handle and sample lots of different materials and sometimes have to make do with poor quality tools. Whilst there is good use made of visual resources such as slides, pupils still need more up-to-date text books and more atlases as well as more opportunities to use computers in geography. There is now more effective use of information and communication technology in music, modern foreign languages and in English but overall, these resources are still used insufficiently to raise standards in other subjects. Although the number of available computers is rising, there remains insufficient indication of what skills will be taught and further developed in the teaching plan of each subject for each year.
61. There are a number of reasons why significant improvements have occurred in a relatively short period of time but other features have only just started to get better. The headteacher and his senior team have provided effective support where weaknesses were identified previously and there has been good guidance also from the advisory service of the local education authority. Improvements in accommodation have promoted a higher degree of teamwork in science that is leading to more consistent teaching and the sharing of good ideas. However, unsatisfactory accommodation is still hindering improvements in design and technology.
62. The inconsistent quality of teaching was a weakness identified at the time of the previous inspection. This is not an issue in the larger departments like English, mathematics and science, but remains one in some smaller departments like art and history where the subject management is unsatisfactory and the monitoring of teaching, both by heads of department and by senior managers, lacks the necessary regularity and rigour to assure total quality. There is no formal programme yet to monitor teaching right across the college and limited opportunities for teachers to see their colleagues teach.
63. Good and very good teaching is clearly having a strong impact on standards reached and progress made by pupils in English and information and communication technology between the ages of 14 and 16 and in the progress pupils make and the standards they reach in mathematics and religious education between the ages of 11 and 16. In English, the strong features that help this are the regular setting of timed targets to complete pieces of work within lessons, accurate assessments that help them to identify what needs to be taught next and good use of questions that encourage pupils to think and get involved in the lesson. The excellent relationships in many lessons, and particularly in English, religious education and mathematics, promote a readiness to work together in order to improve together. This is also a developing feature of the teaching of geography.

64. In information and communication technology, good use is made of the descriptions within the Programmes of Study of what pupils need to know, understand and be able to do to reach a particular standard. This helps pupils and teachers to set personal targets and to know when they have been met. In French, this approach is used well to set longer-term targets that are also shared with parents. This practice has just started in design and technology and is already starting to raise standards. It is helping these subjects to establish a strong and effective link with the aim of the college development plan to raise achievement through individual target setting.
65. In the good, very good and excellent lessons, teaching methods made sure that pupils' interest is sustained and good progress made over the 60-minute lesson. This is a particularly important consideration at Key Stage 3 and in helping lower attaining pupils to learn at a good pace at both key stages. In the good and very good teaching seen, the planning of the lesson takes this fully into account. So, for example, in mathematics, pupils complete a wide variety of activities that are well managed by the teacher. This ensures that the pace of learning and the level of interest are high. Such high, effective planning was also seen in the best physical education lessons. At its best, this provides an increasing degree of challenge as the lesson develops. One of the reasons for the improvements in science teaching has been the more varied range of teaching methods that meet the individual needs of pupils and the more frequent opportunities for them to get involved in the lesson through practical work.
66. Regularly in the very good teaching seen during the inspection, learning objectives were shared clearly and carefully with the pupils so that they knew exactly what they were going to learn. In the best lessons, these were then considered again at the end of the lesson to check what had been learnt. This was a feature of the best teaching in mathematics and religious education. When the teaching of history at Key Stage 3 was unsatisfactory, pupils were unsure what to do. They did not understand fully what they were asked to read and this meant that they could not then complete their written task. As a result, only the higher attaining pupils completed the task satisfactorily and many pupils were left wondering what they were meant to be doing. The organisation of food technology lessons was much better because the excellent, well-planned demonstrations by the teacher really set pupils thinking and helped them to understand.
67. Overall, the teaching of reading and writing as well as the development of speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Their importance has been more emphasised since the previous inspection and there is greater awareness now about the importance of clear written presentation and the understanding and use of the most important words in the study of each subject. However, there is no systematic arrangement to monitor that this is happening or to evaluate the improvements in standards that it is helping to bring about. Where the quality of teaching is good, these basic skills are well taught. It is one of the reasons why lower attaining pupils in particular make good progress. In mathematics, for example, the key words are well explained and understood. This is particularly important when the time comes to take the national tests because it helps them to understand accurately the meaning of the test questions. In information and communication technology, there is a strong emphasis on using the correct technical words. As a result, pupils can describe what they are doing accurately. In religious education, there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills because there is a strong emphasis upon learning through discussion. This is one of the reasons why standards are higher in religious education than in many other subjects. On the other hand, in design and technology these skills are not well taught. As a result, middle and lower attaining pupils do not develop the necessary writing and reading skills that they require in order to develop their ideas, complete background research and record their evaluations of how they might complete a design. In modern foreign languages there is as yet no consistent practice.

68. The teaching of numeracy skills across subjects is satisfactory overall. Only recently has a start been made to co-ordinate the contributions made by the different subjects to the development of these skills. In mathematics, there are frequent opportunities for pupils to make calculations in their heads as well as through using calculators. This is helping them to work more quickly and to think about numbers. They also develop a good understanding of measurement and shapes. In geography, pupils have opportunities to show that they can present information in graphic forms and also understand it when they see it represented in text books. There are missed opportunities to develop numeracy skills in history and music.
69. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The individual education plans identify very clearly the pupil's strengths and weaknesses as a learner, indicate precisely what needs to be done and define simply what the learning targets are. These pupils learn well in religious education, in mathematics and also in physical education at Key Stage 3. In these subjects they make good progress. In history and in design and technology, their learning is unsatisfactory. In all other subjects it is satisfactory. The recent increase in the number of classroom support assistants is starting to improve the quality of learning.
70. The college has not yet formally identified its talented pupils and there are no timetabled additional arrangements to meet their needs across the college. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

71. Taken as a whole, the quality and range of all the planned curricular opportunities are sufficient to meet satisfactorily the needs of all pupils.
72. There are some particularly good features in the range of opportunities beyond the age of 14, particularly for lower attaining and poorly motivated pupils. Improvements have been made in art, music and physical education at Key Stage 3 in order to meet the legal requirements. These are not met fully at present in design and technology.
73. The organisation of the curriculum and the opportunities this offers in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory. The time allowed for most subjects is in line with that found nationally although slightly lower in music, physical education, religious education, history and geography. The two-week cycle of the timetable is well managed and helps to achieve a good degree of balance in the time given to each subject. It does, however, result in a considerable time-gap between each personal and social education lesson as they occur only once every two weeks. All pupils have information and communication technology lessons, but on very few occasions in lessons seen during the inspection was use made of the skills pupils acquire in order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning in other subjects. The quality and range of the curriculum is particularly good in mathematics because it includes good provision for the teaching of numeracy and in science, where work is well planned to match the needs of all pupils. The history curriculum in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory because it is too narrow with only a limited range of sources of information and a lack of variety in the range of activities to develop historical skills.
74. The quality and range of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 are good. There has been good progress in developing a curriculum that fully matches the needs of individual pupils. Opportunities have been further extended through the introduction of media studies and physical education as GCSE courses. Where only a few pupils choose to study a

GCSE subject, for example in music, arrangements are made for them to study it beyond the school day. The provision for information and communication technology is good. All pupils follow a certificated course, either at GCSE or in Key Skills. Another strong feature is the very good quality of alternative opportunities provided for lower attaining pupils. The provision of the agriculture and horticulture course within science provides a further degree of choice for lower attaining pupils, providing a good foundation for those wishing to attend the local agriculture college in Durham City after leaving Fyndoune.

75. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities with clubs and college teams in a variety of sporting activities. There are theatre and drama visits in English, extra revision classes for Year 11 pupils in many subjects and opportunities for pupils to perform in music events at various times throughout the year. Pupils are also able to start their Duke of Edinburgh award towards the end of Year 9.
76. The quality of provision for personal, social and health education is good at both key stages, although the time allocation is low. The well-planned programme includes good provision for sex education, health education and drugs education. Careers education has been further improved and is now integrated into the programme at both key stages. Form teachers in Year 7 teach personal, social and health education but in other years it is taught by a team of specialists. This ensures a high degree of consistent quality. They are also well supported by outside speakers such as local community police officers and the careers service.
77. The college has established good links with the local primary schools. There are good arrangements for pupils transferring to the college at the age of eleven. These include an induction day, whilst pupils are still in the final year of their primary school, that includes lessons in science and information and communication technology. Pupils' work in mathematics at the start of Year 7 is well linked to what they had previously been doing in their primary school. In English, Year 9 pupils produce illustrated short stories suitable for younger children which they then take to local primary schools and read to the pupils. These arrangements have enabled the college to address satisfactorily one of the issues about the curriculum that was identified at the time of the previous inspection.
78. The college has also developed very good links with the local further education college. This has helped it to provide a good range and quality of opportunities, particularly for lower attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 11 are able to take a range of vocational courses, including hairdressing, engineering, catering and construction. This gives pupils both vocational opportunities and also a good introduction to the college, which many pupils attend after leaving Fyndoune. The college has also successfully encouraged some of its part-time cleaning staff to follow GNVQ courses as part of its adult education provision.
79. Good links with the local community and other organisations further extend the range and quality of opportunities available to all pupils beyond the age of 14. The well-organised work experience arrangements in Year 10 are well supported by the Durham Business Education Executive. There are very few opportunities to establish links with local industry because of the local industrial decline. The college plays an important role in the community life of Sacriston with many sporting and other activities taking place in the college in the evenings and at weekends.
80. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The aims of the college include ensuring that it is a community that encourages tolerance, respect for oneself and others, co-operation and service. There



is a positive approach to equality for all pupils. There are helpful guidelines for subject departments to follow. They are expected to add their own contribution to these areas of experience. In fact, the policy is not monitored and many departments show only superficial understanding of their contribution to pupils' wider personal development. Subject departments do not include key objectives for personal development in their planning. As a result, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take decisions about the best way to learn. However, in religious education, planning for, and implementation of personal development are very good.

81. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Within the regular pattern of assemblies in all years the legal requirement to provide for a daily act of collective worship is not fully met. The assemblies often include moral, social and cultural aspects but do not allow for collective worship, including prayer, reflection or reference to God. In religious education, pupils in Year 9 were given the opportunity to analyse, in depth, their thoughts on 'love'. During the lesson, through their own discussion and reflection, they concluded that there are different types of love. In one English lesson seen, there was a sense of awe and wonder when addressing the moral issues in the book 'Of Mice and Men'.
82. The college emphasises the moral development of pupils and the provision is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are expected to behave well and show respect for others in college and in the community. The code of conduct is displayed in every room. Pupils are well rewarded for good work and behaviour, improvement and citizenship. Moral and social issues are dealt with well in many subjects. In personal and social education lessons, pupils study a variety of moral issues. In Year 7, pupils look at 'Rights and Responsibilities'; in Year 11, they study the rights, wrongs and responsibilities of driving a vehicle. Two parents, who are driving instructors, visited the college to talk to pupils on these issues. In science, pupils look at moral issues, for example those surrounding the long-term effects of the disposal of hazardous waste.
83. Pupils' social development is good. They are taught to have a good appreciation of social issues and relationships in all subjects across the curriculum. There is collaborative work in most subjects including lessons specifically designed for pupils with special educational needs. There is a very good range of opportunities for pupils to take an active role in addressing community issues. They visit local community centres and some pupils have been gardening for members of the community. Year 9 'opportunity days' include the chance for all pupils to visit local universities to meet students and lecturers. The visit includes activities on communication skills and 'ice breaker' games.
84. There is a good provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly in modern foreign languages. For example, in French, pupils study French culture and Year 8 visit France. In physical education, the department organised a visit to Barcelona to take part in a football tournament. In geography and history pupils study their own and the culture of other countries. Art, mathematics, English, music and religious education all make positive contributions towards the cultural and multicultural development of pupils. In design and technology and science, such opportunities have not been identified.
85. Since the last inspection, the college has worked hard to deal with the weaknesses identified in the previous report. There has been a good level of commitment to promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness but this is not explicitly taught in all subjects.

86. The overall provision for equal access to opportunity for pupils is satisfactory. Pupils have access to the full range of opportunities for achievement that the college provides. Pupils with special educational needs have the same opportunities as everyone else in the subjects that they study. There is a good range of ways in which this is made possible. This includes helpful advice and the provision of well prepared resources to subject departments by the special educational needs co-ordinator, additional help for those who have difficulties with reading and a homework club. In most subjects, the college monitors pupils' achievements by gender, attainment and background. Monitoring by ethnicity is not applicable to this college at the present time.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

87. Taken as a whole, the procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and security are satisfactory. The college provides a caring, supportive environment where there are good relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves. Tutors stay with their tutor group throughout the college and consequently know their pupils well. They are responsible for monitoring and promoting their personal development and academic progress. Heads of year oversee their work.
88. The local education authority provides the college with assessment data for the incoming Year 7 pupils and the college has successfully addressed the key issue raised at the previous inspection of lack of progress made by some Year 7 pupils on transferring from primary school. Primary school pupils visit the college before entry in September and settle quickly. Pupils are well prepared for studies beyond the age of 16 through an effective careers education programme. This includes a good range of useful visits to colleges of further education, universities and places of work.
89. The twice-yearly MONIT reports are used by form tutors to monitor the academic progress and personal development of pupils. However, the quality and frequency of such guidance is inconsistent. Some pupils benefit from individual discussions whereas others do not have this experience. There is a lack of clarity in the job descriptions of tutors about the responsibilities and time allocation for this work. This makes it difficult to manage effectively. Some pupils in Year 11 benefit from a mentoring scheme and last year this enabled the majority of them to raise their GCSE examination grades.
90. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good with a series of strategies in place if known poor attenders fail to arrive at college. Since the previous inspection, an attendance co-ordinator has been appointed and this has resulted in a significant improvement in levels of attendance. Tutors still have the primary responsibility for promoting good attendance. In this area also, the effectiveness of the tutor is inconsistent. A weekly award is presented to the tutor group with the highest attendance and pupils value the opportunity to go into lunch three minutes earlier than the rest of the college. The education welfare service undertakes home visits on behalf of the college but these arrangements give insufficient attention to identify the early signs of poor attendance by an analysis of the patterns and reasons for absence.
91. The college's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There are clear expectations of good behaviour based on respect for others that are clearly understood even by the youngest pupils. There is a reward system that recognises improved behaviour, pupils' good attitudes towards their studies and the production of work of a high standard. A great deal of thought has been given to the development of an appropriate reward system that would have value for all pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. The recent 'menu' that Key Stage 4 pupils can choose from by saving up their reward vouchers has been well received and

reflects an innovative approach on the part of the college. Funds to pay for the rewards are raised by two members of the teaching staff who give up their break time to run a tuck shop. Sanctions are clearly understood by pupils. The red card system is an effective method of managing unacceptable behaviour in lessons and parents are involved at every stage. Internal exclusion is suitable and is used effectively by subject staff. Two in-service training days for staff have been held recently on behaviour management. Oppressive behaviour is addressed in personal, social and health education lessons where the impact of pupils' actions on others is taught. Bullying is not an issue and pupils confirm that any incidents of hostile behaviour, when brought to the notice of staff, are dealt with immediately and firmly.

92. The arrangements for child protection are good. The child protection co-ordinator and other heads of year are experienced in the procedures involved and are conversant with recent changes to the system. There are appropriate links with the external support agencies. Staff have benefited from recent training and are clear about the procedures to follow.
93. The health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory overall. Key staff with responsibility have not received any training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities with appropriate vigilance. Emergency procedures and first aid provision are good. All departments have not carried out risk assessments and the lack of awareness of some members of staff has led to some unsafe practice. These are of a minor nature that regular safety reviews would have immediately identified.
94. The college supports well its pupils with special educational needs with some well-targeted literacy teaching and as much support in lessons as staffing resources allow. Difficult behaviour is dealt with effectively in nearly all cases. Their progress is monitored regularly against the clear targets set within these pupils' individual education plans.
95. The college has a good, well-organised procedure for the assessment and recording of pupils' academic achievement and progress. This permits departments to have freedom to match internal subject assessment styles to subject content. The requirement for departments to report twice per year on pupils' achievement against National Curriculum levels ensures that pupils and subject teachers have sound knowledge of their current levels of performance. Departments are required to set target grades for individual pupils and monitor progress against them, setting appropriate targets for each pupil. All pupils, when asked, were aware of their levels of attainment in all subjects. The music department has not yet fully implemented the target setting aspect of the system. Most other departments have good or satisfactory procedures in place. The procedures for assessment are very good in religious education and science lessons and excellent in mathematics. In information and communication technology, mathematics and, more recently in design and technology, good use is made of pupils' self-assessment and target setting.
96. The college's development plan has, as one of its main aims, the 'raising of achievement through individual target setting'. Since the last inspection, the college has developed its assessment system to link the monitoring of academic progress and pastoral welfare. There is provision of one-to-one counselling for identified individuals and letters of commendation or concern are sent to parents. In Key Stage 4, pupils are identified for a mentoring process to raise their achievement. This has been effectively monitored and has shown positive gains in the majority of targeted pupils.
97. The use of the college's assessment system is satisfactory. Most departments make satisfactory or better use of the opportunities offered to modify arrangements within the

overall framework in order best to reflect the requirements of their subject. Music, mathematics and, most recently, design and technology departments make very good use of these opportunities, using assessments to reset targets and to influence the teaching received by pupils. In some smaller departments, lack of verification of standards has resulted in unreliable teacher assessment of the quality of pupils' work, for example in art and history. There is good overall analysis of examination data that has led to the development of college targets for improving results.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

98. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the college provides and achieves are very favourable. There was a relatively low response to the parents' questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection because Year 11 pupils had already left the college when it was issued and it was too early in the term for the parents of the new Year 7 pupils to have formed a firm view of the college. Those who did respond agree that the college is successfully meeting their expectations.
99. A high proportion of parents feel that the college enables pupils to make good progress and expects them to work hard. Some concerns were expressed about the amount and regularity of homework and the inspection findings support their view. However, not all parents sign the pupil's planning booklet to show that the work has been done. The college attempts to involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and to work in partnership with the college to ensure that all children achieve their potential.
100. The college has an open door policy and parents feel that they are able to approach the college with questions or problems. Despite the best efforts of the college, a small number of parents do not support the college by ensuring the regular attendance of their child. Overall, the contribution of parents to children's learning at the college and at home needs to be greater.
101. The college works hard to get parents involved in college events such as consultation evenings where recent attendance has ranged from just under half to nearly two-thirds of the parents. A questionnaire seeking the views of parents is given out on consultation evenings and the results analysed and acted on by the college. The parent governors work hard and actively support the college in its work. The Friends of the College organise a range of activities and raise funds to support the college. The governing body, staff and pupils appreciate their efforts. A small group of parents regularly give up their time to take part in a reading workshop for the younger pupils.
102. The quality of information provided to parents is very good. Parents receive termly newsletters from heads of year as well as the headteacher and curriculum information from subject leaders. There are twice yearly consultation meetings where parents can meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. MONIT reports are sent twice yearly to parents with pupils' attainment and predicted grades and attitudes towards their studies. Annual reports are good overall and contain sufficient academic information for parents to assess what their child can do and what they need to do to raise their level of attainment but there is some inconsistency between teaching staff in the quality of these, particularly in the area of setting targets for improvement. The parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved with their annual reviews.
103. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Parents usually attend annual and transitional reviews. One or two parents hear pupils read at the college. Increasingly, parents become actively involved in supporting pupils' progress.



## HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

104. The leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. The headteacher and his senior team share a strongly held guiding principle of providing full opportunities for all pupils in order for them to fulfil their potential. Careful management since the previous inspection, in spite of the difficulties associated with falling pupil numbers, has enabled improvements to be made in the quality of education, the range of planned curricular opportunities and standards in most subjects.
105. Communication and consultation between heads of department, heads of year and senior managers are generally good. Because the college is small in size, arrangements to consult informally are made easier but there is now a good balance between these and the more formal meeting schedule. The curriculum group provides regular opportunities for nearly half of the college teaching staff to be directly involved in policy making. Good links with a range of external agencies, particularly with the local further education colleges, support well-managed, wider opportunities for lower attaining and less well-motivated pupils beyond the age of 14. A high proportion of the parents who attended the meeting before the inspection and completed the questionnaire consider that the college is well led and managed.
106. At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership and management of the college was found to be in need of substantial improvement, particularly because of inefficient use of funding to support the then very small sixth form. There has been a satisfactory degree of progress. The college and its governors took decisive action in consultation with the local education authority to resolve this issue. The senior team is now more effective and has clearer line management responsibilities. It offers effective support to subject departments and exercises a satisfactory degree of oversight of the work of the college. However, the senior management team is insufficiently rigorous in the evaluation of the quality of teaching and in determining whether standards are high enough. The college has made satisfactory progress in setting up its procedures for the performance management of teachers during this academic year.
107. The headteacher and senior staff have clear aims for the college and a strong commitment to its improvement. These are stated precisely in the annual college management plan. This defines clearly the college's priority to raise the achievements of all pupils through individual target setting and is well linked to the development priorities of the local education authority, particularly in raising standards at Key Stage 3. There is less clarity about how those aims will be met because objectives are not stated clearly enough and the indicators by which success will be measured are imprecise. Actions are defined but the outcomes that these are intended to have on standards or the quality of provision and, in particular, on teaching, are not stated. There is a basic review annually of what has been done but this does not really get to grips with the degree of improvement that has resulted from expenditure decisions. As a result, there is no full evaluation of the plan.
108. The annual review lays the foundations for the next year's plan. Until this term there was no longer-term strategic plan to which each annual plan would be a stepping stone. The governing body has been involved insufficiently in its development. As a result, there has been a lack of clarity in considering the longer-term implications of any further fall in the number of pupils on roll.
109. The overall quality of the leadership and management of subject departments is satisfactory. There is a clear link between good subject leadership, good teaching and pupils' good levels of achievement. Current financial constraints have resulted in several temporary posts within subject departments. The arrangements are working

well and are providing good opportunities for professional development. The changes in the science department are bringing about improvements both in teaching and standards. The temporary leadership and management in mathematics are very good because the new developments are building on many inherited strengths and are carefully planned. Leadership and management are currently very good also in religious education and good in English, information and communication technology and physical education. Very effective support by senior managers and the local education authority within the geography department has led to significant recent improvements in teaching and in the planning of schemes of work. The leadership and management of this subject are now good. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in art, history and, until this term, were poor in design and technology. Where leadership and management are unsatisfactory, this is because there is insufficient monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and a lack of sharpness in defining what needs to be done to improve matters. The mathematics and religious education departments provide a very good example of what can be achieved when these features are strong.

110. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in the overall quality of development planning within subject departments. However, arrangements to evaluate these plans are unsatisfactory. Statements in the review of progress against these objectives are frequently only in the form of one word, 'completed' or 'ongoing', and sometimes both. Senior managers have only the broadest indicators against which to measure the success of developments in departments. In the case of the design and technology department, senior managers have been unable to measure the success of additional funding in terms of raising standards.
111. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed. Regular support is offered to subject areas, particularly in the preparation of resources. Links between the co-ordinator and the heads of year are particularly good at the early stages of identification of needs. The good leadership in these areas gives clear direction for the work of the department and its development across the college.
112. The governing body is generally effective in fulfilling its statutory duties although all legal requirements for design and technology in the curriculum and to provide for a daily act of collective worship are not fully met. In order to gain greater insight into the work of the college, governors are now all linked to specific aspects of the college's work. The governing body is appropriately involved in the oversight of provision for pupils with special educational needs but does not currently meet the legal requirement to report on their evaluation of this provision within the annual report to parents. In all other respects they maintain a good degree of awareness about the improvements that the college is making by monitoring the academic success of pupils against targets. In this way, they work supportively and to good effect as its critical friend. They have a strong commitment to its aims and values and relationships between the governing body and the college are very good.
113. There is, however, some lack of awareness among governors about key strategic issues facing the college, and in particular, the way in which it will need to address the problem of falling rolls and its impact on finance, the curriculum and staffing in the years to come. They have not yet been involved in developing contingency plans for this and have largely been reliant on received information from the college. As a result, they are insufficiently involved in these important aspects of strategic planning.
114. Financial planning is sound. The strategic use of resources is satisfactory. Financial controls are good with clear, well-administered procedures. The issues raised within the most recent auditor's report have been dealt with. The efficient use of resources is now much improved following the closure of the sixth form and there have been many

savings in the provision of ancillary services through a restructuring of contracts. The governing body has worked very effectively with the headteacher and his staff to improve the efficiency of the college. Specific grants have been used well to expand the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to provide more opportunities for vocational courses, particularly for lower attaining pupils, and to improve special needs provision through the deployment of learning support assistants. Funding allocated for special educational needs is now clearly identified by the college and used effectively to meet pupils' needs, including those with statements. Overall, careful financial management has supported the college's main educational priority of providing full opportunities to pupils to fulfil their potential. Longer-term planning to reflect the impact of any further reduction in numbers and consequent reduction in funding lacks precision.

115. The overall management, deployment and use of the resources available to the college are satisfactory. In the difficult circumstances of falling pupil numbers and associated reductions in income and teaching staff, there have been significant improvements in the quality of learning resources in art, information and communication technology, mathematics, physical education and modern foreign languages, and improvements in the accommodation of science and art since the previous inspection, all of which have served to improve standards in those areas. Tools and equipment are insufficient in design and technology.
116. Across the college as a whole, satisfactory administrative use is being made of new technology, most especially in the computerised system for recording pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement. Despite its requests for early involvement, the college has only recently become involved at Phase 3 in the National Grid For Learning. Computer resources have increased as a result but there has been insufficient time for them to raise standards further.
117. The college, despite its relatively small size, has a staffing complement suitable to its curriculum needs. The teaching staff is sufficiently qualified and experienced to teach the curriculum effectively and this is an important factor in raising standards. The exception is design and technology, where shortcomings in design skills have had a detrimental effect upon standards. The college has sound arrangements for the professional development of staff and the appointment of learning support assistants has enabled more effective provision to be made for pupils with special educational needs.
118. Accommodation is well managed. The reduction in the size of the college has led to the rationalisation of the use of space in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. This has helped to establish better teamwork in science because teaching areas are now grouped together. Facilities for art have been improved. There have been planned improvements in the dining facilities. The location of teaching areas has been well planned with English rooms close to the Research and Study Centre and a new computer suite close to the modern foreign languages and geography classrooms.
119. Parents commented at the meeting before the inspection how well they thought the premises were maintained internally. However, there remain areas of weakness, particularly in food technology within design and technology where several health and safety issues were identified during the inspection and in physical education where, despite overall very good facilities, a leaking roof means that the sports hall cannot be used when it rains heavily.
120. The college applies the principles of best value through the use of the contracts list of the local education authority and in seeking quotations for services. There remain weaknesses in the current arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of major



expenditure decisions. The college seeks diligently to provide an education service in a highly competitive environment, where pupils who live nearby can and do decide to go to other, larger schools. Parents and pupils are strongly supportive of the service the college has to offer, and the college is keen to highlight and build on the advantages of its small size, such as the close monitoring of pupils' development and progress through target setting.

121. Fyndoune Community College is effectively led and managed. Although standards overall are below average at the end of both key stages, pupils achieve well because they are well taught. The socioeconomic circumstances of the pupils and their standards of attainment on entry are well below average. The unit costs are above average partly because the size of the college is below average. Standards have risen at the age of 16 since the last inspection and there has been a significant improvement in the 2000 national test results at the age of 14. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average but the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above it. When the circumstances of the pupils, their standards on entry to the college, their progress, achievements, personal development and the way in which they are well taught are weighed against the high unit cost of their education, Fyndoune Community College is judged to give satisfactory value for money to its pupils, their parents and the wider community of Sacriston.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to improve further the standards and quality of provision at the college, the headteacher, senior staff and governors should:

- Raise standards in design and technology and in history at Key Stage 3 by:
  - reviewing the schemes of work in each subject area to make sure that legal requirements are fully met;
  - identifying precisely what all pupils know, understand and can do in these subjects when they start at the college;
  - using this information to prepare the programme of work for each year, defining clearly how design skills in design and technology and enquiry skills in history will be taught in each year so that they become increasingly better as pupils get older;
  - setting clear targets for improvement in terms of standards and the quality of teaching and learning, monitoring these closely and evaluating success against agreed criteria;
  - seeking to identify schools in similar circumstances that have successfully addressed these issues and from this, identifying what will best help the college to improve standards in these two subjects.

Paragraphs: 13, 21, 22, 25, 34, 35, 37, 59, 61, 72, 109, 117

- - Improve the arrangements for strategic planning and establish a more rigorous approach to the evaluation of management decisions by:
    - working still more closely with governors to establish a clear and shared statement of the long-term goals for the college;
    - using this as the basis for the long-term college development plan that includes specific targets;
    - creating an annual college plan that sets out the objectives that define what the college will achieve in order to move towards its longer-term targets;
    - using precise success criteria upon which monitoring should concentrate in order that the effectiveness of actions taken can be fully evaluated.

Paragraphs: 106, 107, 108, 110, 113, 114, 120

- Improve the quality of pupils' learning by providing more opportunities to take responsibility, exercise initiative, use information and communication technology and make decisions in the planning and completion of their work by:
  - analysing current teaching and learning styles across subjects in order to get a clear picture of current practice;
  - identifying in current schemes of work where and how these learning skills might be better developed in order to raise standards;
  - monitoring and evaluating the impact that changes in learning styles have on raising standards, promoting pupils' personal development by improving still further the quality of teaching;
  - identifying schools in similar circumstances who have addressed successfully this issue in order to gain insights from their experiences.

Paragraphs: 24, 25, 47, 59, 80, 131, 148, 156, 158, 168

- Improve levels of attendance so that they exceed the national average by:
  - analysing why attendance currently remains below the national average;
  - setting annual and longer-term attendance targets as part of the annual and longer-term development plan for college improvement;
  - identifying any additional resources that may be needed to support the attendance improvement plan.

Paragraphs: 31, 90

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

Paragraph: 112

The inspection team also considers that the headteacher, senior staff and governors should:

- Monitor policy decisions more closely to ensure consistent practice across the college.
- Address the health and safety issues within design and technology and complete risk assessments in all subject areas.
- Promote pupils' personal development by providing a wider range of opportunities for them to take responsibility as they get older.
- Improve the arrangements for pupils' spiritual development.

## PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	23	39	28	3	0	0

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

### Information about the college's pupils

Pupils on the college's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the college's roll	447
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free college meals	119

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
Number of pupils on the college's special educational needs register	82

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last college year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
College data	9.6
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
College data	1.2
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	58	50	108

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	21	29	22
	Girls	32	27	17
	Total	53	56	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	49 (54)	52 (50)	36 (43)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	12 (11)	25 (26)	10 (12)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	15	26	13
	Girls	34	31	23
	Total	49	57	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	45 (61)	53 (64)	33 (61)
	National	64 (61)	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	18 (30)	27 (37)	5 (30)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	39	60	99

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	9	32	34
	Girls	28	59	59
	Total	37	91	93
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	College	37 (37)	92 (79)	94 (90)
	National	46.6 (46.3)	90.9 (87.5)	95.8 (95.7)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	College	32 (25)

per pupil	National	38 (37)
-----------	----------	---------

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	442
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **Exclusions in the last college year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	42	3
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)	28.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	111

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.5
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	22.0
Key Stage 4	19.5

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1356072
Total expenditure	1378856
Expenditure per pupil	2657
Balance brought forward from previous year	17812
Balance carried forward to next year	-4972

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

380

Number of questionnaires returned

74

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	23	61	9	4	3
My child is making good progress in college.	36	59	3	0	1
Behaviour in the college is good.	38	50	4	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	51	16	7	1
The teaching is good.	38	54	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	47	5	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	50	41	8	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	42	0	1	0
The college works closely with parents.	30	57	11	1	1
The college is well led and managed.	35	58	0	3	4
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	49	8	0	4
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	49	12	4	11

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

### **ENGLISH**

122. Standards at the age of eleven when pupils first join the college have, until this September, been well below the national average. Standards in the national tests for pupils at the age of 14 were well below the national average in 1999, as shown by the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in the national tests. The results of the 1999 national tests were also below those of similar schools nationally. This represented a decline on the previous two years, although the results of the tests in 2000 indicate a rise in standards.
123. The evidence of the inspection confirmed that standards for the majority of pupils by the age of 14 are below the national average in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and, in particular, writing. The achievement of boys overall is below that of girls but the gap is narrowing. Although the majority of pupils of all levels of ability develop good listening skills, lower and middle attaining pupils have a limited vocabulary and command of standard English, and they lack the confidence to sustain a debate or an argument. Although most pupils read with an accuracy appropriate for their age, they do not read with expression, and lower attaining pupils have few strategies for self-correcting. Pupils produce a good range of writing but the technical skills of middle and lower attaining pupils are weak; they make frequent errors in punctuation, grammar and basic spellings, and presentation is sometimes unsatisfactory.
124. Standards by the age of 16 were close to the national average for A\*-C grades in the 1999 GCSE examinations for both English language and English literature, although boys achieved lower standards overall than girls. These results were well above average for similar schools. The percentage of A\*-C grades was higher than in the previous two years but the percentage was lower in the 2000 examinations. English results compare well with many other subjects in the college.
125. The evidence of the inspection confirmed that standards in Year 11 are below national expectations in the key areas of speaking, reading and writing. This is true both of English and media studies. Pupils develop the skills of writing longer pieces of work, particularly in their coursework. However, the work of middle and lower attaining pupils is still characterised by frequent errors in punctuation, grammar and spelling, although pupils often express good ideas, for example when analysing literary texts or putting together a critique of the media.
126. Middle and lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning by the age of 14, particularly in reading and the capacity to write in a range of styles, although they make less progress in improving the range of vocabulary and the technical accuracy of their writing. An increasing range of writing styles is evident. For example, pupils write imaginative stories on the theme of 'I'm shrinking', they write factually on the theme of hobbies and pets, they produce book and film reviews, they write metaphor poems and riddles and they learn to write formal letters. This written work shows a developing maturity of style across the three years of Key Stage 3.
127. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in developing their English skills by the age of 14, although progress in improving reading and writing skills is most evident when they receive specialist support. Higher attaining pupils sometimes make insufficient progress when they are not given work of a suitable level to match their abilities, for example when analysing similes and metaphors, a type of work they had already done in their primary schools. Sometimes higher attaining pupils remain



too dependent on the teacher and are not given sufficient opportunity or encouragement through personal research or the use of dictionaries, thesauruses or information and communication technology facilities to develop their language skills at a personal, faster and more challenging rate.

128. Pupils by the age of 16 learn to analyse and evaluate critically the way in which writers from different eras such as Charles Dickens and John Wyndham create settings and develop plots and character in order to gain the interest of their readers. They also learn to evaluate critically the way in which a classic novel such as John Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' is represented in film. However, the writing of middle and lower attaining pupils remains restricted in its accuracy and scope because of pupils' limited vocabulary and inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in developing their reading and writing skills, but their progress does not match that of other pupils at Key Stage 4, mainly because there is limited specialist support available.
129. The quality of teaching in English at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall. It is always at least satisfactory, and is good or better in two lessons out of five. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 is good. It is always at least satisfactory, but is good or better in seven out of eight lessons, and is the principal reason why most pupils make good progress by the age of 16.
130. Where teaching is good or better, it is characterised by several features common to both Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers set specific time targets for the completion of particular tasks within lessons. This helps to focus pupils' attention and helps them to maintain their concentration, leading to good gains in knowledge and understanding in a relatively short time, as for example in media studies when pupils are analysing the way in which sport is presented by the media. Teachers frequently question pupils skilfully to reinforce their understanding, as for example when Year 11 pupils debate the contrasting qualities of short stories written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In good lessons, teachers often ensure that all pupils make an oral contribution, and this increases pupils' motivation. Teachers sometimes carry out effective assessment during lessons, as for example when Key Stage 3 pupils are reading or writing their journals in the Research and Study Centre, or when Key Stage 4 pupils are carrying out group discussions of characters in Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. This enables teachers to build on existing progress and further improve standards. Teachers help lower-achieving pupils make progress in their writing by providing them with writing frames, seen for example when pupils were analysing Dickens' 'The Signalman'. In the best lessons, as for example a Year 10 lesson when the subject was 'Of Mice and Men', a powerful blend of explanation, purposeful questioning and skilful use of resources, put across with humour and authority, totally involved the pupils in the mystery of the language and the emotions conveyed by the author, enabling pupils to make a mature appreciation of the text at various levels. One of the most pleasing features of the teaching in English is the excellent quality of relationships which is evident in most lessons and with all age groups. Pupils work well individually, in pairs and in groups. They enjoy their English lessons and want to do well for the teachers, who have an authoritative but relaxed approach to which pupils respond by working hard, as typified in a Year 9 lesson when pupils were analysing the impact of persuasive writing and concentrated hard throughout on the various tasks.
131. On the very few occasions where some aspects of teaching are unsatisfactory, mostly at Key Stage 3, there is a lack of pace which results in inadequate challenge for high attaining pupils, particularly girls. As a result, these pupils do not always make the progress in developing their writing skills of which they are capable. In a small minority of lessons, the teacher spends too much time in explanations and does not actively

involve the pupils at an early enough stage. Pupils are sometimes not encouraged to work out things for themselves and the teacher questioning or classroom organisation is too controlled to allow pupils to show the initiative and independent learning skills that would assist their personal development.

132. The leadership and management exercised by the head of English have been good in enabling pupils to progress from well below average standards on entry to a significantly higher standard by the age of 16. This has been done partly by beginning to address the issue of underachievement by boys, for example by reviewing the reading material available. Another example of positive development is the increasing emphasis given in Years 7 and 8 to developing a coherent programme of improving reading and writing skills, using the Research and Study Centre and building on the developments of the literacy strategy in primary schools. The department is beginning to use information technology more in lessons, for example producing 'newspapers' on computers. Some areas are still relatively undeveloped. Marking of work is often thorough and constructive but it is not always helpful to pupils in demonstrating to them what they have achieved and how they can improve. The monitoring of teaching within the department and consequent sharing of good practice are also undeveloped.
133. The previous inspection judged that although standards in English were in line or above the national average for many girls at the ages of both 14 and 16, standards were below average for many boys. This is still the case. The principal deficiencies then were in the quality of writing and the quality of pupils' verbal skills. These weaknesses still persist but the department is now more aware of them and is targeting pupils for improvement. The quality of teaching has also improved since the previous inspection and therefore, overall there has been satisfactory progress since 1997.

## **MATHEMATICS**

134. On entry to the college, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the national average.
135. Standards in the 1999 National Curriculum tests taken by all pupils at the age of 14 were below the national average for all schools. Half of pupils reached Level 5 or above and a quarter of them Level 6 or above. The percentage performing at Level 7 or above was about two-thirds of the very small proportion nationally. These results were above average when compared to similar schools. Pupils achieve well. Standards rise from well below average at the age of eleven to below average at the age of 14. Since the last inspection, results have improved in line with the national trend with a significant further improvement in 2000 when two-thirds of pupils reached the national expectation or above.
136. The standards of work completed by pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 during the inspection were in line with the most recent improvements in national test results. Pupils make good progress. A Year 7 mixed ability group successfully collected and tabulated data, producing frequency charts and bar charts of the information. By the end of Year 9, high attaining pupils work to levels above national expectations. They are able to work with cumulative frequencies and can solve simultaneous equations using graphs or calculations. Most pupils work successfully when determining rules governing sequences of numbers, calculating angles within various shapes and manipulating positive and negative numbers. A Year 9 class of middle attaining pupils reached standards in line with national expectations as they successfully calculated various circle dimensions. They plotted simple shapes using co-ordinates in all four quadrants and understood the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Number skills are of a satisfactory standard between the ages of 11 and 14 and pupils are comfortable using investigation processes to determine results. This

was seen when a lower attaining group of pupils investigated properties of symmetry using a variety of techniques.

137. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C and also grades A\*-G in the 1999 GCSE examination was close to the national average, an improvement since the previous inspection. Whilst mathematics remains one of the strongest subjects for boys, there is no discernible pattern in the results of boys compared to girls. The trend from 1997 to 1999 indicates an improvement, closing on the national average. However, there was a fall in the number of A\*-C grades in the 2000 examination. Results for A\*-G grades have been above the national average during the last three years. When comparing pupils' results in mathematics to other subjects they take, performance has been second only to results in English. Pupils achieve well. The 1999 GCSE results were well above the average for similar schools.
138. Between the ages of 14 and 16, pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Pupils in Year 11 work at levels appropriate to their ability. Their books show higher attaining pupils working at levels of exceptional performance in some topics. They are strong in the use of number and algebra, multiplying algebraic expressions and manipulating formulae. They are able to determine the probability of outcomes of compound events and calculate areas and volumes of similar solids. Middle attaining pupils showed proficiency in finding and describing sequences where the rule was quadratic. Most lower attaining pupils achieve GCSE grades at foundation level. Working successfully to consolidate previous learning, they are able to plot points in all four quadrants and construct pie charts from collected data. Their general level of numeracy is below national expectations in Key Stage 4 because they have gaps in their understanding of basic numerical facts.
139. In both key stages, low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make progress similar to other groups, producing work at an appropriate level. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson. Their understanding of proportional division was rapidly advanced and consolidated in a lesson enjoyed by both teacher and pupils alike.
140. The department has made many improvements since the last inspection that have contributed to these improved standards. In response to the findings of the previous inspection, work is now better matched to pupils' previous learning at the start of Year 7. The new approach to mixed ability teaching and self-assessment by pupils has led to their having greater knowledge about how they are doing and what they need to do next as they make progress towards their target grades. The choice of appropriate textbooks and the response to the numeracy initiative have also contributed well to the raising of standards. All mathematics lessons are taught by specialist teachers. This has ensured that these initiatives have been consistently put into action.
141. Teaching in both key stages is very good. All lessons observed were good or better. In three-quarters of lessons teaching was very good or better. Teachers are suitably qualified and have very good subject knowledge. Good organisation, high expectations of pupil behaviour and a respect for the individual helps maintain good discipline and a brisk pace to lessons. Sustained interest and application from pupils is maintained by the careful planning of lessons which contain a wide variety of activities. On the very few occasions where there was insufficient variety of activity, low attaining pupils found it difficult to maintain their concentration for the whole 60 minutes of the lesson. Teachers' interest and enthusiasm for their subject is transmitted to the pupils who work co-operatively and with motivation. In a Year 7 mixed ability group, pupils were eager to offer their answers and in a Year 11 lesson with low attaining pupils, there was a mature atmosphere of respect and effort. The friendly atmosphere in lessons breeds confidence and encourages co-operation as it allows pupils opportunities to work in

groups and offer support to each other in their learning. In all lessons, teachers took care to use appropriate vocabulary to ensure all pupils could make progress. This was clearly seen in a Year 9 lesson when the teacher reinforced the understanding of lower attaining pupils about the words to be used during the lesson and encouraged them to explain their answers as fully and accurately as possible. Pupils learn well because they are also encouraged to become directly involved in the marking and assessment of their work. This helps them to agree with their teachers their next targets for further improving their work. There are good out-of-hours arrangements to provide additional lessons to support pupils' revision.

