

INSPECTION REPORT

ELLESMERE COLLEGE

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 130371

Principal: Ms Fiona Moir

Reporting inspector: Sarah J Mascal
20536

Dates of inspection: 25th –28th June 2002

Inspection number: 198873

Short 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:	Community special
Age range of students:	11 to 19
Gender of students:	Mixed

School address:	Ellesmere Road Leicester.
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Postcode:	LE3 1BE
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Telephone number:	0116 289 4242
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Fax number:	0116 289 4121
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
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Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Knights
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Date of previous inspection:	December 1997
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Ellesmere College is a college for boys and girls aged between 11 and 19 with moderate learning difficulties. There are currently 249 students on roll, including 50 6th Form students. The college remains similar in size to the time of the last inspection. All students have statements of special educational need. The special needs of the students have changed since the last inspection and there are now a greater number with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are slightly more boys than girls. Nearly all students come from the Leicester City and Leicestershire area. 65 students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. In addition to English, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu (Kutchi) and Bengali are spoken at home. A small number of students are of black Caribbean and European backgrounds. Over half the college's population is now eligible for free college meals; this is more than at the time of the last inspection and is higher than similar schools. The college is in an Education Action Zone and is involved in the Excellence in Cities Initiative. It has been awarded the Career Mark, School Achievement Award and Investors in People. It is at present working towards the Healthy school's award.

(In line with the college's own practice all those in Years 7 to 11 and 6th Form will be referred to as students).

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

Ellesmere is a very good college with a number of excellent features. Through the inspirational leadership of the Principal and the excellent support of her senior managers, staff are continually working towards improving what they do. Teaching is very good and as a result students make very good progress. The college provides very good value for money.

What the college does well

- Students make very good progress because of very good teaching.
- Leadership and management are excellent. The college is continually reviewing what it does in order to provide the best it can for students.
- The very good range of experiences provided for students prepares them well for when they leave college.
- Students are well supported in managing their behaviour.
- The college works very effectively with parents to ensure that they are fully involved in their children's education.

There are no significant areas for improvement.

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in December 1997 and has made very good improvement since that time. There were a number of areas for improvement including raising achievement in reading and writing, students' subject knowledge and their competence in information and communication technology (ICT). All these areas have been successfully dealt with. Teaching and achievement have improved and the college has actively worked to improve all aspects of its work, taking on initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 strategy and a research project to develop students' learning skills.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Students achieve very well and make very good progress. They gain qualifications from Year 9 onwards when a number of Year 9 students gain the AEB in literacy. In years 10 and 11, students achieve Certificate of Educational Achievement awards, Assessment and Qualification Alliance Unit awards (AQA) and Asdan Youth Awards. In English all students make very good progress in speaking and listening and good progress in writing. In Years 7 to 9 progress is very good in reading and mathematics because students have benefited from the literacy and numeracy strategies and the effective promotion of these areas across the curriculum. For students in Years 10, 11 and 6th Form students' progress in reading and mathematics is good. Achievement in science is good. In practical and creative subjects including art, design and technology, physical education, music and drama progress is very good. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is good because students are given a range of experiences throughout the curriculum. Year 7 students make very good progress in specific ICT lessons. In personal, social and health education students achieve very well. In all other subjects progress is good. The college has set itself challenging but realistic targets for students to improve and has achieved these well.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Very good. Nearly all students enjoy college, work very hard in lessons and take real pleasure in their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of students behave very well both in and out of college. They are mature and clearly understand what is acceptable behaviour. The small minority of students with behavioural difficulties respond well to the college's approaches in helping them improve their behaviour and most behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students enjoy the many opportunities to take on responsibilities and do so very sensibly. They get on well together and support each other very well.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. For the vast majority of students attendance is good. However there is a small number of students who regularly do not attend college and this has a negative impact on attendance overall. Punctuality to college varies but is satisfactory overall. Students arrive on time to lessons.

