

INSPECTION REPORT

FREWEN COLLEGE

NORTHAM, RYE

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114635

Headteacher: Mr S. Horsley

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Passant 2728

Dates of inspection: 29th October to 1st November 2001.

Inspection number: 197157

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Independ
Age range of pupils:	9 to 17
Gender of pupils:	Male
School address:	Brickwa Northiar Rye, East Sus TN31 6N
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	01797 2:
Fax number:	01797 2:
Appropriate authority:	Frewen I
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Fri
Date of previous inspection:	9.12.96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2728	Mr R. Passant	Registered inspector	English, Physical education,	How high are standards? How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11414	Mrs. A. Bennett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10668	Mr. D. Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics, Music, Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
1249	Mr. J. Edge	Team inspector	Science, Information and communication technology, Design and technology.	Post-16 provision
15197	Mr. E. Nash	Team inspector	Art and design, geography history, Equal opportunities, Special educational needs (additional).	
2700	Mr. P. Sudworth	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

The inspection contractor was:

**NES Education Services Ltd.,
Linden House,
Woodland Way,
Gosfield,
Essex.
C09 1TH**

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Frewen College is a specialist, independent residential and day-school for severely dyslexic boys. The school operates through a charitable trust and is approved under section 347 of the 1996 Educational Act. There are 75 boys on roll and all pupils have a statement of specific learning difficulty. Pupils enter the college with low literacy levels but there is a wide range in other attainment. All applicants have to undergo a period of assessment at the school before being accepted. Pupils enter the college throughout the year and can enter any year from Year 5 until Year 10. Primary aged pupils are taught in a separate primary department. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. There is a small sixth form for those students it is felt require additional time in the college to develop further their confidence. They follow a specific work-related course linked to the local further education college as well as continuing with work in basic skills. The curriculum at Frewen College places emphasis on literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and study and organisational skills as well as the full National Curriculum. Residential pupils come from a very wide geographical area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Frewen College is a good school and has many strengths. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this is a significant factor in the way the school supports pupils' growth of self-esteem. Pupils face up the fact that they have difficulties and want to do well. Teaching is good and often very good. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well. They make good progress in reading and writing skills because there is very good initial assessment and the English department teaches pupils to develop these skills in a carefully structured manner, ensuring that the work is carefully matched to the needs of the individuals. The headteacher leads the school very well and he provides a very clear sense of direction. The college provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils have very good attitudes to the college. They recognise their difficulties and want to do well.
 - Teaching is good and often very good.
 - Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
 - There is a good range of learning opportunities.
- There is very good leadership by the headteacher.

What could be improved

- The involvement of heads of department in formal monitoring and in development planning.
 - Modern languages provision for Years 7 to 10.
- The deployment of staff in the residential setting.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been very significant improvements in the college since it was last inspected in 1996. At that time there was an acting headteacher, the roll had fallen and there was little sense of on-going improvement or direction. The college was catering for a wide range of special educational needs. Since the appointment of the current headteacher the college has defined what it is about and what kind of pupil it can help. It has worked hard to establish a calm community in which pupils can develop their confidence and thrive. The quality of teaching has improved and there is a rigour about much of the work. There has been significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum has developed and geography and English Literature have been added to the subjects taken at GCSE. Important emphasis is now placed on developing study and organisational skills. Individual education plans show significant improvement. Numbers on roll have increased and parents hold the college in high regard for what it achieves with their children.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 12	Key
speaking and listening	B	B	C	very good A
reading	B	B	C	good B
writing	B	B	C	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	C	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of the majority of pupils against age-related national expectations or averages, although individual pupils or groups of pupils do achieve success in National Curriculum tests and GCSE and other accredited courses.

In 2001, 10 pupils gained five A* to G grades in GCSE examinations. No pupil gained five A* to C grades. Pupils gained the higher grades in drama and art. Ten pupils gained passes in mathematics and sixteen in science. Five pupils gained GCSE grades in English and English Literature.

Most pupils leaving Frewen College go on to further study.

In general, the few post-16 students lack basic skills to a significant extent. The examination results for the previous post-16 group include creditable outcomes in GCSE mathematics and Associated Examination Board Test in Literacy. The previous post-16 group all gained entry to colleges of further education, mostly for courses leading to level 2 National Vocational Qualifications [NVQ].

Pupils have a wide range of literacy skills and progress in developing reading and writing skills can, for some pupils, be a slow and somewhat insecure process. Some pupils join the school relatively late in their school career with very limited abilities in reading and are acutely aware of their difficulties and their failures in the past. By the time they reach Year 11 almost all pupils have gained at least a basic level of reading and writing skills and specific coping strategies to function effectively in, for example, higher education. Many others achieve levels of literacy beyond this. Overall pupils make good progress against their targets, showing, for example, marked gains in their reading ages. Higher and middle attaining pupils are able to tackle demanding texts and answer questions about character and plot. Lower attaining pupils work hard at their ability to manage their difficulties to achieve a basic level of functional literacy.

Overall pupils achieve well in English and mathematics in Years 5-11. In the sixth form their progress in these subjects is satisfactory. They achieve very well in science. Achievement is good in art and design, physical education and drama. There is very good achievement in history at Years 5 to 6 and it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. History is not taken as an examination subject. Overall pupils achieve well in geography. Achievement is satisfactory for Years 7 to 9 in ICT and good for older pupils. Achievement in personal, social and health education and religious education is satisfactory across the school. There is poor achievement in modern languages. Although progress in the lessons seen was satisfactory, because the teachers have good relationships and work hard, progress over time is poor because teachers lack the depth of knowledge to build pupils' skills.

Pupils with additional special educational needs, such as dyspraxia, make good progress, because members of staff are sensitive to their needs across the range of subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Many pupils arrive at the college with an experience of failure in other schools, but develop a mature attitude towards learning and a determination to cope with print and to prove themselves. Pupils feel valued, and they in turn respect each other and the staff. Pupils come to lessons ready to learn
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class is very good; it is good around the school. Unsatisfactory behaviour is rare. During the last year there were nine fixed-term and one permanent exclusions. This term five pupils have been excluded for short periods linked to breaching the college's 'golden rules'. Around the school, and in the evenings, pupils were seen to be behaving well.
Personal development and relationships	Overall there are good relationships amongst the boys. Younger pupils did suggest that there were occasional tensions with older pupils, where, for example, they might borrow something without permission. Care staff are vigilant towards the possibility of bullying. Parents at the meeting stressed that pupils got on well with each other.
Attendance	Attendance of the 34 day pupils in the last school year was 89.8 per cent, which is below the national average of 91.2 per cent for this type of school. The figures are distorted by the very poor attendance of four pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 - 11	Year 12
Quality of teaching	Very good	good	good	good

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

Teaching of English and literacy skills is very good. Members of staff have a very good understanding of pupils' needs with regard to all aspects of English. They approach the work in a supportive and sensitive manner, fostering pupils' self-esteem and through a careful structure enable them to develop their skills with reading and writing. Science teaching is very good across the school and teaching is good in mathematics. Teaching of personal, social and health education is satisfactory.

Teachers have good knowledge of the pupils and their needs and good subject knowledge, except in French. Relationships with pupils are very good and this develops pupils' confidence and sense of self-esteem. Teachers' planning is good and they have high expectations. Across the school teaching of basic skills is good and very good in the sixth form. Pupils are managed very well. On-going assessment is good and very good use is made of homework to extend the learning in class.

As a result of the overall good quality teaching, pupils make good progress and achieve well particularly in Years 5 and 6 and Years 10 and 11.

Teachers are sensitive to those pupils who have additional special educational needs such as dyspraxia and, as a result, these pupils make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good and provides the pupils with a highly appropriate balance of subjects. There is a deliberate emphasis on English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The length of the taught week is significantly above the majority of special schools. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils in Year 11 to obtain accreditation in GCSE and other accredited courses.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the moral and social development of pupils is a strength of the school but more needs to be done to foster spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall the procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Day-to-day residential care is good and there are strengths in the residential provision. A weakness is the deployment of residential staff. Overall the residential provision is satisfactory. There are good procedures to monitor academic progress.

Lack of indoor accommodation restricts the range of activities in physical education. Health and safety audits are undertaken but not within term time when pupils are present to check for unsafe practices. There are good informal links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear sense of direction. The senior management team is very supportive.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors have considerable personal and professional expertise. They are supportive and play a part in the strategic direction of the college but the current format of the school development plan makes it difficult for them to fulfil their monitoring function. They monitor the budget carefully. They are supportive of the headteacher but their role of 'critical friend', based on their knowledge of the college, requires further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher monitors the school informally. By chairing the formal pupil's annual review, the headteacher monitors pupil progress and the factors leading to that progress. He also monitors the work of the school informally. Heads of department do not carry out formal reviews of their departments.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well.

Apart from modern languages there is a good match of staff to the curriculum. Accommodation is generally good although there are a few weaknesses. The changing rooms and showers are poor and the school is seeking to address this. Art and design accommodation is cramped. Decoration and some furniture in the communal areas of the residential accommodation are worn. Overall resources are satisfactory.

The school applies the principles of achieving best value to any expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school works with parents. • The range of interesting activities outside the curriculum.