142. Leadership and management are very good. The acting head of department is a very effective leader and manager, well supported by others in the department. Teachers within the department aim for very high standards in teaching and caring for pupils' needs, with an emphasis on improving the mathematical skills of all pupils.
143. There has been a good range of improvements since the last inspection. Strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning have been introduced, with all staff contributing to the initiatives in numeracy and Key Stage 3 developments. The departmental development plan identifies clearly how these improvement strategies will continue into Key Stage 4. Very good analysis of pupil data and examination results by the acting head of department is reflected in clear targets for improvement. Teachers have their own rooms in the dedicated mathematics suite that are well decorated with stimulating posters and pupils' work. This enables good access to resources and the development of a strong subject identity within teaching areas that are visually stimulating in order to promote pride and interest in the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

144. Standards at the age of eleven on entry to the college have been well below average but have improved significantly in September 1999. The 1999 science results in the National Curriculum tests taken by all pupils at the age of 14 were well below the national average but broadly in line with similar schools. Results have been well below the national average since the previous inspection with only slight changes in the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. The same pattern trend applies to the assessment of pupils' work by teachers. There was a significant improvement in 2000 when the proportion reaching the national expectation Level 5 increased by 19 per cent. The boys have performed consistently better than the girls since the previous inspection.
145. GCSE results in science in 1999 were below the national average for all schools with 42 per cent of pupils achieving an A\*-C grade compared with a national average of 48 per cent. These results were above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C has risen by 17 per cent since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils gaining higher grades was below the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining an A\*-G grade has improved by three per cent from the previous inspection to 100 per cent for both boys and girls. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of girls obtaining grades A\*-C has been higher than the proportion of boys.
146. In work seen during the inspection, standards were above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils are now doing better in class than in the end of key stage tests. Several factors are involved in this. Their ability to retain a large amount of prior information is poorly developed. Their literacy skills lean more to the shorter, snappy questions in class. They find difficulty with the longer, more structured questions in the national tests. Year 7 pupils are enthusiastic in their practical work to find out which are

the strongest acids and alkalis by adding an indicator. Year 8 pupils know that wheat, corn, rice and potatoes contain starch and that starch is our main energy food. In Year 9, a class of average prior attainers can carry out a simple experiment to burn a metal in air. They understood that a new substance is formed, mass is gained and the new compound is an oxide. A Year 9 group of higher attaining pupils could make suitable predictions of what might happen in an experiment measuring heat transfer to different volumes of water, understanding the idea of constants and variables. Pupils with special educational needs know examples of fossil fuels and that they are non-renewable.

147. Standards in work seen at the end of Key Stage 4 were above national expectations. As their knowledge increases and their practical skills improve, Year 11 pupils deal more confidently with a range of activities. Lower attaining pupils coped with data analysis on soil, but only a few realised the need to repeat the experiment if the results were inconsistent. Middle attaining pupils could set up parallel and series electrical circuits. Higher attaining pupils could explain why domestic lighting was in parallel. In a Year 10 class of lower attaining pupils, a significant majority could carry out an experiment to displace water from a measuring flask using hydrogen gas produced in a reaction between magnesium and hydrochloric acid. They could then plot the graph of volume against time. By the end of Year 11, pupils are more confident in their practical work. The planning of their experiments is good but evaluation is less so, particularly in the case of lower attaining pupils. Analysis of exercise books showed incomplete work in some areas and experiments sometimes had no conclusion. Pupils are being actively encouraged to carry out investigative work. They do less well in the GCSE examinations than in the work seen in the classroom because their preparation in terms of learning facts and revising topics is less effective. Many struggle using revision texts because they do not always fully understand what they read in their textbooks.
148. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress across both key stages. In a Year 7 class, pupils made good progress by staining, identifying and comparing cells because their teacher had planned the lesson well and had high expectations of them. In Year 8, lower attaining pupils learned well and made good progress when working on Venn diagrams relating to fossil fuels because they were well motivated within very well managed group work. Middle attaining pupils in Year 10 completed a challenging experiment to test for starch on a wide range of foodstuffs and tabulate the results because they were encouraged to persevere with the task through the high expectations of the teaching. In a Year 11 class, pupils with special educational needs could analyse simple data and then use it to plot a graph of oxygen produced in an experiment because the teacher set out the data in a form to suit every pupil's need. Enthusiasm and perseverance were strong features in the best learning seen in science. Pupils learn well together but are less confident when working by themselves. They learn better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4 because attention to literacy improves their approach to revision for tests.
149. Teaching is a major strength of the department and the quality is good across both key stages. The good accommodation and satisfactory resources support the teacher's organisation and management. Their knowledge and understanding of the subject are very good. They share lesson objectives with the pupils and verbally reward good behaviour and response. They have high expectations of the pupils and manage them well if there is a possibility of lack of concentration. Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection include the better organisation of lessons with tasks more suitably matched to the needs of the pupils. Many of the methods are practically based and in this they are supported by an excellent technician.
150. There remain some areas of current weakness. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but needs to make more effective use of the

classroom support assistants. As yet the very good individual education plans are not being used consistently to modify the teaching methods to meet the identified learning needs of these pupils. Homework is regularly given in both key stages and is usually used well to reinforce what has been learnt in the lesson. Some homework in Key Stage 3 does not challenge the pupils sufficiently and is of little value in developing scientific knowledge or understanding. The marking of pupils' work is better at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3 it is inconsistent. Comments are not always constructive and the marking often lacks depth. Procedures for assessing pupil attainment are good but they are not used enough to inform planning and to follow the progress of individual pupils.

151. Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. The major strength has been the creation of a high degree of shared commitment to improve teaching and learning across the department. The major weakness is that the results in terms of improvements in these areas are not monitored or evaluated with sufficient rigour. The curriculum is well managed overall but there has been insufficient emphasis upon identifying opportunities to raise standards further through the use of information and communication technology.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

152. Information about standards in the 1999 statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 is unreliable. This is because the assessments were not checked against standards described in the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4, standards at GCSE were well below the national average in 1999, with one-sixth of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C compared with a proportion of two-thirds nationally. This is because there is not enough attention paid to developing broader handling skills, especially in painting. At grades A\*-G all students achieved success. This was above the national average of nine-tenths. Results improved in the GCSE examinations in 2000 when one-third of pupils obtained grades A\*-C, and all pupils obtained passes at A\*-G. Over the last three years, the GCSE results show some improvement, although they are still well below national averages.
153. Teacher assessments of how well eleven-year-olds perform on entry indicate that standards in drawing and in painting are well below national expectations. When this is set against the work seen in the college, pupils' progress and their achievement by the age of 14 is satisfactory. Pupils' skills in creating lino prints demonstrate their growing ability to control the surface texture and to use carefully chosen colours. Pupils also gain knowledge of the work of a range of artists such as Gauguin, Picasso and Derain, as well as studying the art of non-western traditions such as Aboriginal and Hindu cultures. The progress and achievements of those pupils who choose to study the subject up to the age of 16 and take the GCSE examination is satisfactory when measured against what those pupils could do at the age of 14. They make gains in their ability to handle colour and shape, in drawing painting and collage. They improve their ability to use coloured pencils, developing their delicacy of touch and their ability to achieve well-finished effects. They also gain confidence in using pastels and by the age of 16, they can blend and vary colour and tone to produce interesting effects.
154. In the work seen in the college, standards were below average at Key Stage 3. Pupils show they can use pattern in colour to a standard in line with national expectations and there are some good observation drawings seen on a smaller scale which show a good level of competence in line work in the higher ability pupils. However, very many pupils of all abilities show poor skills in painting and lack confidence in their ability to handle the materials. Their sketchbook work is also sparse and underdeveloped and there is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to raise standards.

155. At Key Stage 4 in the work seen, standards were well below average. Pupils can use chalk pastels competently and graphic design work shows a sound grasp of the principles of the activity. It is well presented. For example, life-size constructions are seen in package designs which are well made and bright, covering a range of consumer products such as breakfast cereals and fruit drinks. These are realistic and form an interesting and attractive display. The girls show higher skills in drawing than do the boys. A careful and fluid use of line is seen in the work of the higher ability girls, especially in small-scale drawings of everyday objects. However, painting skills are underdeveloped and pupils lack an appreciation of the expressive possibilities of the medium. The material is handled crudely and without confidence. There is also very little evidence of broader or larger-scale work in any material. The absence of good quality work in this area is a weakness of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 which is having a negative effect on standards. This is a major reason why standards are well below national expectations at the age of 16.
156. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages. In the lessons seen, one-fifth were good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. At Key Stage 3, teaching and learning were satisfactory and in the best lessons, there was good use of visual aids which helped pupils see what they were trying to achieve. This was well illustrated in a lesson on designing masks where examples of different shapes and textures were shown to the class in the form of a poster prepared by the teacher. Weaker aspects of the teaching were seen when introductions were too long and did not focus on the task in hand. As a result, pupils did not concentrate immediately on what they needed to do. This was a feature of a lesson on observation drawing where pupils were shown examples of paintings that were not relevant to the tasks that they have been set. This restricted what they actually learnt because it led to their being unsure about what was expected.
157. At Key Stage 4, good teacher/pupil relationships were a strong feature, for example in a lesson on designing packages for foodstuffs. In this lesson, the teacher circulated the class giving frequent encouragement that helped pupils overcome any difficulties and persevere. Another strength of the teaching was the level of individual help given to pupils. This showed that pupils' individual needs were being well identified. This was well illustrated in a lesson on making observation studies from groups of interesting objects in the art room. The teacher gave advice and demonstrated how to use chalk pastels to express textural qualities in a picture. This produced effective learning as the pupil and teacher could see the results of the advice immediately. However, in many of the lessons, the work was too strongly directed by the teacher and too narrow in scope to allow pupils to demonstrate expressive skills and creative flair. There were too few opportunities to experiment and to explore larger-scale work. This restricts learning to a satisfactory level. As a consequence, improvements in standards are restricted and slower than they could be.
158. Since the last inspection, improvement overall has been satisfactory. The schemes of work have been improved and the curriculum at Key Stage 3 now fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are now sufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in a broad range of activities, including three-dimensional work in ceramics and in constructions. Pupils also now study work produced by artists and designers from a range of cultures and historical periods. The provision of resources has improved and the accommodation has been relocated and refurbished. The teaching rooms are now sufficiently light and spacious to encourage positive attitudes. Pupils can now work with confidence in colour and pattern and produce some interesting work as a result, especially at Key Stage 3. Achievement at both key stages has improved and is now satisfactory. There are improved stocks of books available in

the department and a better range of visual aids and materials. However, standards have not risen sufficiently at Key Stage 4 because of the restricted nature of the curriculum and the lack of opportunities for broader approaches and more experimental work, especially in painting.

159. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory as strategies to raise standards at Key Stage 4 have been insufficient. This is because there is insufficient analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and not enough emphasis is placed on developing the curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

160. GCSE results have been below or well below national average at grades A\*-C over the last three years, but at grades A\*-G they have been above average. In 1999, GCSE points per pupil were also higher than the national average, reflecting high rates of entry for the examination and success for pupils at lower grades of performance. There are significant differences though, in the standards reached by boys and girls. Boys have not gained A\* or A grades in recent years and their A\*-C rates have run at below half the average for boys nationally. They generally do worse in design and technology than in other subjects in the college when compared to the national difference between subjects, and in 1999 they did much worse. Girls' performance is relatively better. They consistently do better in design and technology than in other subjects in the college and their average GCSE points score in 1999 was above the national average. These differences reflect the different standards of performance across design and technology subjects. In food technology, where the majority of candidates are girls, results at grades A\*-C were close to the national average in 1997 and 1999, though well below in 1998. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in this part of the subject. Otherwise, grades in electronic products, graphic products and resistant materials have been well below the national average in recent years.
161. In work seen during the inspection, standards were below national expectations across both key stages. Teacher assessments of pupils' National Curriculum levels in Year 9 were confirmed in work seen during the inspection.
162. There are some good features in pupils' work. They are generally confident in making products. In the workshop, they are accurate in measuring, marking and shaping them. They mostly make appropriate choices of tools and equipment but they do not use computers enough to help them design and make products. In food technology, they are well aware of the effects of varying ingredients on the taste and texture of their products, and at Key Stage 4, strengths in practical work are based on very sound knowledge of food characteristics and issues such as health and hygiene.
163. There are, however, fundamental weaknesses in designing skills across both key stages that reduce standards in all areas. Standards of graphic communication are very weak, drawing skills are poor and pupils do not annotate work effectively to show how their ideas develop. The standard of presentation of portfolios of work is generally poor. Research undertaken to develop designs is mostly very narrow and as a consequence, design ideas are limited in breadth and mostly not well evaluated. Significant weaknesses in design clearly depress overall standards which are not therefore high enough in the subject as a whole.
164. These weaknesses in designing are related directly to how pupils have, until this term, been taught. There was a marked difference in the overall satisfactory quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons during the inspection and that reflected in pupils' portfolios of previously completed work which was unsatisfactory. Pupils have not been



equipped with the basic designing skills that they need to apply in all their work. Teaching and learning have therefore, until this term, been unsatisfactory at both key stages because of weaknesses in the teaching of designing skills and in the overall management of the subject. There is, however, evidence that these weaknesses have now been identified. As a result, current units of work are beginning to address the weaknesses, especially in Years 7 and 8 and in food technology at Key Stage 4.

165. This has been supported by another recent improvement involving a very effective system of assessment against National Curriculum standards at Key Stage 3. This serves not only to monitor the progress of pupils and provide targets for improvement, but has also helped to link teaching and learning objectives more closely to the standards described in the National Curriculum.
166. Such changes are already starting to raise standards. This was clearly evident in the lessons seen during the inspection where the quality of teaching was good overall at Key Stage 3 and in nearly two-thirds of lessons it was good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen. At Key Stage 4, teaching was generally satisfactory and good or better in half of lessons. In the lesson that was unsatisfactory at this Key Stage, the teacher and the pupils were unclear about the ways in which the practical task could help to improve the pupils' knowledge and skills for the GCSE course.
167. There were strong features in the good teaching of food technology. Units of work build on the traditional strengths of the area; the development among pupils of good knowledge and understanding about food and good practical skills. Practical demonstrations by teachers were excellent and raised broad-ranging issues surrounding the growing and preparation of food. The best lessons maintained a good pace throughout, with a range of activities suited to the capabilities of different groups of pupils. They emphasised practical planning and the reinforcement of the facts and issues raised during the demonstrations. As a result, pupils frequently learn well in these aspects of the subject.
168. On occasions, despite the best efforts of the teacher, pupils' learning is less successful because they lack the confidence and organisational skills necessary to work on their own. This can lead to poor organisation of time and late completion of GCSE course work. Middle and lower attaining pupils have weaknesses in writing that affect the development of their designs and standards of background research, annotation of drawings, analysis of research and evaluation of proposals.
169. The leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection have been poor. The allocation of additional funding over several years has not led to improvement. There has been insufficient attention given to addressing the very significant differences in standards between the different design and technology subjects at Key Stage 4 and the poor performance of boys. Monitoring and development of teaching to ensure consistent standards across the department have been inadequate. Resources available to the subject are poor so that pupils have little opportunity to explore the properties of different woods and textiles and sometimes have to work with badly maintained tools. This problem is compounded by the absence of technical support to the teachers who have to spend too much time in preparing materials and work areas rather than addressing weaknesses in teaching and learning. Lack of materials and lack of computers, software and manufacturing equipment linked to computers means that pupils are not able to receive many aspects of their statutory entitlement to the new design and technology Programmes of Study at both key stages. There are significant health and safety concerns surrounding the food technology rooms and the degree to which pupils implement safe practices in the workshop. The absence

of a procedure for making risk assessments contributes to these problems and contravenes the general teaching requirement for health and safety.

170. Progress since the last inspection has been poor. Except in food technology, examination results have declined. Practical skills have improved but standards in design skills remain low. Concerns expressed in the previous report about the curriculum and the availability of resources remain. The recent change in the leadership of the area has started to lay the foundations for the very necessary improvements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

171. Many pupils' geographical skills and understanding and also their levels of numeracy and literacy are well below average when they join the college at the age of eleven. Standards in the statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 were below the national average in 1999. Boys' standards were much lower than girls'. In 2000, approximately half of the pupils reached the national expectation Level 5. The proportions of boys and girls who did so were very similar.
172. In the 1999 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C has increased steadily since the last inspection, although it has remained well below the national average. There was a further improvement of ten per cent in the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C. All pupils who were entered for the final examination obtained a grade in the range A\*-G in 1999. This was above the national average. Overall, pupils achieved well and made good progress by the age of 16.
173. Standards were below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 in work seen during the inspection. This is because, although pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding between the ages of 11 and 14, they still have too few opportunities for research and independent study. Overall, they make a satisfactory degree of progress. A small number of pupils reached standards that are above the national expectation. This indicates that the small number of higher attaining pupils also achieve satisfactorily.
174. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can locate their village on a map of England. They understand the formation of caves, arches and stacks. They understand the terms 'wave pounding', 'hydraulic action', 'abrasion' and 'attrition'. Pupils readily name countries in South America. They describe key features of the equatorial rainforest and know the appropriate vocabulary.
175. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils evaluate the effects of tourism on the Spanish coast. They illustrate graphically the growth of Benidorm. Pupils identify and suggest trends in the further development of the town. They identify British power stations on a map and assess their advantages and disadvantages. They fully understand their implications for global warming. In fieldwork, they assess the quality of the local urban environment looking carefully at different types of housing in the locality. They study retail outlets and means of transport. Fieldwork techniques continue to improve. They present their findings using annotated photographs, sketch maps and a good variety of graphical techniques.
176. There has been a good degree of progress since the last inspection. There has been effective support both within the college and through advice from the local education authority. Teaching and learning are now good at both key stages. Short- and medium-term curriculum planning has been improved. Fieldwork has been profitably extended so that beyond the age of 14, pupils have more opportunity to pursue research and inquiry,

particularly through fieldwork. There has been less progress made in improving resources. Texts still require updating and there are insufficient atlases to serve the needs of the curriculum. There is still insufficient use of information and communication technology to raise standards.

177. Pupils are well taught. All the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and the majority were good. Lessons are carefully planned. The teachers have good subject knowledge and clear objectives. At Key Stage 4, they fully understand the requirements of the examination. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils who rise to the occasion. Relationships between the teachers and the pupils are good. Lessons are pleasant occasions. Tasks are interesting and well matched to prior ability. Learning is enhanced by a good range of additional materials such as slides on the overhead projector, good worksheets and carefully chosen illustrations. Homework helps pupils in their learning and is regularly set and well marked.
178. Management of the subject is good. It provides clear educational direction. Learning and teaching are well monitored. Pupils are set appropriate targets and the good standard of monitoring already serves to improve standards. The curriculum is of good quality and fulfils all statutory requirements.