There is a very high level of temporary exclusions but many of these are for no longer than a day. The college has used this sanction as a method for improving students' behaviour and it has been effective for a number of students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very 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 and learning are very good. The teaching of English and literacy is very good for students in Years 7 to 9 and good and occasionally very good for older students. It is the same for the teaching of mathematics and numeracy. Teaching is good for science. In practical and creative subjects including art, design and technology, physical education, music and drama teaching is very good. Teachers have developed good skills in information and communication technology that ensure students make good progress. Teaching in ICT is very good when it is taught by the subject specialist in specific ICT lessons. Throughout the college students' skills in personal, social and health education are taught very well. In all other subjects teaching is good. The college has adopted the national strategy for students in Years 7 to 9 and, as a result, lessons are effective. Planning is very good and this ensures that lessons are interesting and students work hard. They are told at the start of lessons what they are expected to learn and teachers discuss what has been achieved at the end. There is good teamwork between teachers and support staff; support staff contribute well to students' learning. Students are given homework when teachers feel it is required and they have opportunities through the homework packs to extend their learning at home.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Students are given a very effective range of experiences, which prepare them well for the world of work. Extra curricular activities, including residential opportunities both in England and abroad, are very good and extend students' experiences further.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. Support for these students is managed very well and there are good links with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant (EMAG) service. This enables these students to play a full part in lessons and develop their communication skills.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The college successfully promotes all areas of students' personal development and ensures that these areas are well planned throughout the curriculum. The diversity of cultures represented by staff contributes well to students' knowledge and experiences.
How well the college cares for its students	Very good. The college is a very caring community. There are very good systems in place to support and guide students. Relationships with students are very good and this has a positive effect on students' behaviour. Procedures for assessing how well students are doing are good.

There are considerable opportunities within the curriculum for students to develop their personal and social skills. The use of the residential unit, Hill View, is excellent in enabling students to learn to look after themselves and to share with others.

The college has built up very good links with parents. Parents are very positive about the college and the progress their children are making.

Students have excellent opportunities for careers education and work experience. Links with other schools and colleges are very effective. They provide students with opportunities to attend mainstream colleges and also for a small number of mainstream students to attend lessons in Ellesmere. The community is used very well to enhance students' education and experiences.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The Principal leads the college very well and is very clear about the direction for the college. She is extremely well supported by her senior managers and all staff. They carry out their roles and responsibilities very effectively.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very aware of what goes on in college and the strengths and areas for improvement. They have very good plans for developing even closer links with staff.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The college is continually reviewing its plans and evaluating its work. It has a comprehensive improvement plan that is well thought through and which when implemented will improve the college further.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. It has worked hard to manage its funding and the previously large underspend is being spent effectively in line with the college's improvement plan. Staffing and learning resources are very good and are used well. The budget is very well planned and controlled by the college manager.

Staffing appointments have been managed carefully to ensure that there is a wide range of expertise available. There are very good training opportunities for staff. Accommodation is very good and the college makes good use of local sports' facilities to make up for the lack of outdoor areas for physical education. There is an excellent library and a very good range of information and communication technology equipment. Governors and the senior managers have a very good understanding of the principles of best value and ensure that this is achieved in all aspects of the college's work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The close contact they have with staff ▪ The progress their child is making ▪ The good teaching ▪ The improvement their child is making in social skills ▪ Their child's increased confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their child does not have sufficient homework

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The inspection team feels that provision for homework is satisfactory because there are a number of packs that students can take home to support their work in college.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE COLLEGE DOES WELL

Students make very good progress because of very good teaching.

1. There has been a considerable focus on improving students' learning through developing effective teaching strategies. This has been very successful and there have been improvements in students' achievement and the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
2. The college has wholeheartedly adopted the Key Stage 3 national strategy for improving teaching and all teachers have had training in this area. This has resulted in conformity and consistency in lessons, which students understand. Teachers introduce a lesson and make it clear what students will be learning; there is a range of activities including group and individual work before the class is brought back together to recap on what they have done and assess what they have learnt. This pattern was seen in a very well structured lesson in which Year 7 students devised a story around the willow pattern plates. They worked independently or in pairs to prepare an imaginative tale. At the end of the lesson they talked about what they had done and read their stories to each other. In an art lesson the teacher made clear what he wanted the class to do and what they would learn during the lesson. His enthusiastic approach motivated the students and kept them on task for the whole time. As a result by the end of the lesson students developed an understanding of what happens when primary colours are mixed.
3. A strength of lessons is the planning that goes into them. Lessons are on average 1 hour 20 minutes long and yet all the time is used effectively; on occasions students are working so hard they do not realise how quickly time has passed. Teachers ensure that the range of activities is planned to meet all students' needs well. They do this through providing strategies that ensure all students will be able to use, for example, the worksheets they are given. In humanities and religious education lessons students are given a selection of worksheets and they choose which ones they will do. Teachers work well with other staff ensuring they know with whom they should work and what they should be doing. In a very good Year 8 English lesson, students for whom English was an additional language were supported effectively as were the lower attaining students and all achieved very well as a result. In a Year 7 English lesson, planning ensured that lower attaining students who would struggle to write a story were able to record on tape their ideas and responses to a picture.
4. Teachers use questioning exceptionally well to encourage students to develop their ideas and recall work from previous lessons. In an excellent Year 8 history lesson and also in a very good Year 9 religious education lesson the teacher has a wide range of skills to draw out students' knowledge. Her style of questioning includes starting a sentence and letting the students finish it. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson work from the previous lesson is revised very well through effective questioning encouraging the students to recall what they have learnt. Praise is used well in all these sessions so

that even if a student gets the answer wrong he/she is able to try again and suffer no loss of confidence.