Parents are very supportive of Frewen College. Over half the parents responded to the parental questionnaire, and in spite of their wide geographical spread, a good number attended the pre-inspection meeting. Their positive responses were very high; all felt that their sons are making good progress and that the school is helping them become more mature and responsible. Six parents felt that the way the college worked with parents and four felt the range of activities outside of school could be improved. The college works hard to involve parents and keep them informed. There is a good range of extra-curricular and residential activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of the majority of pupils against age-related national expectations or averages, although individual pupils or groups of pupils do achieve success in National Curriculum tests and GCSE and other accredited courses.
2. In 2001, 10 pupils gained five A* to G grades in GCSE examinations. No pupil gained 5 A* to C grades. Two pupils gained a B grade and six gained a grade C in drama. One pupil gained a B grade and two gained a grade C in art. Ten pupils gained mathematics at grades D, E and F and 16 pupils gained GCSE grades in science in the D to G range. Five pupils gained GCSE grades in English and English Literature at grades D and E. In English examinations and tests, although pupils are given additional time, they are not allowed the help of a scribe or someone to read the questions to them or provide other help as is the case in some subjects.
3. In the National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 six pupils achieved level 4 in English (the expected level lies between level 5 and 6). Four pupils achieved level 4 and one gained level 5 in mathematics. In science seven pupils achieved level 4 and three gained level 5.
4. Some students stay for one year of post-16 study. At the time of the inspection five students had stayed on from 17 pupils who made up the previous Year 11. The post-16 group includes two who have only been at the school for a year or so. In general, the post-16 students lack basic skills to a significant extent. For example, the standard of their work in English and mathematics is well below average. Overall progress is satisfactory with good features. Pupils improve their basic skills, in literacy and in number. The examination results for the previous post-16 include creditable outcomes, such as four out of five entered for GCSE mathematics attained pass grades, ranging from D to F. Also the group entered the Associated Examination Board (AEB) Test in Literacy, attaining level 2 (four students) and level 3 (one student).
5. The key strength in standards created by the year of post-16 study is that the students progress into further study. The previous post-16 group all gained entry to Colleges of Further Education, mostly for NVQ and GNVQ at Level 2.
6. Pupils have a wide range of literacy skills and progress in developing reading and writing skills can, for some pupils, be a slow and somewhat insecure process. Some pupils join the school relatively late in their school career with very limited abilities in reading. They are acutely aware of their difficulties and their failures in the past. By the time they reach Year 11 almost all pupils have gained at least a basic level of reading and writing skills and specific coping strategies to function effectively in, for example, higher education. Many others achieve levels of literacy beyond this.
7. Overall pupils make good progress against their targets, showing, for example, specific gains in the reading age. Higher and middle attaining pupils are able to tackle demanding texts and answer questions about character and plot. Lower attaining pupils work hard at their ability to manage their difficulties to achieve a basic level of functional literacy.

8. Overall pupils achieve well in English and mathematics in Years 5 to 11 and satisfactorily in the sixth form. They achieve very well in science. Achievement is good in art and design, physical education and drama. There is very good achievement in history at Years 5 to 6 and it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. History is not taken as an examination subject. Overall pupils achieve well in geography. Achievement is satisfactory for Years 7 to 9 in ICT and good for older pupils. Achievement in personal, social and health education and religious education is satisfactory across the school. There is poor achievement in modern languages. Although progress in the lessons seen was satisfactory, because the teachers have good relationships and work hard, progress over time is poor, because teachers lack the depth of knowledge to build pupils' skills.
9. Pupils with additional special educational needs, such as dyspraxia, make good progress, because members of staff are sensitive to their needs across the range of subjects.
10. Individual education plans show significant improvement and are now more specific and relevant to the pupils' needs and allow subject staff to monitor progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils at Frewen College have a very good understanding of their dyslexia. They know what they find difficult, and realise that they have been given an opportunity to succeed. They are pleased to be in a school with others with similar difficulties, and to have their problems recognised. Many arrive with an experience of failure in other schools, but develop a mature attitude towards learning and a determination to cope with print and to prove themselves. Pupils feel valued, and they in turn respect each other and the staff. There is a corporate understanding of dyslexia so that pupils understand and want to help each other in lessons. Students in Year 12 show good commitment to their courses, designed to help them develop the independent life-skills they need.
12. Behaviour in class is very good; pupils come to lessons ready to learn, and relationships with teachers are very good. Pupils feel their learning is important because teachers confront their difficulties, provide them with coping strategies and encourage them. There is a strong mutual respect that replaces the pupils' sense of failure with one of 'can do'. Older pupils feel motivated by their teachers' belief in them and their expectations of what GCSE results they could achieve. Younger pupils at the Oaks work very well together with real enthusiasm. Pupils learn to concentrate, become more confident and their self-esteem grows. Because they are provided with supervised homework sessions they learn to manage their own work, and as a result GCSE pupils show considerable independence.
13. Pupils appreciate the reward scheme for good work and behaviour, and can articulate the benefits in the long- and short-term. As an incentive it works well even for older pupils.
14. Behaviour in every area has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now good. Only rarely is it unsatisfactory in class, and then it is through lack of motivation, by boys who arrived during Year 10 and in a subject which was not their choice. During formal assemblies pupils behave exceptionally well. They demonstrate considerable discipline and an ability to sit quietly, to listen and to reflect. The football team behaved exceptionally well under extreme physical provocation during a match in which they were soundly beaten and ridiculed.
15. Around the school, and in the evenings, pupils were seen to be behaving well. There is a wholesomeness about relationships and behaviour: a lack of sexual or racist comments or innuendo. There are occasional lapses in behaviour; during the last year there were nine fixed term and one permanent exclusion. This term five pupils have been excluded for short periods. These are usually for breaches of school rules, for example, smoking.

16. Overall the personal development and quality of relationships between pupils are good. There are very good relationships between members of staff and pupils and staff do listen to pupils' views. The school is vigilant about bullying and parents reported that pupils got on well with each other. The personal, social and health education programme gives appropriate emphasis to the possibility of bullying and the need to tell. Nevertheless, there are, sometimes, tensions between older and younger pupils. For example, younger boarding pupils complain that some older ones 'borrow' things from them or, for example, help themselves to chips after swimming, which they do not always report in case there are consequences. There are minor aspects of school life about which some pupils grumble, such as the quantity of food, but they realise the importance of being in this school. However, pupils' opinions are not regularly sought formally and they are not given opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of college life. Their time is filled and organised and there are few opportunities for individual initiative; this slows their maturity. This is balanced by the college's investment in study skills and the fact that teachers supervise 'homework' sessions providing help and advice. The college recognises that some pupils find personal organisation difficult and whilst there are clear expectations in relation to this aspect, for example keeping their room tidy, making and changing their bed, bringing the right equipment to lessons, nevertheless there is sympathetic and understanding support.
17. The post-16 group of pupils have positive attitudes to their extra year at school. They are interested and motivated, such as by the experiences of study at college, and of work experience. They improve their capacity to form constructive relationships with adults and others beyond school.
18. Attendance of the 34 day pupils in the last school year at 89.8 per cent was below the national average for schools with a specific learning difficulty. The figures are distorted by the very poor attendance of four pupils. Two pupils have a history of school refusal, and three of the four pupils have shown a better pattern of attendance this term. Registers are not always completed formally as required for each registration group.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching has a number of strengths and few weaknesses. Overall it is good. It is sometimes very good. It is very good in the primary department, the Oaks.
20. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and because their relationships with pupils are very good, they manage them particularly well in a quiet unobtrusive manner. Teachers know the pupils and this is a key factor in the school in the very successful way teachers foster pupils' sense of self-esteem. Many pupils enter the college with a profound sense of being an academic failure and the college is skilful in rebuilding lost confidence.
21. Apart from modern languages, teachers have good subject knowledge and this allows them to plan effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils. On-going assessment is good which allows teachers to track pupil progress. Time and resources are used well. Setting of homework is very good; it extends the work in classrooms and the fact that it is supervised means that it is carried out in a purposeful atmosphere.
22. Overall the quality of teaching in English is very good. Teachers build strong bonds of respect which appeal directly to individual pupils. This builds their maturity and very positive attitudes towards tackling their difficulties. Teachers plan the work well based on the needs of the individuals. Work is carefully matched so that pupils make progress. Questioning is skilled and teachers know how to break down a task into manageable 'chunks' so that pupils succeed.

Teachers establish a warm, friendly but rigorous work ethos. They have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve.

23. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall. In the best lessons teachers are enthusiastic, using their secure mathematical knowledge to the benefit of the pupils. Well-planned and executed mental exercises focus the pupils on the day's tasks. Pupils are managed well, all the necessary resources are readily available and changes of activity are well timed, resulting in highly motivated pupils participating fully in their work. However, learning is not regularly reinforced at the end of the lesson through a whole class discussion session, although pupils are often rewarded by a quiet word of praise for behaviour and effort. The use of ability groups, where numbers allow, enables teachers to target their teaching more effectively and provides appropriate challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
24. Teaching and learning in science are both very good, for pupils of all ages. A significant proportion of both teaching and learning is excellent. No teaching or learning is less than satisfactory. Teachers have significant strengths across the range of skills. The key strengths are that planning is thorough, with high expectations about the progress to be made by pupils. Teachers also manage pupils very well so that pupils work productively.
25. The teaching of art and design is always satisfactory and occasionally good. Lessons are planned well, time is used very effectively and individual education plans are referred to in planning. The teacher guides pupils in making choices, rather than directing them.
26. Teaching and learning in design and technology for pupils aged up to 11, is very good. High expectations from the teacher lead to a very productive pace of learning. For pupils aged up to 16, the key strengths are that teachers have specialist skills. Work is very well organised, with clear learning objectives, especially for food studies. As a result, pupils make substantial progress in both designing and making in food studies and in the best of work with resistant materials. In these situations, pupils concentrate well and gain independence, because the practical approach fosters initiative. At best, pupils take a real pride in the outcomes of their work, and derive confidence so that they handle new tasks equally well. In some instances progress is insufficient in work with resistant materials, because the methods used by the teacher meet the needs of some but not all pupils. For example, lack of interest by some pupils is not resolved. Their productivity is then too low.
27. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology are satisfactory overall, but range from very good to unsatisfactory. Strengths to be found in all teaching are the expertise of the teachers in ICT, and the effective management of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The inconsistency in the teaching concerns planning. Sometimes the work planned does not ensure pupils make sufficient intellectual effort. They are asked to undertake simple tasks, or to cover work too slowly, so that they do not improve their understanding of how to use ICT for specific purposes. Some of the good and very good teaching encourages pupils to be confident and independent learners.
28. The teaching of geography is always at least satisfactory, often good, and on occasions very good. Teachers have secure knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject. When teaching is good or very good, a variety of teaching techniques is used, planning is thorough and pupils are actively involved in a range of activities. Overall, teaching in history is satisfactory.
29. Overall, teaching of French is poor because teachers lack the conversational language skills and do not have sufficient depth of knowledge to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time.
30. Overall, the teaching of music is good. The teacher's very good preparation and planning ensures that pupils learn and practise musical skills systematically and pupils build on previous

learning. The teacher's infectious energy and enthusiasm communicate themselves to the pupils, with the result that a good amount of work is covered in lessons and they are inspired to work hard and respond to the range of musical experiences.