## **HISTORY**

179. In the 1999 statutory teacher assessments for all pupils at the age of 14 over half the pupils reached the national expectation Level 5 with only a small proportion of pupils achieving standards above it. This year, the department assessed a higher proportion as achieving the national expectation, with a significant increase in those exceeding it. These standards were not checked sufficiently carefully against those described in the National Curriculum.
180. The proportion of pupils obtaining levels A\*-C in the GCSE examination remains well below the national average and has declined over the last four years despite an improvement in 1999 when 15 pupils were entered for the examination. The numbers opting to study the subject in Key Stage 4 have halved during this period. All pupils entered for the examination achieved grades A\*-G this year, a significant improvement on previous years. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C was, however, very low.
181. Standards are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. They are not high enough and progress is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils knew that the Romans colonised their area. They confidently defined fact, opinion, legend and myth in their study of Romulus and Remus. Pupils' understanding of chronology enables them to construct a timeline from BC 800 to AD 500. They understand the nature of primary and secondary sources at this key stage. Knowledge of the events of the industrialisation in Britain is unsatisfactory. In a lesson in Year 9, pupils learned about Josiah Wedgwood but did not understand that the pottery he produced was both innovative and of high quality. They failed to connect the concept of population growth with market demand. In a lesson on child labour, Year 9 pupils could not collect evidence from a written source. Pupils undertake historical projects independently at this key stage. These show some ability to structure information, but pupils' analytical skills are poor. Some pupils make good use of information and communication technology to obtain information, improve the presentation and create illustrations for their projects.
182. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils had a basic knowledge of the agrarian revolution and understood the rationale behind the strip

system and some reasons why land had to become more productive. They realised that the eighteenth century village had important stratification and fully understood terms such as 'tenant farmer' and 'smallholder'. Pupils, however, failed to understand other causes of agrarian change. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils evaluated a range of written resources but some needed a good deal of help for this. Pupils' knowledge of chronology is sometimes uncertain but most understood the events behind the 1870 Act of Parliament, for example, which decreed universal elementary education. Pupils make useful notes at this key stage. They plan their work effectively and are able to quote from a narrow range of sources. Identifying, evaluating and interpreting sources continues to be a weakness. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to present their work orally in either key stage because these are not planned as part of the teaching methods.

183. There has not been enough improvement since the last inspection. Standards of achievement in GCSE have declined still further. About half as many pupils entered last year for the examination as in 1997. Next year, the number will decline still further. Skills in evaluating historic resources remain weak although the materials are generally better matched to the needs of the pupils. The curriculum continues to lack detail and depth. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is no longer entirely satisfactory. The range of teaching and learning styles, however, was narrow during the week of the inspection. Tasks set at both key stages still do not consistently provide more able pupils with sufficient opportunities to extend their understanding and achieve standards that are high enough.
184. Teaching was unsatisfactory in two lessons seen at Key Stage 3. It was satisfactory in all lessons seen at Key Stage 4. The unsatisfactory lessons at Key Stage 3 were poorly organised and learning objectives were not clear. Sometimes pupils could not read the written material properly, nor understand what they had to do. In the unsatisfactory lessons, pupils' understanding was neither fully assessed nor consolidated. Although materials of different degrees of difficulty were available, they were inappropriately used in one lesson so that high attaining pupils were unable to write as much as they wished in answer to a question. When the teaching was satisfactory, particularly at Key Stage 4, explanations were clear, lively and well informed. Learning was supported by good worksheets. Lessons had clear goals. Planning, however, is not undertaken in sufficient detail at either key stage. Expectations are not high enough. Lack of supplementary materials, such as pictures and maps, mean that the lessons do not interest and inspire pupils as much as they might. Although the curriculum fulfils statutory requirements, the quality and range of what is taught is unsatisfactory. Some useful visits to the Roman wall and Beamish museum add breadth to what is taught. Lessons are not sufficiently supplemented with artefacts, extra books or pictures which might encourage pupils to study the subject independently or in-depth. Sources used are too often limited to those provided by the textbook. Resources for the subject are unsatisfactory, with documents and artefacts underdeveloped.
185. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The aims and values, which should inform the subject and promote high standards, are not explicit. Teaching and learning are not systematically monitored and evaluation made of why standards have declined.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

186. Standards in the 1999 statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below the national average. Approximately one-quarter of the pupils reached the national expectation whereas towards two-thirds of pupils did so nationally. Standards in the 2000 assessments were similar. However, boys did better than girls in 2000.
187. In 1999, half of the pupils who entered for the GCSE examination obtained grades A\*-C. This was above the national average. All pupils obtained a grade in the range A\*-G. This was also above the national average. Standards rose further in the 2000 GCSE examination when two-thirds of those entered obtained grades A\*-C.
188. Standards were higher in work seen at Key Stage 3 in Year 9 than in the most recent statutory assessments with a higher percentage of pupils currently working at Level 5 and above. In the work seen at Key Stage 4, standards were broadly in line with the most recent GCSE results.
189. In Year 7, pupils are able to access the network and load files. When working on word processing tasks, pupils show satisfactory keyboard skills and manipulation of text. The majority of pupils continue to build on the skills learned in Key Stage 2 and are working towards expected Levels of 3 to 4. The majority of pupils in Year 8 are working at Level 4, some higher attainers are working towards Level 5, although a significant minority are at Level 3. Pupils are able to import artwork from other sources and use it effectively. They can organise information in different forms and make satisfactory presentations using a combination of word-processed text and graphics.
190. Standards in work done by pupils by the age of 14 are broadly in line with national expectations. A higher proportion of pupils are working at Level 5 or above compared with the 1999 statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils show confidence in importing artwork, and are aware of audience for their work. They have satisfactory skills and knowledge in order to word process text effectively. The majority of pupils can produce the desired quality for letters suitable for parents' evening.
191. Standards in work completed by the age of 16 are broadly in line with the most recent GCSE examination results. In a Year 10 key skills lesson, pupils showed satisfactory levels of skill in word processing. They could use a variety of fonts, were able to use a spell check and had good keyboard skills. However, some of the set work in the Key Skills 1 module is too easy for a number of pupils.
192. In Year 11 pupils continue to develop their folders for either the key skills course or GCSE. In key skills in Year 11, pupils have covered the appropriate work in line with the syllabus, with a range of word processing tasks, graphics, spreadsheets and data bases. In this year's GCSE course, all pupils have completed a major project to meet the requirements of the examination board. There is evidence of high quality work, with the majority of pupils having a good grasp of the subject and able to make effective use of word processing, modelling with spreadsheets and database searches.
193. Teaching is good in both key stages. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning is adequate but the lesson itself sometimes lacks pace. This has the effect of reducing effective teaching time and therefore lowering the amount of learning by pupils. An important strength of the teaching is the clear presentation of good subject knowledge and good explanations that help pupils to learn. Good use of the correct technical language of the subject helps pupils to develop a good level of knowledge and to use these terms correctly themselves. Self-assessment is used well to help pupils to learn and know what they have achieved in Year 10 key skills. At Key Stage 3, good use is

made of the National Curriculum levels to help teachers and pupils to set targets for future work. Criteria performance sheets support good pupil self-monitoring and assessment. In good lessons, effective use is made of resources such as overhead projectors, and combined with the skilful use of question and answer, these help pupils to make good progress in learning new skills and concepts. Good lessons have pace that encourages pupils to work speedily but accurately. In very good lessons, pupils of all attainment levels are set clear tasks that are appropriate. In a Year 11 lesson, there were clear targets for pupils working in both core skills and in GCSE. There are high expectations of pupils being able to work with minimum of supervision allowing the teacher to work more effectively with pupils who need help in specific aspects.

194. Leadership and management are good. Subject documentation is excellent. The schemes of work are particularly good because they support very well the planning of how pupils will make progress in the subject. Good assessment schemes have been developed although they are not used more effectively as pupils move from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. The self-study book for GCSE pupils is particularly good because it encourages pupils to organise their own work. Pupils studying agriculture and horticulture make very effective use of information and communication technology in presenting information within their examination folders.
195. There has been a satisfactory response to the previous inspection as not only has there been a significant increase in the amount and quality of computer equipment, but also above average standards of work have been established in the GCSE examination course.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

196. Pupils' standards in written and spoken language are well below national expectations when they start at the college in Year 7. Some pupils have the advantage of having studied some French in their primary school. This is a minority of the intake.
197. Standards in the statutory teacher assessments are lower than that in other subjects and below national expectations. At Key Stage 3, new topics were introduced almost a full year after the recommendations of the adopted course. There is evidence that this has been remedied in Year 9 and Year 8.
198. In 1999, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C in GCSE French was above the national average. Girls did better than boys. This declined slightly in 2000 when just over half of the pupils who chose to study this subject reached that standard. In German, GCSE results also improved between 1997 and 2000, although at a slower rate than in French, and remain well below the national average. Here too girls scored higher grades than boys.
199. Standards in work seen at Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils can understand short passages spoken at normal speed but they need to hear the passage several times. Most pupils can take part in short conversations using a limited number of verbs in the past tense. Pupils' pronunciation is good. There is good practice in the way teachers and pupils use the foreign language for all forms of communication within the department. This is a definite strength. The practice was evident in a lesson where pupils asked each other how they were and were able to reply confidently, including pupils with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils can write short and accurate passages using the past tense. They can adapt previously learned language to make new phrases. They are able to ask questions, give information and express opinions. Literacy is emphasised by insistence on correct

spelling and in the teaching of grammar points. Numeracy is mainly aided by work on dates, currency and the 24-hour clock.

200. At the end of Key Stage 4, the standard of work seen in French was in line with national expectations. In German, standards were lower. This pattern was found in both written and oral work. Higher ability pupils are sometimes not challenged enough. This is evident when Year 10 take their mock examinations at foundation level only.
201. The quality of teaching is good. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Two-thirds of lessons were good at Key Stage 3 and one-third were very good. At Key Stage 4, teaching was good in half of lessons and satisfactory in the other half.
202. Lessons are well planned and good relationships promote pupils' active involvement in lessons. In the best lessons, the subject matter is linked clearly to what has been learned previously. As a result, pupils make good progress. The improvement in the quality of teaching has directly influenced the achievement of pupils, especially at Key Stage 4. Some weaknesses remain. Marking is not consistent across the department. This causes some confusion in daily target setting on pupils' work. The procedure for monitoring individual pupil progress is thorough but no detailed guidelines are included in the departmental handbook.
203. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 4. The use of the target language is consistent across the department. Lessons are well paced and writing tasks at Key Stage 4 now include good examples of extended passages using suitably taxing syntax and vocabulary. Oral tasks for the higher attaining pupils are still short and could be extended by individual tape-recording of work. There is evidence that homework is regularly set to consolidate knowledge and to practice all four language skills. Occasions when pupils might organise their own work and make their own decisions are limited, partly because there have been limited opportunities for them to use information and communication technology. This facility is being installed within the modern foreign language departmental area but computers were not yet in use at the time of the inspection.
204. Leadership and management are good. This has led to improved teaching and learning and rising standards since the previous inspection. The department has defined its priorities clearly in order to build on its strengths in the teaching of French and to fulfil the potential of higher attaining pupils. Much of the documentation is helpful to teachers but it currently does not include guidance on teaching methods and lesson planning. There are no formal arrangements currently to monitor standards of teaching and learning.