5. Teachers challenge students as much as possible. For example, when Year 9 students watched a video they were asked to consider why the director had chosen the character to stand in a particular way or why he had used a certain type of music in the background. There is a clear focus on encouraging students to question what they see and not to accept the obvious. Equally a teacher will make intentional spelling mistakes so that, for example, Jonah is misspelt and rhymed with words such as moaner and groaner. As a result the Year 9 students realise that this reflects Jonah's character and try to think of other words to describe him.
6. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and this enables them to challenge and develop students' skills. This is very evident in art where students' work is reaching national expectations. For some the very high quality of teaching has enabled them to join a mainstream group in order to take GCSE. Students are able to produce large-scale portraits of famous people and other students and have developed skills in printing and designing. They use a range of media including paint, collage and felt work to extend their ideas. Their work is celebrated around the college in very effective displays. In design and technology Year 10 students used their acquired skills to make a meal. They chose the recipe of a fish pasta dish. Through the very secure knowledge of the teacher students were encouraged to follow the recipe and make sensible choices. By the end they produce a delicious meal. Teachers' confidence was reflected in another Year 10 design and technology lesson where the students were asked what they wanted to design and make next term. The teacher effectively encourages students to think through their ideas and how they will work. There is very good attention to detail and experience so that techniques such as spot-welding are demonstrated in such a way that by the end of the lesson nearly all students can spot weld. In physical education teachers improve students' skills by showing them what they want them to do. For example a teacher shows Year 10 students how to jump hurdles and then evaluates his own performance pointing out where he could improve. This encourages students to look critically at their own skills and they return from each run wanting to do better and able to say what they could do to improve. The very good expertise and role modelling by physical education staff provides a good example to students and engenders, in most of them, an enjoyment and interest in sport.
7. ICT is only taught in specific ICT lessons for Year 7. For all other students they learn their skills through other subjects. They all make good progress because teachers are so adept in using ICT. This is very evident in all subjects. Teachers use white boards well and computers are seen by all staff as a learning tool. Students are sent off to do research and find out information; they design and use spreadsheets and record their work. In music particularly, very good use of ICT is made. Students understand the software to compose music and can select and modify sound patterns through this technology. Students make very good progress in specific ICT lessons because the co-ordinator is very confident in his subject knowledge. In English older students use a commercial programme to support their work on Shakespeare. They download the pictures and are able to put their own subtitles underneath. The college has rightly recognised that students could make even better progress if ICT were taught as a separate subject throughout the college and plans are in place to do this.

Leadership and management are excellent. The college is continually reviewing what it does in order to provide the best it can for students.

8. The Principal is an inspirational leader and staff appreciate her vision, energy and commitment to the college. The working relationship between her and the vice principal is very effective and they complement each other to very good effect. The newly formed senior management team underpins and supports their work well and there is a strong sense of collaborative teamwork and enthusiasm that ensures things get done. Subject managers are continually looking at the work of their departments and striving to improve what they provide for students.
9. For some time the college has been developing ways of considering how to assess the effectiveness of what it does in order to improve. There is considerable commitment on the part of the Principal, Vice Principal and staff to continually check the work they are doing and to look at how they can improve. Because of this the college sets itself very high standards and there is a clear expectation that things can always be improved. All are involved in the process, including students in the college council. As a result the college is very aware of where its strengths lie and where it feels it can do better. It is impressive how aware the senior managers and subject co-ordinators are of what needs to be improved. Where they do identify areas for improvement, for example in the management of English, they work very closely with the staff involved and provide a considerable amount of support. There is a clear, open dialogue and a great deal of time put in to try and improve and develop this aspect.
10. All areas of the college have developed methods of self-evaluation. For example a review of the structure of the senior management team eighteen months ago showed that there was a need to develop staff professionally and that the existing senior management team lacked a whole college overview. As a result three teachers were promoted to the posts of assistant principals with very specific areas of responsibility which encompass the whole college. Their responsibilities cover student support, professional development and inclusion and special educational needs. This has led to a more effective management team and a better overview of what is happening in college. It has also enabled the Principal and Vice Principal to share their tasks and enable them to take a higher profile in and out of college.
11. Staff benefit from the Vice Principal's knowledge and enthusiasm for self-evaluation. He has worked extremely hard and sends out a range of information that keeps staff up-to-date and provides opportunities for them to look at what they do. The work he and staff have done in this area has been recognised nationally and they have met the requirements for Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement (OCEA) Standard 2, 3 and 4.
12. College improvement planning has clearly benefited from the self-evaluation process. Staff meet regularly to review the improvement plan and in order to ensure that there is no slippage, the college has established what it refers to as "quality assurance" timescales. These establish when each area on the college improvement plan is going to be reviewed over the year. As a result the college has a very clear picture of where it is in terms of the plan and what is left to do.
13. In order to review and compare how their students are doing the college has recently started assessing students through "Pivats" (performance levels produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for assessing the achievements of students). As with everything the college does time was taken in deciding which recording system would meet the needs of the students they have. They now have two years data on students' achievements and have a clear picture of how students are doing over time. For example, students in Year 8 are making bigger gains in their learning than those in Year 10. An analysis of the results suggests that the younger students will have benefited from the literacy and numeracy strategies in the primary schools and the