31. The quality of physical education teaching is good. The teacher has very good knowledge of the pupils and he knows when to provide support and encouragement or spur others onto a greater challenge. He is sensitive to the additional special needs of some pupils. He establishes a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere but within that expects pupils to work hard and achieve well.
32. Overall the quality of teaching and learning in religious education is satisfactory. This is weaker than at the last inspection when a subject specialist taught the religious education. Lessons are characterised by high expectations of behaviour and participation. Questioning is used well, though sometimes pupils are not given the opportunity to expand fully on their views or understanding. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and plan effectively with a genuine understanding of the individual needs of the pupils.
33. Overall teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. The post-16 students acquire significant new knowledge and skills, and work productively. At best teachers succeed because they use what they know about the students effectively, so that learning difficulties are resolved and students begin to understand how they can improve.

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

34. The curriculum is good and provides the pupils with an appropriate balance of subjects. There has been a full review of the curriculum since the previous inspection in 1996 in order to meet more precisely the distinctive needs of the pupils. The overall improvement is good. There is a deliberate emphasis on English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The full range of the National Curriculum is taught to Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 modern foreign languages are not taught and this enhances the time for literacy and information and communication technology. The college has also introduced a study skills programme.
35. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, though some, notably in religious education, are due for updating so that they more accurately reflect present practice. Subject planning in English, mathematics and science is particularly good. The length of the taught week is significantly above national guidelines and in comparison with the majority of special schools and this increases the teaching time available. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils in Year 11 to obtain accreditation in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in English, mathematics, science, and eight other subjects, including English literature. For less academic pupils suitable nationally accredited course are provided. For example, Certificate of Achievement in many subjects, City and Guilds Certificate in Professional Cookery, Associated Examination Board (AEB) Basic Test in Health, Hygiene and Safety, and Achievement Tests in Literacy and Numeracy.
36. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adapted imaginatively to meet the needs of the pupils in the primary classes and are enhancing the curriculum and improving pupils' achievements in English and mathematics. They are both suitably extended to pupils in the secondary phase of the school.
37. The curriculum for post-16 students is good. It provides a range of highly relevant experiences, and prepares students very effectively for the next stage. Experiences are well selected to promote the further development of key skills. There is a choice of vocational courses, work experience and access to a local further education college, with appropriate certification, as well

as GCSE and other courses for those who can benefit from them. Such placements help to give students an understanding of the wider community and the world of work.

38. The post-16 curriculum includes two days per week of further education college placement and individual work experience. These elements promote effective access to the world of work and further training. Other elements are mainly English, design and technology, music, mathematics and life skills. There is daily contact with the tutor, including one weekly twenty-minute session for support and guidance. The tutor monitors and maintains the quality of learning from the College placement and work experience. The post-16 programme is quite distinct from the previous curriculum during Year 11. The overall impact of this programme is a beneficial pre-vocational experience. In this context students are encouraged very well to take responsibility and to understand life beyond school. There is sufficient time for careers advice, and it is used well.
39. The school places a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education, which is taught as a discrete subject and is also conveyed through many facets of the college's ethos and the daily life of the pupils and students. Sex education and information regarding drug misuse are handled sensitively. Overall, the provision for personal, social and health education within the taught curriculum is satisfactory, but will need to be revised to accommodate the new element of citizenship.
40. Inclusion, both within and beyond school, is good. Pupils and students have good equality of opportunity and are able to enjoy access to everything the curriculum offers. However, wheelchair access to many of the rooms is limited because of the nature of the listed building.
41. There is an extended day for those day-boys whose transport is flexible until early evening so that they may take advantage of the supervised homework opportunities time for the residential pupils. Resident pupils are given good opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities, some of which act as an extension to the taught school day. They include information and communication technology, and others provide leisure pursuits, such as sports, music, the creative and visual arts and other community experiences. Teaching staff give freely of their time. In addition pupils in Year 11 have additional homework sessions, supported by members of staff to allow them to continue with their course work. The variety of the extended day programme helps pupils to grow in their personal, social and creative skills, develop independence, build relationships, learn to share and develop both physically and mentally.
42. Links with the local community are good. This plays an important part in the learning opportunities of the pupils, particularly the social aspects. They also visit nearby places of literary, artistic and historical interest as an extension of their academic courses. There are satisfactory links with partner institutions. Pupils attend a nearby college for a vocational course in photography and participate in the various sports and games with local schools. The junior school pupils share their creative arts productions with local primary schools.
43. Provision for the moral and social development of pupils is a strength of the school but more needs to be done to foster spiritual and cultural development.
44. Arrangements to promote moral and social development are very good. A programme for personal, social and health education permeates every aspect of the school. There is a constant but unobtrusive emphasis on appropriate behaviour, taking turns and thinking of others' needs. Pupils and students demonstrate that they know what is required. For example, pupils will hold open doors for adults and say 'Please' and 'Thank you'. Staff members also provide excellent role models, both in their dealings with each other and in their treatment of the children in their care. Pupils and students are encouraged to think of others beyond the school. For example, in science Year 9 pupils are looking at the effects of science on the environment.

45. Few opportunities are planned for spiritual development, though they do occur spontaneously. The moments of silence during the school assembly are well respected and they are times of stillness and reflection. Most assemblies meet the requirement as an act of collective worship. In religious education lessons pupils learn about Christianity and the other major world religions and festivals. Cultural development is also satisfactory. Pupils visit local museums, theatres and places of interest such as Bodiam Castle. The music and art and design curricula also extend the pupils' cultural and multicultural knowledge and understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Teachers know the pupils very well, and make very good provision for them academically. They offer timely advice and guidance, raising pupils' expectations of their ability to achieve. They take on extra duties, like the supervised study sessions for GCSE students, and offer support with their project work.
47. Similarly the head of care and his deputy know the boarders well, and make good provision for them out of school hours. Two care staff are new this term. Both matrons and two other care staff have first aid qualifications, and pupils who are injured or unwell receive a satisfactory level of care. Some pupils use the sick bay as a retreat, where they go at break and tea-time. The role of matron is more one of care than of medical provision. One of the matrons offers a counselling service. However, they are not part of the care team, which is occasionally stretched during the evenings when providing adult supervision to a range of activities.
48. The headteacher has responsibility for child protection matters, and the two new members of the care staff received their induction during the inspection week. Arrangements are satisfactory; there is now a formally agreed policy, and practice takes account of the fact that pupils' homes are in a number of different authorities.
49. The estate manager is responsible for matters of health and safety. The policy is clear, and risk assessments are carried out in practical areas. Although he reports to the governors each term, the minutes of these meetings do not make health and safety matters sufficiently explicit for governors to be confident they are exercising their statutory duties. Nor is it clear that the health and safety implications have been considered following an entry into the accident record. The annual health and safety review takes place in August and therefore does not identify concerns that would only be evident when the school is operational. A number of relatively minor health and safety concerns were mentioned to the headteacher during the inspection. Older pupils are allowed to go to the village during their lunch hour, but are not required to sign out. This is a health and safety issue. Care staff operate a "signing out" system successfully in the evenings.
50. Pupils arrive at the school at any stage in their school careers, and this can restrict the GCSE courses they are able to study. Taking into account the number of pupils involved, the school offers a wide range of GCSE subjects, and teachers do their best to counsel and advise when only second best options are on offer. Careers teaching and advice are appropriate and realistically prepare boys for life after school. Teachers constantly provide help which acknowledges problems and offers pupils relevant coping strategies.
51. There is a very thorough and detailed approach to individual education plans and assessment in the school. There has been significant improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection.

52. For all new entrants a summary statement is produced. This statement collates information from previous reports or from the primary teachers for those entering Year 7 at the college. Within six weeks a member of staff, with the specific responsibility carries out a series of tests on the pupil. This information forms the basis of the first individual education plans and is sent to all departments and the family. The thoroughness of this initial assessment is a strength.
53. Subject teachers set targets. Individual education plans and targets are regularly reviewed by the teachers and are used as the basis for the thorough annual reviews. A weakness is that apart from annual reviews there is little formal monitoring of pupils' progress other than by the subject teacher.
54. Overall the provision for careers and vocational education is satisfactory. Within this careers teaching and work experience are good. The provision now is very much better than that reported at the previous inspection. Sufficient time is allocated for all pupils to complete a good variety of activities, starting in Year 9. For example, Year 9 enjoyed a decision-making exercise. Year 11 pupils benefited from help about form filling because they learnt about the activity and they gained confidence about coping with dyslexia. Every pupil has two weeks' well managed work experience in Year 10. The school gives individual advice to each pupil, principally to prepare them realistically for roles in working life. Additionally, each pupil has at least one individual meeting with independent, external careers advisers.
55. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance, and the secretary telephones parents on a pupil's first day of absence. The headteacher knows his pupils very well, and wisely separates unsatisfactory behaviour and frustration from dyslexia. There is no formal discipline policy, and as a result situations are dealt with as they arise. This means that there is no recognised tariff for offences, and exclusion is used when one of the school's golden rules is broken. The behaviour monitoring scheme is complex, having positive and negative aspects, but is understood by pupils and is having a good effect. Behaviour is better than at the time of the last inspection. This is also because pupils are now admitted solely for their dyslexia needs.
56. Day-to-day residential care is good. It offers a stable and caring environment with a wide variety of evening activities. Together these extend and promote the self-confidence, interests and experiences of the pupils. They foster positive behaviour and attitudes and enable pupils to start and complete the day in a positive frame of mind. Pupils feel safe and secure within it. Staff members ensure that pupils have the opportunity to take part in some stimulating activity each evening. The residential experience extends the classroom curriculum and enhances the overall quality and standard of education provided by the school. Personal development and independence are reviewed termly and monitored by a key worker. Formal care plans with a target for development are not yet in place, though a member of the residential staff, as key worker, does contribute, orally and by written report, to the annual reviews. Another area of weakness is the formal transfer of information between the residential staff and teaching staff. Generally the passing of such information is oral and informal, though records of daily incidents are maintained.
57. Behaviour in the residential areas is of the same high standard as that which exists in the school setting. Relationships between pupils and care staff are very good, but knowledge of child protection procedures and practices by staff is good.
58. Staffing for the residential aspect of the school is generally sufficient, but is not always effectively deployed. Establishing a unified management structure in the care team to include all adults on duty, could ease the problem.