## **MUSIC**

205. When they start at the college at the age of eleven, many pupils do not have the range of knowledge and skills expected of their age group nationally and are not familiar with the elements of music.
206. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. A small number of pupils achieve higher standards. These pupils are usually those who are supported in their learning by additional instrumental lessons and extra-curricular performing opportunities. Lower attaining pupils are able to play as part of an ensemble, having memorised a short harmonic pattern of notes. Middle attaining pupils can use notation to play a melody or counter melody with the right hand only. Higher attaining pupils are able to keep in time and use appropriate dynamic effects on the keyboard. All

pupils show a willingness to perform and are developing skills in evaluating their work and the work of others.

207. Overall, by the age of 14, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Their achievement is satisfactory. Weaknesses in attainment are due to poor knowledge on entry, insufficient additional in-class support for those pupils with special educational needs and limited opportunities for pupils to develop composition skills.
208. Since the previous inspection, all of the small number of pupils taking music at GCSE have obtained grades A\*-G. The proportion obtaining grades A\*-C has fluctuated. In 1997, just over half of the pupils entered gained A\*-C grades but this fell to one-quarter in 1998 and 1999 before increasing again to 43 per cent in 2000. The small numbers of GCSE entries fluctuate annually and it is impossible to draw firm conclusions from the examination data. There is no significant difference in the entries and achievement of boys and girls.
209. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Compositions are on schedule and range in style. For example, one pupil has composed a tune for 'cello in the bass clef', another a piece for violin. Both pupils demonstrated knowledge of the range of these instruments. However, pieces were short, often without dynamics, tempo and phrasing. All pupils are enthusiastic performers. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 11 have good listening skills, they are able to identify features of jazz, analyse a melody describing time, key structure and form. They are able to describe their feelings about the music they have listened to. In dictation, they have moderate success in being able to write down a rhythm in common time, adding bar lines.
210. The department is aware of the need for further development in the teaching of composition skills and strategies are in place to improve these. For example, in one Year 7 lesson, pupils clapped patterns of notes. They worked well and performed in groups. One group of lower attaining pupils was able to devise a rhythmic pattern and each pupil clapped it in turn. One group of average attaining pupils clapped more than one rhythm at the same time. Higher attaining pupils clapped in layers, using dynamics, silence and shape.
211. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4. Relationships in the classroom are good and pupils are well managed. Teachers' knowledge and skills are good. Weaker areas of teaching are in composition and the uses of assessment to inform planning. In all of the lessons seen, the majority of time is teacher led, leaving few opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas, evaluate their work and the work of others. Departmental documentation shows that planning is improving to include more opportunities for pupils in composition and a more rigorous approach to the use of assessment. The quality of teaching and learning is enriched through additional instrumental tuition.
212. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There are increased opportunities for pupils to receive instrumental lessons, including the guitar. Legal requirements are now fully met and the range of work has widened to include the study of world music. A few pupils in Key Stage 3 and Years 10 and 11 GCSE groups are making more use of information and communication technology through the use of new keyboards and computer software.
213. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Schemes of work have improved but do not include sufficient details about how improvisation, exploration and



the development of musical ideas should be taught by making use of structure, style and tradition. No extra-curricular musical activities were seen during the week of the inspection but during the school year, pupils have the opportunity to perform in college and in the local community.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

214. Standards in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in GCSE are similar to that seen in most schools nationally. In Key Stage 3, 82 per cent of the pupils are working at or above the expectations for the key stage, which is in line with national averages. In GCSE physical education, over 60 per cent of the pupils gained A\*-C grades and all pupils gained a grade in A\*-E range. This was a significant improvement on the results of the previous year. The attainment in both Key Stages 3 and 4 is at a satisfactory level and in line with that nationally. In Year 7 gymnastics, pupils can perform a variety of methods of moving around the gym, whilst a few higher attainers are able to perform cartwheels and good quality rolls. The majority of pupils have a satisfactory range of gymnastic skills appropriate for their age. Year 8 pupils in netball and soccer are working at expected levels. In netball, passing and receiving in practice situations are satisfactory but less successful in games. Pupils in soccer are able to control and pass the ball and the few higher attainers in the group have good shooting skills. Pupils in Year 9 soccer are able to run effectively with the ball, with some able to use Cruyff turns. In small games however, they often lose possession of the ball when under pressure. The majority of pupils are working at the expected level, although a significant minority are working below this. All pupils however, have a good understanding of the game and rules. In Year 9 netball, many pupils are working above expected levels and are able to pass and receive effectively with the correct footwork. In Year 10, pupils in soccer and netball have a wide range of skills with a significant number working above the expected levels. In soccer, pupils are able to use a variety of crosses in an attack and show good control when dribbling and passing. In netball, many pupils have effective passing and catching skills and have a good understanding of the formations in the game and in the rules. There are a few very high attainers who have particularly good shooting skills. In GCSE theory in this year, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of analysis of sporting activities and the importance of experience for effective analysis. There is a wide range of attainment in netball in Year 11; pupils have a satisfactory understanding of rules and positional play although there are few higher attaining pupils. In GCSE in Year 11 soccer and cricket, pupils have a good understanding of key skills. They are able to analyse effectively, and devise simple practices to use in these games. In GCSE theory in this year, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of anatomy and physiology and methods of fitness training in line with the Edexcel syllabus.
215. Teaching in both key stages is good, although it ranges from satisfactory to very good. In satisfactory lessons, planning is a key feature so that pupils are given tasks to develop their skills and understanding. In Year 7 gymnastics, pupils learned new methods of moving which could have been extended further. The planned use of a range of teaching styles in a Year 10 GCSE theory lesson would have been more effective with better management of a few disruptive pupils. In netball in Year 11, pupils continue to develop their skills as a result of selected practices in a circuit training situation. Good teaching makes more demands on pupils by giving them challenging work which matches their attainment levels. In Year 11 soccer, pupils are given good opportunities to plan by having to devise different methods of taking indirect free kicks and then evaluate success and failure which leads to increasing their understanding. Good subject knowledge of all teachers with clear explanations helps pupils learn effectively. In a Year 9 health-related fitness lesson, pupils increased their understanding of the relationship between heart rate and exercise as a result of the combination of prepared worksheets and good, clear explanations during and at the end

of the lesson. In very good lessons, pupils make significant progress due to very effective planning, practices with increasing challenge and very good pace. Pupils are given opportunities to take their own warm-up sessions and evaluate each other's work, which contributes to their very good progress in both soccer and netball in Year 9. All teachers have good relationships with pupils and in the majority of lessons, high levels of good behaviour and working atmosphere enable pupils to learn new skills and improve existing ones.

216. Pupils are responsive to teachers, they show interest and enthusiasm for the subject and work well at tasks set. There are very good records of active participation with very few, if any, pupils being excused lessons, in both Key Stages and in both boys, girls and mixed classes.
217. There is good management of the department and a shared vision to improve pupils' standards in the subject. The curriculum gives pupils a good range of experiences in Key Stage 3, although more time needs to be given to gymnastics and outdoor activities to create a more balanced programme. There are fewer opportunities in Key Stage 4 for pupils to experience a wider range of activities, although GCSE and a good range of extra-curricular activities both in college teams and inter-form events, create additional opportunities for pupils of all attainment levels. There is good planning to make effective use of good facilities. However, poor levels of maintenance on the sports hall roof mean that planned lessons have to be cancelled because of the ingress of water, thus having a negative impact on continuity in pupils' learning.
218. The department has made a good response to the previous inspection. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements and there has been a significant improvement in participation levels, particularly amongst girls. However, further work needs to be done to bring curriculum documentation and assessment up-to-date to meet National Curriculum 2000 requirements.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

219. Standards at the age of 14 are above the expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus. The majority of pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country and how their lives are shaped by their beliefs. They have a very good understanding of religious language, symbols and ideas. Their skills in applying religious insights to their own experiences and to that of others are particularly well developed.
220. In the 1999 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C (58 per cent) was four per cent above the national average. All these pupils obtained a grade within the range A\*-G. This was above the national average. Results have improved since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C rising from slightly less than half in 1997 to approaching two-thirds in 1998. GCSE results in religious education have improved overall since the previous report. There was a further significant improvement in 2000 when 89 per cent of pupils obtained grades A\*-C, of whom six obtained grade A. Boys and girls perform equally well but considerably fewer boys than girls chose to study GCSE religious education between the ages of 14 and 16.
221. In Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well both in lessons and over the key stage. Work becomes increasingly challenging year on year and their skills develop accordingly. Pupils are encouraged to recall knowledge acquired in the primary school and use that

information to help with contemporary schemes of work. For example, in one Year 8 lesson, many pupils were able to recall the story of Abraham and his son. This was used as a starting point for introducing the Jewish ceremony of Circumcision.

222. In the religious education course that all pupils follow between the ages of 14 and 16, the standards reached in lessons by the majority of pupils were above expectations of the Durham Agreed Syllabus. They make good progress and achieve well, building on and extending the gains made in Year 9. In Year 10, for example, they are able to apply religious insights to a range of moral issues, such as those surrounding the sanctity of life. In a Year 11 lesson, all pupils showed a deep understanding of the difficulties and moral dilemma facing parents and doctors in making decisions concerning the separation of Siamese twins.
223. This good progress is a reflection of both good teaching and the good response of the large majority of pupils towards the subject. In both key stages, pupils are well motivated, come to lessons keen to learn and sustain concentration well. They are very keen to ask and answer questions and listen with respect to one another's views and opinions in discussion. They behave very well in all lessons seen and are provided with very good opportunities for developing skills of independent research and enquiry. They have a clear understanding of their attainments and of their individual targets for improvement.
224. The overall quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the department. There are examples of good teaching in Year 9 and excellent teaching in Year 8. Teachers have a very good grasp of their subject. They communicate their aims clearly to pupils and have high expectations. Teachers make very good use of questions to extend pupils' understanding and encourage them to be curious. In one Year 7 lesson seen, where pupils were using their imagination and knowledge of Christianity to write about and illustrate their picture of God, the teacher's questions helped pupils to ask questions themselves, initially of their teacher and eventually each other. Pupils' questions included issues about the creation, evolution and Adam and Eve. Teachers pay very good attention to the differing needs of pupils and to those who are under achieving. High expectations and skilful teaching are the hallmarks of the department.
225. Work is marked regularly in all years and is supportive in helping pupils to understand how to raise their attainment. Homework is set regularly in the department. Pupils respond well, and in work seen, produce good lengthy pieces in a variety of ways, often using technology in the department or at home. Parents support the department by signing completed homework.
226. There has been a significant improvement in the GCSE results and the overall quality of teaching is now very good in both key stages.
227. Leadership and management are very good. These are reflected in the clearly defined direction for the further development of the subject, well illustrated in the very good departmental documentation and the high level of commitment to the further raising of standards. The production of high quality resources is very well managed and ensures that the subject makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