work at Ellesmere is supporting these strategies. The Year 10 students have not had the same level of exposure to the strategies when they were younger but are benefiting from the education they are being given now.

14. One of the biggest impacts of self-evaluation has been on the way teachers consider their work. There are opportunities for all teachers to observe others' lessons; staff can nominate whose lessons they want to see. The impact of this has been in the way teachers assess their lessons. During the inspection every teacher observed gave a very clear account of how their own lesson went and how they could have improved it. In nearly all cases their comments exactly reflected those recorded by the inspector during the lesson. Teachers use this information to improve their practice and are now taking the process a step further by assessing the impact of their teaching on learning.
15. Governors too have become more evaluative in the way they carry out their roles. For example they have reviewed the structure of the governing body and set up two committees, which cover all areas. They are extremely well led by the Chair of Governors and it was impressive on meeting the governors how aware they are of what goes on in college. There has been much thought and consideration given to the membership of the governing body. There was a conscious decision to be selective and the college now has a governing body that reflects, and is representative of, the cohort of students and the diverse cultural areas they come from.
16. Students themselves are very involved in reflecting on the work they have done. For example, a scrutiny of their work shows that at the end of projects they assess how they feel they have done and what they have learnt. In a very good English lesson for Year 10, students were able to watch a video of drama work they had completed on desert island survival. They were very critical of their work but made constructive suggestions. For example "It doesn't look as if that is heavy by the way you are carrying it". The teacher ensures that there are opportunities for students to compare their first and second performances and they are able to identify even more areas they can improve; comments such as "we couldn't hear that" and "the camera is shaking" were made. Students are willing to listen to each other and are not intimidated by suggestions for improvements.

The very good range of experiences provided for students prepares them well for when they leave college.

17. From the moment students start at Ellesmere staff work with them to develop their social and independence skills. Parents were unanimous in their positive views about how their children's confidence and social skills had improved since starting at the college.
18. There are expectations that students will take on responsibilities. Initially these are quite light such as taking the register and making decisions about what they will have for lunch. However, as they grow older these are extended. For example, there are expectations that, by the time they leave college, the majority of students will be able to travel independently to Ellesmere. A lot of work goes into this by staff who organise bus pass practice and there is funding to allow for a three-week focus in developing students' skills. Students are also encouraged to take control of their learning. The college is involved with the University of the First Age (a project established in Birmingham) which provides students and staff with ways of understanding how to improve their learning. For example, students talked about the fact that the brain needs fluids to work and it is important to drink water to improve thinking skills. This is reflected in practice; in many lessons students can get a drink if they feel they need one.
19. There is a rolling programme for students to stay at least once a year at Hill View, which is a nearby residential facility managed by the college. Students gradually extend

their stay starting with one night in Year 7 and by year 11 and 6th Form staying most of an allocated week. During their time there they plan their meals, shop and cook for each other. They also learn about personal hygiene, cleaning and how to live and share with other people. Time is well structured and staff plan a very good range of activities. The facility is very well co-ordinated and very well organised. Staff are very committed to this and form tutors stay with their tutor groups. Students show real pride in the house and are keen to show visitors around as well as talk about all that goes on. For example there was great enthusiasm on the part of a group of students spending one night there during the inspection and a lot of thought had gone into what they were taking. One Year 8 student complained that it was unfair that they could not stay even longer at Hill View as it was a long time before she would be in Year 10. The college ensures that students also have a very good range of residential experiences. For example an Outward Bound expedition to the Lake District and a visit to North Wales. Opportunities to visit abroad also enable students to develop their knowledge of the different cultures in France and Spain.