59. Care staff have a high degree of autonomy. Resources are satisfactory. The residential accommodation is homely, but somewhat worn in the communal areas and does not inspire the pupils to smarten-up and personalise their rooms. Pupils generally have reasonable personal space, en suite facilities and ready access to both personal and nursing care and attention. Bedrooms are sufficiently large to contain desks at which independent study may be carried out undisturbed. There are communal televisions with video and information technology facilities are available for the pupils. Larger games such as table football and pool and table tennis tables are also available. There is a telephone accessible to the pupils independently and calls in and out may be made with reasonable ease and privacy. The Childline number is prominently displayed. The school's facilities, particularly those for physical activities in the grounds, are extensive and very well used to enhance the residential provision.
60. Overall the residential provision is sound.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents are very supportive of Frewen College. Over half the parents responded to the parental questionnaire, and in spite of their wide geographical spread, a good number attended the pre-inspection meeting. Their positive responses were very high; all felt that their sons are making good progress and that the school is helping them become more mature and responsible. None said that their son did not like school. Many parents have made determined efforts to get places for their sons, because they believe it offers hope when dyslexia had blighted their previous school experiences. They believe that the college provides an opportunity for boys to believe in themselves, and to grow in confidence and in self-esteem as they learn. One parent expressed her overwhelming relief at the emergence of her son's personality.
62. There are good informal links between the college and the parents; and both teaching and care staff keep in telephone contact with parents, reporting progress as well as any concerns. Parents feel able to make telephone contact with whomever they feel is appropriate, and the headteacher makes time for them. Written communication is good. The termly newsletter, which doubles as a promotional leaflet, is a full colour glossy production that reports on events and achievements during the term. Pupils' annual reports are good, and parents also receive an interim grade report. Annual reports give details of course content, and some give National Curriculum levels or predicted GCSE grades, but they don't give quite enough information on what the pupil is able to do. Teachers' written comments relate more to a pupil's attitude than how he can improve his work. In fact, pupils have good attitudes to their work and teachers need now to take this for granted and focus more on ways to raise achievement.
63. Parents have access to all of their son's individual education plan targets. They are invited to attend the annual reviews. The level of support required from parents is different from that of most schools. Supervised 'prep' sessions during the week are available to day pupils as well as boarders, and this allows pupils to go home at the end of the day or week having completed their homework. Many parents find this helpful because it allows families to have time at the weekend to be together without, what they see as the burden of study. Some parents have dyslexia themselves, and feel unable to help their sons practically.
64. The school generates a loyalty amongst ex-pupils and their parents, one of whom 'popped in' to visit, because he was in the area, during the week of the inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. There are significant strengths to the leadership of the school and few weaknesses. Overall the school is led and managed well.
66. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He is clearly ambitious for the school and its development. Under his leadership there has been very significant development since the last inspection. He has established the clarity of purpose of the college – it knows what it can do and the type of pupil it can help. The quality of teaching has improved and this has led to an improvement in the quality of the ethos. The establishment of much of the main school accommodation centred around the library area and ICT facilities supports the learning ethos well. The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher, particularly in the day-to-day support and functioning of the college.
67. The headteacher monitors the work of the school in a formal and informal manner and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. This informs the school development plan. Clear priorities have been established and successfully carried out.
68. Staff members across the school show a very good commitment and capacity for ensuring that there is further improvement in the work of the college. The school curriculum group is fully involved in developments, for example the recent whole-school initiatives on improving individual education plans and the current work on study skills. Heads of department monitor the work within their subject and department areas, but the monitoring is mainly informal.
69. Currently the headteacher is the catalyst for change in the school and he has been responsible for drawing up development plans and reporting on them to the governing body. He has created a stable situation in terms of roll, ethos and curriculum. The school is now at the stage where the management role of heads of department with regard to identifying priorities through formal monitoring and evaluation requires development so that they take on more corporate responsibility for the college's development. This monitoring process needs to be linked to raising achievement further in a phased prioritised way. The current plan is in a literary style with the governing body as its audience. The school has not yet established these college priorities in a framework which easily identifies the steps to be taken within a given time scale, responsibilities, funding allocation and success criteria to make it easier for the senior management team to monitor the college's progress towards achieving its priorities. Such an approach would enable other members of staff to share and understand these priorities more easily and indeed allow them to participate in their construction. In addition it will allow the governing body to monitor the work of the college and its progress more effectively. Finally the adoption of the process of a college development planning process with in-built review will also develop a process whereby all members of staff are engaged in periodic process of internal quality assurance.
70. The governing body has considerable personal and professional expertise. Members of the governing body are supportive and play a part in the strategic direction of the college. The headteacher submits termly reports but the current format of the school development plan makes it difficult for them to fulfil their monitoring function. They monitor the budget carefully. The governing body is involved in shaping the direction of the school through the management of the trust and identification of targets for the headteacher. They are supportive of the headteacher but their role of 'critical friend', based on their knowledge of the college, requires further development.

71. Apart from modern languages there is a good match of staff to the curriculum. Accommodation is generally good although there are a few weaknesses. The changing rooms and showers are poor and the school is seeking to address this. Art and design accommodation is cramped. Decoration and some furniture in the communal areas of the residential accommodation are worn. Overall resources are satisfactory.
72. The school succeeds in its aims of promoting high standards for all. The post-16 students are given extra and different provision by which they cope well and progress. There is sufficient oversight of the quality of this provision through the care and interest taken by key staff, principally the teacher in charge of Year 12. The group benefit greatly from the well used resources from beyond school, that is the college of further education and work placements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to build further on Frewen College's many strengths, the headteacher, governing body and members of staff should:
 1. involve heads of department in formal monitoring and setting targets for improvement linked to college development planning by:
 - developing a process of school monitoring and evaluation;
 - establishing priorities for development with a focus on improving standards;
 - linking this process to school development planning ;
 - prioritising developments within a specific timescale;
 - presenting the plan in a format which allows for easy monitoring of the process of development;(Para. 69)
 2. improve the modern languages provision for Years 7 to 10;
(**Para.** 8,29, 131)
 3. improve the deployment of staff in the residential setting.
(**Para.** 58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	14	38	31	3	0	0
Percentage	4	16	42	34	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	75
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	10.1	School data	0.1

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	72
Any other minority ethnic group	

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y12

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y5– Y12

	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage	1	1
Black – other		
Indian	1	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	8	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	00-01
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	£
Total income	1,210,078
Total expenditure	1,238,823
Expenditure per pupil	14,747.89
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

75

Number of questionnaires returned

39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	26	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	67	31	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	41	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	40	0	10	3
The teaching is good.	79	18	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	36	5	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	13	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	10	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	64	21	10	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	23	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	41	8	3	3

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

ENGLISH

English is a very strong department. It has a major role in the college of developing pupils' language skills which extends beyond the English classroom. It carries out this responsibility very well.

Strengths:

- The department undertakes a detailed assessment of pupils' needs and monitors progress carefully.
- There is a structured approach to developing pupils' skills.
- The department develops very positive attitudes to learning.

Areas for improvement:

- The links between teachers in the primary and secondary phases.
 - The consultancy role of the English department across the school.
 - The fiction culture in the school, the current reading stock and the use of cassette story-tapes.
74. Each pupil has a specific need and the rate of progress varies with individual pupils. Some pupils, for example, are able to take GCSE examinations in English language and literature by the time they reach Year 11 whilst for others attainment remains more limited. Overall, pupils achieve well against their personal targets. Reading skills, in particular, show at least steady improvement.
75. Detailed initial assessment and identification of each pupil's need and the development of a specific individual education plan allow progress to be monitored. Teachers know the pupils, not just in a general, pastoral sense but also what the individual pupil needs to do in order to improve their basic literacy skills. The department then sets about supplying these needs in a carefully structured manner.
76. The department is also very successful in unlocking the pupils' own motivation and developing a mature attitude which acknowledges the difficulties they have. This results in pupils wanting to do well. A teacher talking to a Year 8 pupil said: 'You don't have to get every word right.' To which the pupil replied: 'I know but I want to get some of them.' Pupils also learn to trust that the specific skills they are developing do work. Developing pupils' sense of self-esteem is a strength of the college. Within the English department the self-esteem develops because of the gains in literacy skills.
77. A key element is the development of listening skills. Year 6 pupils practise distinguishing between a short vowel and a long vowel. They hear the difference between 'hop' and 'hope' and understand that it is the 'e' that has made the difference. They recognise that 'bankrupt' is a two-syllable word with a short vowel and use this information to find the word in a specialist dictionary. They can hear the blend of 'fl' as in 'flick' and can hear the rhymes to make 'stick', 'lick', 'tick'. Year 8 pupils can hear and spell 'sec' and can also hear 'ons'. Using an electronic dictionary they find 'seconds'. A Year 10 pupil, practising with the speech therapist, identifies the odd word from 'cake, lake, fox' or taking the consonant away from 'blow' to give 'low' or taking the second sound away from the word so that 'free' becomes 'fee'. A lower attaining pupil in Year 11, struggling with 'tri-es' is reminded of what happens 'when two vowels go walking' and then succeeds in reading 'tries'. Across the year groups pupils are encouraged to listen accurately to the sounds which go to make up a word.

78. Speaking skills are encouraged consistently. By Year 11 higher attaining pupils are able to respond to detailed questioning about 'Lord of the Flies' in the role of a designated character in the book.

'What did you feel like when Simon died?' 'Nothing much really. It was like killing the pig....exciting, dangerous. Piggy is annoying and stupid...Its good being the boss... I don't want anyone to stop me being leader. I got more aggressive I suppose.'

The 'hot-seating', as this particular technique is called, was carried out in a mature atmosphere. The quality of learning in this session was of very high quality because the pupils had obviously prepared well before the lesson and had made considerable personal investment in the task, showing excellent attitudes to the work as well as very detailed knowledge of the text and the characters. However, even within this small group of five pupils, there was considerable diversity of oral and literacy skills. Some pupils and sixth form students are more reserved and tentative. The majority of pupils, however, are confident in talking about their work to visitors. In class, pupils reply to questions with varying degrees of confidence. Teachers are skilled at providing sensitive encouragement to encourage more extended replies. The college uses a variety of national accreditation to mark pupils' success in speaking and listening.

79. A small sample of drama lessons was seen. In the 2001 GCSE examinations two pupils gained a B grade and six gained a grade C in drama, achieving above average standards. In the lessons seen, Year 11 pupils showed developing performance skills. They were able to create a character, sustain it and read well with real expression and character. One particular boy, standing in for another who was absent, sight-read a part extremely well, almost as if he gained reading confidence when he was in a role of another character. Pupils made good progress in the lesson. Year 9 pupils are able to develop with guidance and direction a polished improvisation using relatively stock characters. Year 7 pupils are able to respond to direction as they rehearse a production. Year 6 pupil use drama to explore the lives of working children in early Victorian period which suddenly came alive as the teacher assumed a role in the drama making the lesson not only memorable for the pupils but at its culmination an effective springboard into their history work.
80. Teaching has particular strengths and is overall good. The specialist teacher knows the examination and supports the pupils particularly effectively. He has high energy and is enthusiastic about the subject which motivates and encourages the pupils. He is sympathetic to their specific difficulties but has high expectations and he is particularly effective at directing the pupils and creating the conditions whereby they can achieve success. In the primary phase the teachers work together well and are able to paint a verbal picture and assume a character well. This grabs pupils' attention and keeps their focus and involvement.
81. Across the school pupils have good attitudes to drama. They clearly enjoy the subject and the success they gain from it and as a result always make at least satisfactory and often good progress. Older pupils in particular are keen so that they rehearse their parts outside of lessons. The subject plays a significant part in the college's social provision by providing another area in which pupils can achieve success.
82. In 2001, three pupils out four took the National Curriculum English tests for pupils at the end of Year 6. One pupil achieved Level 3, another Level 4 (which is the expected level for this age) and another reached level 5. The previous year no pupils were entered for the test because it was felt that their difficulties were such that there was little chance of success. This gives an indication of the range of individual attainment, particularly in reading and writing. One pupil is able to retrieve and organise information from a variety of sources, read a range of demanding texts, such as 'Lord of the Rings'. He is able not only to 'decode' the text but to

read between the lines and infer why characters behave as they do, while another pupil is struggling to recognise familiar words on the '200 Common Word List.'

83. Progress in reading varies with individuals. Some pupils when they enter the school have reading ages which either are too low to register on the tests or are a long way behind their actual age. All make progress and this progress is carefully tracked. By the time they leave the college all pupils reach at least a state of reading where they can function outside school or college and have strategies to help them cope with any difficulties. Some pupils arrive at the school quite late in their school career with very low levels of reading skills and in some cases not being able to read at all. In addition they are often bruised by their previous learning experiences and distrustful that this time, the techniques taught to them will work. The head of department is very skilled at teaching the young adolescent to read and pupils make progress as a result.
84. The college reduces the range of attainment in any one year group by setting the pupils into very small groups. This investment allows for a large degree of individual attention or for the teacher to deal with a narrower range of specific difficulties. The small group sizes plus consistent good quality teaching provide good conditions for progress. Time-tabling the groups at the same time allows for some movement between them, which is particularly helpful in Years 10 and 11. Here the department teachers have established the GCSE courses and Certificate in Achievement to run in parallel and movement between the courses is possible, to match the needs of individual pupils.
85. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 read a passage downloaded from the internet about the Yeti. The department makes very good use of non-fiction material as a specific strategy to engage the boys' interests and because the staff feel that non-fiction has an internal logic which makes it easier to decode. 'Remember it must make sense' is a common injunction. This is because pupils when reading aloud have a tendency to make a stab at the word. 'Fodder' becomes 'folder', 'survived' becomes 'served'.
86. Other pupils in Year 11 study a novel 'Brother in the Land'. They know the story and are able to answer questions about the plot and the characters and the teacher uses the pupils' answers to create a mind-map on the whiteboard as preparation for pupils to undertake some writing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 display good knowledge of their set books. Pupils taking the GCSE language and literature examinations engage with the plot and the characters in the play or novel well. However, they do find the engagement with ideas, concepts and quality of the language more difficult, because they lack a rich reading experience.
87. Writing skills show a wide range of attainment. A Year 8 pupil starting a fantasy adventure space-story wrote:
'major Jon is spodd to go in space in ten seconds. Finally He gets into space but hes space pod breaks an important panel and Her loses control'
- A Year 9 pupil wrote the following in handwriting which is very immature, using a mixture of capitals with some letters joining and some letters printed.
- 'The crocodile has thin nose with its jaws are shut nearly all its teeth can be seen. The fourth tooth back from the bottom jaw is longer than the others.'
- Another pupil in Year 9 pupil wrote in neat well-presented handwriting:

‘I started to go to headkorters.... I had an underground tunall we went through to the house we went back to the house to get some food and drink when I was at the house my dad was there....’

Another Year 9 pupil, writing neatly, is able to use speech marks and punctuation and writes in sentences.

‘Hello,’ boomed a gigantic voice.

‘Hello,’ I said in a voice a mouse would find it hard to hear.

‘Did you like your stay?’

88. When pupils arrive in the school, their handwriting is often very immature, using a mixture of capitals with some letters joining and some letters printed. Pupils are encouraged consistently to improve their handwriting skills and over time the majority do manage to develop a legible, joined style. The degree of fluency and speed of writing varies considerably according to the individual.
89. Individual Year 11 pupils demonstrate in their course work that they are able to write long extended pieces of work on, for example, ‘Macbeth’, using direct quotations from the text to support their argument in a mature manner. For example, ‘The witches, “the imperfect speakers,” vanish in a puff of smoke.’
90. Pupils understand the plot and characters of the novels and plays they are studying and can write, again at length, Macbeth’s diary which tracks events in the play. They respond well to the facts of a poem:
- ‘Obviously the army discharged him because they recognised that he was ill, but he thinks they discharged him from the army for other reasons that he does not understand or know about.’
91. Most course work is word processed and very well presented and the department encourages pupils to use ICT. In this respect ICT makes a considerable contribution to pupils’ development of skills precisely because the spell-checker does pick up spellings and the work looks finished and ‘professional’. This is particularly important if you know that hand-written work looks immature and tells the world that you have a problem writing and spelling. ICT makes a specific contribution to pupils’ developing self-esteem in English. The department also uses ICT in other ways, such as downloading material from the Internet or using it to modify and adapt a core exercise to the individual needs of a particular pupil.
92. Overall, pupils’ attitudes to English are very good. They want to improve their skills and recognise that the teachers are helping them and that the work is making a difference. Teachers’ relationships with the pupils from Year 6 through to Year 11 are warm, friendly and very supportive but built on the bed-rock of respect that pupils have for the teachers and which the teachers engender. Just occasionally, a pupil may display his frustration and indeed truculence but teachers manage this well. It is hard for pupils in English because they have to face their difficulties. In other subjects they can show their skills and achieve success more easily. In English they have to bring to the lessons their motivation to improve and their trust that the teachers are able to make a difference. Whilst some will adopt initially avoidance-strategies, they appreciate that the only answer to their problems is to work at them under the guidance of the teacher. Pupils appreciate the work of the department because it does help them.

93. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. This is because of the consistent reinforcement of self-esteem, the sensitive encouragement, energy and structure they bring to the lessons. Teachers build strong bonds of respect that appeal directly to individual pupils. These help to build up the pupils' maturity and very positive attitudes towards tackling their difficulties. Teachers plan the work well to meet the needs of the individuals. Work is carefully matched to stages of development, so that pupils can make progress. Teaching has significant strengths, lively reading, detailed knowledge of pupils and good subject knowledge. Questioning is skilled and teachers know how to break down a task into manageable 'chunks' so that pupils succeed. The management of pupils is skilled so that, for example, a superficial comment is listened to and through questioning the pupils' response is developed into one of more depth. Teachers listen well to the pupils and by the quality of their listening they communicate that what the pupil has to say is important. Teachers establish a warm, friendly but rigorous work ethos. They have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. In addition, the department is also very reflective, teachers think about what they are doing and why and how what they are doing might be improved to help a particular pupil.
94. The department is very well led and managed. There is a very strong sense of their being an English department. Teachers are supportive of each other. More formal links could be developed between the staff in the secondary phase and the teachers in Years 5 and 6. There exists within the department considerable expertise. This expertise could be used to a greater extent across the school to develop other teacher's skills and expertise in helping pupils develop their literacy and oral skills.
95. The department places emphasis on using non-fiction material with the pupils because it is easier for the pupils to check that what they are reading 'makes sense'. Older pupils capable studying for GCSE, understandably, find the examining the quality of the language and the underlying concepts in the novels and plays and poetry they are reading more difficult than discussing the plots or the characters. To a large extent this stems from having a limited reservoir of experience of literature. There is not enough recent fiction, appropriate poetry nor 'speaking – books' tapes to provide a challenging range of literature for higher attaining pupils to experience.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision for mathematics is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Strengths:

- The quality of the teaching.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- The regular assessment and monitoring of pupils' performance.
- The leadership of the subject.
- The shared commitment by all for improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- Whole-class reviews at the end of lessons.
- Monitoring of the subject and development planning.

96. Whilst standards of attainment are variable and often low, achievement and progress in mathematics are good throughout the school. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils practise division of double-digit numbers by a single digit. A few need the help of a calculator, which

they use accurately. Lower attaining pupils can multiply and divide by ten mentally. Pupils develop their understanding of horizontal, vertical, perpendicular and parallel by using a plumb line and spirit level. They understand reflective symmetry and higher attaining pupils can recognise that some shapes have many lines of symmetry.

97. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils are confident with the four rules of number. They begin to work with number sequences and recognise simple patterns in number. They measure accurately to the nearest degree. They can complete tally charts and transfer the information in them into bar charts, pie diagrams or line graphs as appropriate. Lower attaining pupils practise adding three single-digit numbers within a set time and make a tally chart with much support.
98. By Year 11, all pupils are working towards nationally accredited examinations. Higher attaining pupils recognise the different graphical forms that may be used to illustrate information. They can collect data and process it using tally lists, frequency tables, mode and median and finally represent the findings by a pictogram, bar graph, pie chart, frequency diagram or line graph, including line of 'best fit', as appropriate. They convert between fraction, decimal and percentage accurately and multiply to two decimal places. Lower attaining pupils practise their understanding of multiplication and division and knowledge of addition and subtraction so that they may accurately calculate the cost of their purchases and change. They can convert minutes into hours. They can use negative numbers and recognise simple sequences. They name two- and three-dimensional figures and understand tessellation. They know the names of angles and the number of degrees in a triangle.
99. In Year 12, pupils work individually either to improve their previous examination grade or to improve facility with basic number skills. Higher attaining pupils calculate percentages, use fractions and decimals. Lower attaining pupils work with smaller numbers to master the operations of adding and subtracting and require much support.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Of the 13 lessons observed, four were satisfactory, eight were good and one was very good. Teaching is good at all key stages. In the best lessons teachers are enthusiastic, using their secure mathematical knowledge to the benefit of the pupils. There is a lively, prompt start usually with a well planned and executed mental exercise to focus the pupils on the day's tasks. For example, in one Key Stage 3 group for low attaining pupils they were required to add three single-digit numbers within a set time. Pupils respond well to their success at this time and it encourages them to work well in the main part of the lesson. Tasks are explained clearly and in many groups, where pupils are all working independently the teacher takes pains to ensure that no pupil has to wait for attention. There are very good relationships between the pupils and their teachers and pupils display extremely good attitudes to their tasks. Pupils are managed well, all the necessary resources are readily available and changes of activity are well timed, resulting in highly motivated pupils participating fully in their work. However, learning is not regularly reinforced at the end of the lesson through a whole-class discussion session, although pupils are often rewarded by a quiet word of praise for behaviour and effort. The use of ability groups where numbers allow enables teachers to target their teaching more effectively and aids the higher attaining pupils to achieve to their highest potential. Through the good role models of staff and some of the activities, which require working together and thinking about the needs of others, mathematics contributes well to the moral and social development of pupils.
101. Mathematics is used throughout the school day. For example, pupils use basic numeracy and graphical representation in science, they use measures and scale in design and technology, grid references, graphs and bar charts are used in geography and there is a little counting in French.

Computers are used to complete some mathematics assignments and in order to improve the presentation of an investigative study.

102. The development of the subject since the last inspection has been well led and managed. However, the subject leader's monitoring of the subject is mainly through informal means and he is not yet required to produce an annual subject audit and development plan. Teachers are being supported effectively with the introduction of the numeracy strategy at Key Stage 3. They keep detailed records of pupils' attainment, monitor individual progress carefully and use this information when planning future work. Over time a secure picture of individual progress is created. Pupils are enabled to sit the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) both at the end of Key Stage 4, some attaining at or near to national expectations and, if appropriate, again in Year 12. For those pupils for whom the GCSE is inappropriate they are prepared for the Certificate of Achievement in mathematics or the Associated Examinations Board's Achievement Tests in Numeracy. The success that pupils attain in these examinations is a good measure of the achievement of the department.

SCIENCE

Achievement, teaching and learning for science are all very good. Science is a strength of the school.

Strengths:

- Substantial progress is made by pupils of all ages.
- Teachers plan effectively and have high expectations about how well pupils can learn.
- Pupils work very productively, and with strong interest.
- Older pupils are mature enough to learn independently.
- Shrewd steps are underway to improve further the provision in science.

Areas for improvement:

- The liaison between primary and secondary science staff.

103. The standards achieved by pupils are very good, for all age groups up to age 16. By age 11 pupils cover the full range of science expected by that age. Of these a few attain levels in line with national expectations. Last year one pupil attained level 5 in the national tests at the end of eleven: this is above average. For example, most pupils in the primary age class know where body parts are located in the human body, and remember the names. Low-attaining pupils know only a few parts. High-attaining pupils know a very good range of body parts, and understand the functions. It is especially good that dyslexic pupils use technical terms with confidence, such as 'diaphragm' and 'small intestine'.
104. By age 16 pupils have a much wider grasp of science, with impressive knowledge and understanding over the expected range, that is of life processes, materials, physical processes and scientific investigation. In 2001 most pupils attained grades E and F in single award GCSE, with one pupil attaining grade D. Current work shows more substantial attainment, though pupils struggle to write fluently, to an extent that limits GCSE outcomes. For example, Year 11 pupils investigated whether elastic bands stretch in the same way as metal springs. They organised the data collection very well, and presented their conclusions very clearly. All understood enough about molecular structure to be able to explain what they had found out. This level is close to, though just below, national expectations for that age. Number skills were good; for example graphs were used correctly and interpreted intelligently. Writing was slow and stressful; spelling and grammar were often inaccurate. Literacy skills are generally fragile for pupils of all ages. Even so much is done to alleviate the pressures and problems experienced by pupils because of their dyslexia. Overall, progress in knowledge, skills and understanding is very good. This progress is maintained year on year, for both low- and high-attaining pupils. Pupils with additional special needs, principally dyspraxia, make progress as good as the rest.

105. The progress in science is now better than it was at the time of the previous inspection, in 1996. The other significant improvement is that teaching is now very good.
106. Teaching and learning are both very good, for pupils of all ages. A significant proportion of both teaching and learning is excellent. No teaching or learning is less than satisfactory. Teachers have significant strengths across the range of skills. The key strengths are that planning is thorough, with high expectations about the progress to be made by pupils. Teachers also manage pupils very well so that pupils work productively. It is very good that even the youngest pupils are very interested in their science lessons, and the oldest pupils work with very impressive levels of independence. Useful homework is set regularly for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils complete this work to a good standard. Teachers provide a strong and effective focus on literacy skills. For example, the use of information and communication technology, principally word processing, helps pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 feel confident about science. One facet of the very good learning of all age groups is that pupils mostly cope very well with reading and writing. The gains in knowledge and understanding are very good.

107. The liaison between the staff leading science in Key Stage 2, and the teacher leading the subject in the secondary part of the college is not as effective as other aspects of organisation. Currently science for Key Stages 3 and 4 is being considerably improved with bold leadership covering a well thought-out range of targets. New money is available to plug gaps in resources, and for a technician. Schemes of work and assessment procedures are being improved. The current sound practice of including science targets in individual education plans is being maintained. Overall there is well planned teaching about the social and moral dimensions of science. As part of this, Year 9 has specific and regular lessons, which ensure pupils learn more about such matters. Pupils take a mature and willing interest in such learning. Useful steps have started to increase the extent of use of a variety of materials in lessons, targeted to meet the differing levels of both literacy and science amongst pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall pupils achieve well in art and design and make good progress. Overall, there has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Strengths:

- The secure knowledge of the teacher and his enthusiastic and motivating style.

Areas for improvement:

- No ICT facility in the art room
108. Achievement in art and design is good throughout the school. Pupils by the age of eleven, and 14 are working within an appropriate level. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils take GCSE. Over the last few years there has been a slight decline in the results. This may be due in part to the ability of the pupils, but also the changing rules of the exam board which now asks candidates to explain the processes they went through to achieve their final work. This has caused the teacher of art and design to seek an alternative examining board where more emphasis is given to the coursework and examination work. The present Year 10 has embarked on course work, which at this stage is suitable for both examining boards.
109. At Key Stage 3 pupils use power of observation, and experiment with different media, tone and line. The opportunity to work with clay and photography is also explored. Key Stage 4 pupils develop their ideas and are able to work independently and refine their work. They work in two- and three-dimensions with a wide variety of media.
110. Pupil's attitudes are good across all key stages. They show a real enthusiasm for art and design. They have pride in their work and are able to discuss their ideas together. They listen well, are well behaved, and highly motivated. Pupils often spend breaks and lunchtime in the art room. An art class offered in an evening is a popular choice.
111. The teaching of art and design is always satisfactory and occasionally good. Lessons are planned, and time is used very effectively and individual education plans are referred to in planning. The teacher is able to guide pupils in making choices, rather than directing them. Programmes of study are sound. The teacher has very secure knowledge and experience in the subject, particularly in clay. He seeks opportunities to use ICT with the pupils, but would benefit from improved availability of a computer with a CD ROM in the art room.

112. Accommodation for the subject is not ideal because of its cramped nature and the size of group in the pottery and photographic area needs to be kept small, as space is restricted. Resources are readily available and there are books available in all areas. However, there is no ICT facility in the room and the teacher has to send pupils to the study centre to access the Internet. As there is only one full-time member of staff, this causes some difficulty.
113. Since the last Inspection there have been a number of improvements. Art and design is now a discrete subject and not a part of design and technology. The accommodation however, has been reduced.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision is overall satisfactory and matches pupils' needs and interests.

Strengths:

- Good variety of subject coverage: food, automotive, and resistant materials.
- Pupils gain confidence over time with all elements of design and technology.
- Food studies offers a wide variety of accreditation, matched well to pupils' ability.

Areas for improvement:

- Teaching and learning about resistant materials.
- Systems for assessment and curriculum planning, to ensure greater consistency of standards.

114. Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall, although inconsistent. Achievements of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are more consistent in food technology than in work with resistant materials. Achievements of pupils in the primary classes are high. These pupils make well-finished items that work, though they need help to do so. Some understand what is good about the methods they used whilst making. By age 14, pupils make items in wood with little help though the finish is sometimes unsatisfactory. Mostly these pupils plan their task but only with rough and ready sketches. These same pupils make meals with a reasonable understanding of healthy eating, if guided. They work at a straightforward level of skill, and some pupils readily learn new techniques.
115. Fifteen-year-olds in food studies have been taught about dietary guidelines but few as yet remember or understand enough to use them to plan meals. Pupils of the same age, Year 11, follow either automotive studies or work with resistant materials. Some design to a creditable standard, close to national expectations, with detailed drawings and plans for alternative approaches, which they assess well before choosing the final design to make. Others design more simplistically.
116. Most Year 11 pupils are skilful enough to work well with a good range of materials and techniques. GCSE results for food studies in recent years show an upward trend, including a few pupils who attain Grade C. Others gain merit awards, such as for the Associated Examination Board 'Health, Hygiene and Safety' Certificate. GCSE results for resistant materials are less impressive.
117. Year 12 pupils work to a reasonable basic skills standard. They continue to study within the AEB system for food studies, and are developing teamwork as they follow a teacher-led project to build a single-seater competition car.
118. The standards now are much as reported in the previous 1996 inspection. Teaching and learning are less consistent now, compared to the overall good teaching in 1996.

Accommodation and resources remain good. Pupils' attitudes are good and the subject, as then, continues to help them become more sensible and disciplined.

119. Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory, ranging from unsatisfactory to very good. The inconsistency is within teaching about resistant materials. Teaching and learning for pupils aged up to 11, is very good. High expectations from the teacher lead to a very productive pace of learning. Skills and understanding improve well, and pupils enjoy their work. For Key Stages 3 and 4 the key strengths are that teachers have specialist skills. Work is very well organised, with clear learning objectives, especially for food studies. As a result, pupils make substantial progress in both designing and making in food studies and in the best of work with resistant materials. In these situations, pupils concentrate well and gain independence, because the practical approach fosters initiative. At best, pupils take a real pride in the outcomes of their work, and gain in confidence so that they handle new tasks equally well. In some instances learning is insufficient in work with resistant materials, because the methods used by the teacher meet the needs of some but not all pupils. For example, lack of interest by some pupils is not resolved. Their productivity is then too low. Also the teaching of skills, especially for the least competent, does not improve standards enough. The least able lack clear exemplification of how to do something. They do not learn well enough from the discussion of alternatives that is so effective with high-attaining pupils.
120. There are positive and negative features in the other factors relevant to pupils' achievements. The spacious accommodation and the good level and variety of resources are a boon. The use of individual education plans to target the next steps in learning and to assess what has taken place is good. Food studies is well organised in terms of schemes of work, and in that National Curriculum attainment targets are regularly assessed. Systems for managing the curriculum and assessment for the resistant materials element of design and technology are too informal to give a sound basis for the improvements that are needed. The lack of technician support is a drain on teachers' time.

GEOGRAPHY

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Overall, pupils achieve well.

Strengths:

- The re-introduction of GCSE has motivated pupils and staff.
- The overall quality of teaching by specialist teachers.

Areas for improvement:

- Formal co-ordination of the subject.

121. Geography is taught throughout the school and progress up to Year 9 is satisfactory, and at Year 11 it is good. In the primary classes, geography is taught as part of a humanities course, and no lessons could be observed during the inspection as geography and history topics are taught on a half-termly basis.
122. The subject is taught within the appropriate levels of the National Curriculum. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are studying the water cycle and show understanding of the concepts. At Key Stage 4 pupils are involved in a topic on soil erosion for GCSE coursework. The school has organised field trips and pupils are able to discuss land defences, gambions, sea walls, for example, and show a good depth of knowledge. Displays on the wall are appropriate and relevant to the topic.

123. The teaching of geography is always at least satisfactory, often good, and on occasions very good. Teachers have secure knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject. When teaching is good or very good, a variety of teaching techniques are used, planning is thorough and pupils are actively involved in a range of activities. The teacher is able to relate topics studied to the pupils' experiences. The field trip was of great benefit to Key Stage 4 pupils, whilst at Key Stage 3 condensation on windows, ice forming on aeroplane wings, boiling water giving steam, all helped the understanding. The use of homework (prep) is a positive feature.
124. Pupil's attitudes to geography are good. They enjoy the lessons and have good relationships with the teacher and each other. When they are asked to go and work individually on the computer in the study centre, they do so and remain on task. Pupils use ICT effectively in the subject, but no computer is available in the classroom.
125. There is a humanities policy in the school, and a comprehensive scheme of work is in place. Work is seen regularly and notated. End of topic tests are marked and used effectively for future planning. Teachers are aware of individual education plans targets for individual pupils, and are acutely aware of additional needs of pupils. A range of resources exists and the department has a small budget shared with history. Staff teaching geography meet informally but there are no formal departmental meetings. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. Geography is taught as a separate subject at Key Stage 4. The college has re-introduced GCSE and Certificate of Achievement courses in geography and there has been improved use of information and communication technology.

HISTORY

Pupils achieve very well in history by the age of eleven and satisfactorily by the age of 14. Older pupils do not take the subject.

Strengths:

- The high quality of history teaching for pupils up to the age of eleven.

Areas for improvement:

- The lack of subject co-ordination across the school.

126. History is taught as a part of humanities course at Key Stage 2 and as a discrete subject in Key Stage 3. The college has decided that because of the subject's particular linguistic demands the subject history would not be taught at Key Stage 4 as a GCSE subject. Achievement is very good by the age of eleven and satisfactory at 14. Work is at an appropriate National Curriculum level, with pupils at Key Stage 2 studying 'Working Children in Victorian Times' and pupils in Key Stage 3 studying life in England 1750 - 1900, and World War 1. Pupils in all lessons were able to discuss previous work and recall facts and details. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teaching was satisfactory in all the lessons observed at Key Stage 3, and excellent in the lesson observed at Key Stage 2. Lessons are thoroughly planned and reference is made to targets in individual education plans. The topics in Key Stage 2 are chosen particularly to enhance vocabulary and literacy skills. Key words for the topic are displayed in all relevant classrooms. Visits to local sites and museums are used well by the teachers.
127. Pupils show an interest in the topics and attitudes are satisfactory and often good. They listen to others' points of view and respect their opinions. ICT is used when writing up some work,

and displays of previous work can be seen in classrooms and around the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

128. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, and local libraries are used for the loan of additional material. There are a number of teacher teaching the subject and whilst each uses assessment to inform planning, there is no clear co-ordination of the subject. The small budget is held within another departmental heading.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Standards overall are satisfactory with strengths in teaching and learning during Years 10 and 11. Provision and outcomes are now much better than at the time of the previous inspection.

Strengths:

- By age 16 pupils are confident and effective learners.
- Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 benefit from regular access to ICT.
- Progress in Key Stage 4 is good.

Areas for improvement:

- Inconsistencies in progress during Key Stage 3.
- Access to ICT during Years 5 and 6 and post-16.
- The co-ordination of ICT.
- Links between lesson planning and National Curriculum attainment targets.

129. Standards overall are satisfactory. A good start is made during Years 5 and 6. Progress during Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, covering an adequate range of topics. Progress during Years 10 and 11 is good. By age 11, pupils have sufficient skills to allow them to produce well-presented poems and graphs. They understand the benefits of using ICT for such purposes. They do not cover the full range of applications expected nationally by age 11 because their work focuses on word processing as an aid to writing, and spreadsheets for calculation and graph work. In the period up to age 14, pupils become familiar with a wider range of applications, gaining satisfactory understanding of the purposes of each. For example, Year 9 pupils made sales handouts. All entered text and pictures to create attractive handouts. Some, but not all, were familiar with more than one application, so they made sensible choices. Year 9 pupils differed in how well they controlled the quality of the products, from just adequate to competent. Some understood how to produce a product with maximum appeal. However, some work by Years 7 and 8 is too simple, being just text and data entry.
130. Standards by age 16 are impressive. Partly this is because pupils make productive use of daily access to computers, encouraged by the school. Also the GCSE provision is carefully organised to meet the needs of both low- and high-attaining pupils. By Year 11 pupils are competent with a good range of applications. High-attaining pupils are fluent, skilful users who adapt the forms and styles of their work very well to specific targets. For a few pupils their GCSE work is close to national expectations. All in Year 11 have sufficient knowledge and understanding to work at GCSE level projects. ICT is not studied by Year 12. Subject teaching makes good use of ICT, for example to facilitate the completion of coursework and to enhance reference skills, particularly in English, science, geography, and design and technology. This regular use significantly enhances pupils' overall ICT capability. Pupils who joined the school in the last few months have very soon reached the standards of established pupils.
131. The situation now is much better than that reported in the previous inspection. Progress overall is now satisfactory, from unsatisfactory. Outcomes for all by age 16 are now impressive, having been basic and with ICT just an optional subject. Overall teaching and management are now much better. The key improvement is that the considerable investment by the school, in resources and accommodation, has secured very good access for all pupils in Years 7 to 11.

132. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Strengths to be found in all teaching are the expertise of the teachers in ICT, and the effective management of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The inconsistency in the teaching relates to planning. Sometimes the work planned does not ensure pupils make sufficient intellectual effort. They are asked to undertake simple tasks, or to cover work too slowly, so that they do not improve their understanding of how to use ICT for specific purposes. Some teaching is good or very good because it enables pupils to be confident and independent learners. This feature is especially strong for Year 11 and helps them make overall good progress, such as with their GCSE coursework. Overall strengths in learning are that pupils make gains in skills and understanding. They are willing, with suitable teaching, to make good or very good efforts to learn, and to work productively.
133. Other factors have a bearing on achievement, some positive and others needing some improvement. The provision of only two computers for Years 5 and 6 is restricting the extent of work covered. The provision of technician and learning support for Years 7 to 11 is an important benefit to achievement. There is no formal provision in ICT for post-16 students. The overall co-ordination of ICT is effective. However, because the role is ill defined, some of the usual aspects of co-ordination are overlooked. These are forward planning, oversight of ICT across the whole school, and monitoring to ensure consistency of teaching and learning. Assessment processes involve effective use of good individual education plans. The processes lack frequent reference to National Curriculum attainment targets. As a result some lesson planning leads to work pitched at too low a level so that achievement is not maximised. However, resources and accommodation are now good and are used so well that achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 benefits significantly.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Pupils make poor progress in the subject.

Strengths:

None observed, although by teaching the subject the school seeks to comply with pupils' statements and to cover the full range of the National Curriculum.

Areas for improvement:

- Pupils make insufficient progress and their progress over time is poor.
134. French is taught for one period each week to pupils in Years 7 to 10. Achievement is poor. The pupils are working at a very low level of the National Curriculum. The work often comprises written exercises and not conversational or oral French. Pupils make insufficient progress and progress over time is poor. Within individual lessons, pupils sometimes make sound progress but their levels of attainment are well below average.
135. Standards in modern languages have declined since the previous inspection. This is because the college now does not have a specialist language teacher. However, it is also important to note that the cohort of pupils at the time of the last inspection was of a different type of special needs and comparison of judgements, particularly regarding the learning of another language, cannot readily be made.
136. Year 8 pupils can show the correct number of fingers to add numbers to 10. They can complete a simple crossword, inserting the correct French word. They can carry out simple additions in French. Year 9 pupils can identify numbers up to 12. They can use such terms as 'ma soeur' and 'mon frère' to talk briefly about their family. They can remember some new words they have just learned such as 'cuisine' 'tarte' and 'oncle'.

137. The quality of teaching observed in the lessons was satisfactory in a number of respects. Teachers had good relationships with the pupils and kept them on task. All took part with enthusiasm but they were never really challenged or stretched. Teachers' own subject knowledge was limited but nevertheless the teachers worked enthusiastically with the pupils. Pupils maintained their interest and enjoyed what they did as a result but at a low level of attainment. Teachers used time productively and managed the pupils well. Lessons were usually well organised and the activities varied which assisted in keeping the pupils interested. Pupils showed they had acquired new vocabulary and they willingly attempted the pronunciation of words. Pupils appear to enjoy the lesson and work well together. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils and the latter remain on task and show interest.
138. However, although the teaching seen in the lessons had these positive features, teaching overall is poor, because teachers lack the conversational language skills and do not have sufficient depth of knowledge to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time. The teachers are acutely aware of their own shortcomings. Teachers deliver lessons strictly to the scheme and are ill-prepared to extend the learning because their subject knowledge is lacking.
139. There is a policy for modern languages and a basic scheme of work, but it is at a superficial level and does not give appropriate emphasis to oral work.
140. The school does attempt to comply with the pupils' statements of special need and to cover the full range of the National Curriculum by delivering a lesson of modern languages to all pupils in Years 7 to 10. There is no budget allocation and very limited resources.

MUSIC

There is very good provision for music.

Strengths:

the teacher's specialist subject knowledge

pupils' interest, attitudes, behaviour and relationships

the assessment of the pupils' work and the monitoring of pupils' performance

141. During the inspection music was taught by supply and cover teachers. No music lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. The effective methods used in teaching ensure that all the pupils have opportunities to improve their skills of listening, playing, turn taking, and expressing preferences and feelings. Pupils make good progress in music.
142. By Year 9, pupils study the 12 bar blues. They listen attentively to one of the earliest recordings of this style and are intrigued by a story of how it came to be so named. They quickly identify the musical structure and call out the changes to the teacher's playing. Higher attaining pupils can follow a short, simple melody and copy it themselves and then, using a keyboard, choose a voice and add chords to give their own performance to the class.
143. By Year 11, pupils play their preferred instrument. They quickly learn the sequences and tempo of the piece and begin to play in concert with keyboards. They show obvious gains in confidence and are delighted at their achievement at the end of the lesson, but are able to self-evaluate and realise that further improvement is possible.

144. Overall, the teaching of music is good. Of the five lessons observed three were good, one was very good and one was excellent. The teacher's very good preparation and planning ensures that pupils learn and practise musical skills systematically and pupils build on previous learning. The teacher's infectious energy and enthusiasm communicates itself to the pupils, with the result that a good amount of work is covered in lessons and they are inspired to work hard and respond to the range of musical experiences.
145. Learning is also good. Pupils maintain a high level of interest and concentration. They respond very well to these high expectations, showing good behaviour and attention. Pupils concentrate and give their full attention to the tasks set for extended periods of time. When pupils create musical pieces of their own they are encouraged to evaluate their performance and suggest possible alterations and improvements. Pupils' efforts are praised and questions are asked to extend learning. Clear assessment, including self-evaluation, is part of each session. The teacher makes very good use of time. Pupils respond appropriately to the teaching they receive and to the music they create and listen to, sometimes with spontaneous body movements and obvious pleasure and at other times with a reflective quietness, which shows considerable maturity.
146. The subject is well co-ordinated, including schemes of work with medium- and short-term goals. The employment of a specialist teacher ensures that the quality of subject knowledge is very high. Assessment is good, and it is used effectively to build on pupils' learning experiences. The resources for music are very good. There is a well-equipped, dedicated music room and pupils have the opportunity for individual instrumental instruction. There has been good improvement since the 1996 inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall pupils attain standards that are appropriate to their age when compared to national expectations.

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching and the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject.
- Pupils' attitudes towards each other which stem from their understanding what achieving one's personal best means.
- Pupils achieve well, make good progress and attain the national standards for their ages.

Areas for improvement:

- Aspects of the accommodation which limit the subject's contribution to the life of the school.

147. Pupils achieve well in physical education and make good progress. Overall pupils attain standards which are appropriate to their age when compared to national expectations. Many pupils are well co-ordinated and athletic. Other pupils who are less co-ordinated physically also make good progress. This is because there exists in the college a strong sense of striving to achieve one's personal best so that higher attaining pupils understand that some pupils find playing, for example, football more difficult and lower attaining pupils are therefore involved fully in the activities. Teams are adjusted without fuss or personal rejection to ensure a balance and lower attaining pupils are involved fully. Pupils are very mature socially in this aspect. This in turn stems from the attitudes of the teacher.

148. It was not possible to see younger pupils in a physical education lesson but by Year 9 pupils attain national average standards. They are able to demonstrate a knowledge of the strategies and tactics to be used in, for example, playing two onto one, running into space and 'laying the ball off' to a partner. Year 10 pupils can discuss the types of defence in basketball and in discussion suggest alternative ways of making an attack. Both age groups show, overall, average skills in ball control.

149. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject. They are very keen and work hard at developing their skills. They want to do well. Even though there were only two boys in one Year 11 lesson, they worked hard at developing their table tennis skills, because the teacher set up appropriate exercise to develop their skills and provided much encouragement to work at developing them. What started off as a rather low-key game of ‘ping-pong’ developed into a very positive learning session as they developed their co-ordination and incentive to develop their table tennis skills. Relationships are very good between pupils and the teacher and they clearly enjoy the subject.
150. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher encourages very good attitudes to sport and towards working as a team, as well as more fundamental attitudes relating to fair play. This was particularly demonstrated when the senior football team played another school. Despite extensive provocation and barracking by the opponents and spectators, individuals did not display any loss of temper or show their frustration but continued to try and play a three-touch passing game. Although the college team lost they displayed considerable maturity.
151. The teacher has very good knowledge of the pupils and he knows when to provide support and encouragement or spur others on to a greater challenge. He is sensitive to the additional special needs of some pupils. He establishes a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere but within that expects pupils to work hard and achieve well. As activities develop the teacher works hard at providing extensive coaching to improve skills. His high energy and enthusiasm for the subject rubs off on the pupils. He enjoys their developing skills and success and the contribution the subject makes to their sense of self-esteem. He uses technical vocabulary well so that pupils use correct terminology to describe a particular move. His whole manner fosters enjoyment in physical activities and compensates to a large degree for some of the difficulties caused by unsatisfactory or poor accommodation and physical resources.
152. The college has recognised the poor quality of the changing rooms and showers and is actively seeking a grant to rectify the situation. The college lacks a large indoor space and this limits some of the activities that it can and should provide within the National Curriculum. The college has sought to use accommodation within the community but as yet has not found suitable premises open at suitable times. Basketball is played on the outside tennis court but the basketball backboards are damaged and the basketball court is not marked out. Outdoor facilities otherwise for football, rugby, cricket and athletics are good. There are very attractive and extensive grounds.
153. The college has established a well-equipped fitness room and older pupils are trained in the room’s use. This allows some indoor activities to go ahead. The college has a swimming pool but the use is restricted to the latter part of the summer term. Because the main building is ‘listed’ as being of historical importance there are a restrictions which mean that the College cannot cover the pool which makes it impossible to heat the pool efficiently.
154. Outdoor adventurous activities take place within the holidays and residential pupils play some games in the evening. Nevertheless, the potential of the subject to contribute further to the cultural life of the school is currently restricted.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The provision for religious education and personal, social and health education is satisfactory.

Strengths:

Ideas are discussed in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and act as good role models for pupils.

Areas for improvement:

Lack of specialist teaching.

Schemes of work and coverage of citizenship within the personal, social and health education programme.

155. Overall, the provision for religious education and personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the subject. The subjects are combined and their strength lies in the pupils' interest, attitudes, behaviour and relationships, which enable knowledge and ideas to be thoroughly discussed in a respectful and thoughtful way. The weaknesses are the loss of specialist teaching for RE since the last inspection and the limited time devoted to the subjects. Neither subject is timetabled for post-16 students.
156. By Year 6, pupils are able to compose simple prayers to remember those near and dear to them. By Year 9, pupils have studied the life of Moses and can recall many salient features of it. For example, they know that he was placed in a basket in the River Nile and they can describe several of the plagues, including the painting of the doors of houses so that the Israelite children should be spared. They learn about the Ten Commandments and discuss their relevance for today. They know the story of the Good Samaritan. They understand the difference between legal and illegal drugs. They discuss the need for laws and show considerable understanding of their own difficulties. They show a depth of understanding as they discuss the differences between hitting a child and a dog and compare punishments. By Year 11, pupils have a good awareness of the many actions that would aid a person who had just suffered an accident, though they did not discriminate between them in order to prioritise or ensure the safety of the first-aider.
157. During the inspection period one discrete religious education lesson and six personal, social and health education lessons were observed. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Of the seven lessons observed six were satisfactory and one was good. This is weaker than at the last inspection when a subject specialist taught the religious education. Lessons are characterised by high expectations of behaviour and participation. Questioning is used well, though sometimes pupils are not given the opportunity to expand fully on their views or understanding. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and effectively plan with a genuine understanding of the individual needs of the pupils, though they too seldom allow time for review of what has been achieved. Members of staff are good role models for pupils.
158. Pupils' learning is satisfactory. Their attitudes are generally good and they respond well to the challenges that the discussion and short tasks set. They show keen interest in lessons and are happy to take part in discussion. There is a climate of trust and respect between pupils themselves and with staff.
159. The schemes of work reflect the college's aims well, but both are now somewhat dated. The personal, social and health education scheme of work does not yet include the new elements of citizenship. Religious education and personal, social and health education are satisfactorily co-ordinated, and the religious education content is based around the locally Agreed Syllabus. There is an appropriate range of artefacts and video material. These subjects make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.