20. Personal, social and health education lessons contribute greatly to students' personal and social development. They are well planned and ensure that students develop their skills well. They look at a range of aspects, including health education. Year 9 students show maturity when watching a video about how babies are made. They respond to questions and have a good knowledge of the vocabulary, recalling words such as "genes" and recognise some of the myths and legends about growing up. For example, a student puts "false" to the statement "All men have hairy chests". There are formal lessons for all students on a weekly basis and every Monday morning each tutor group meets for the first lesson and they cover a planned range of activities linked to current events and social skills. These are adapted where relevant, for example, when the Queen Mother died, tutors spent time talking about this and what would happen as a result. Students are given opportunities to talk about events at the weekend that they want to share with each other. There are additional social skills lessons for students who have been assessed as needing extra support. The students are withdrawn from classes to attend tutorials aimed at developing specific skills such as answering the telephone and joining in conversations.
21. There is a huge variety of clubs available for students, which enable them to learn to play games and work together in a social setting. Activities range from reading, playing games such as Connexions, Lego, music, choir, five-a-side football and glass painting. Students are given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and can attend a maths club or improve their literacy and numeracy using Success Maker (a computerised learning programme).
22. The careers programme and opportunities for work experience are very good at preparing students well for the world of work. There are excellent links with the careers service and students undertake a very comprehensive careers education course from year 9 onwards. There is a wide range of visits for all, which gives students a better understanding of different types of jobs. By Year 11 students are well prepared for work experience and their records show that they do well in their respective work situations. They have also experienced life at college and attend college courses on a regular basis. 6th Form students have a three-week work experience. They attend a World of Work conference and have regular days at college. The excellent links with the careers service have resulted in the link careers advisor for 6th Form students leading lessons in Years 12 and 13. Students have regular careers interviews and the college prepares a careers information booklet for parents. One of the many strengths of the college is the support it provides for students who are less independent. For example there is a transition course for those who are not ready to attend college. Students are able to link into the college's options part time. An extensive careers library supports students further in finding out about careers; staff and students have produced a number of

pamphlets and booklets that are more accessible and relevant to students. The college's work is of such high quality in this area that it has achieved the "Career Mark" for its work over the past five years.

23. 6th Form and Year 11 students have a very good range of options in which the emphasis is on students' personal development through courses such as "out and about". Every effort is made to ensure that what they do is age appropriate and extends their skills further. Hence for residential activities the oldest students whilst at Hill View will arrange and book to go out for a meal. They are encouraged to use public transport and find their way around town. A focus on sport helps to prepare them to organise and think about making best use of their leisure time.
24. The progress students make is reflected in their approach to "Focus week" when Year 11 students participated in team building activities. The week is run by an outside group and reflects how well the college uses the community. The adults involved are training to lead management training courses and this Focus week provides them with the opportunity to work with a range of young people and improve their skills in communication. Students entered into the activities with enthusiasm and were able to participate in tasks such as moving a nuclear bomb (in reality an egg!) using string and an elastic band. With only a limited amount of support they were able to resolve the problems and move the "bomb". Their challenges involved a range of activities that varied from entertaining the residents of a care home to constructing and decorating compost bins. Every effort is made to involve the community and students benefit from links with local shops and businesses.
25. The college is committed to being inclusive and works hard to ensure that through all its work it ensures that students have a range of opportunities, social and academic, both in Ellesmere and elsewhere. Social and academic skills are developed through very good links with local schools both mainstream and special. Students attend mainstream schools to support their learning. For example last year a student did GCSE art at a local secondary school. Equally mainstream students attend Ellesmere and also accompany students on the residential trips supporting younger students, such as when camping.
26. Students develop their confidence because of the range of opportunities they are given and because they feel valued and respected. All staff treat students well, listening to their ideas and giving them scope to present their own thoughts and points of view. The range of experiences available to them extends their confidence further and as a result they know they can succeed. By the time students leave college they are mature, sensible young adults who are well prepared for life out of college.

Students are well supported in managing their behaviour.

27. Overall the behaviour of the vast majority of students is good and often very good. Since the last inspection the number of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties has increased considerably. In order to ensure that these students are able to develop strategies to control their behaviour and be positive about learning the college has introduced a number of methods, which are effective. On occasions the college receives students who have extreme challenging behaviour and it has reluctantly had to arrange for these to be placed in more appropriate provision. However, for the majority of students the systems in place work well, although, the college is constantly reviewing them and trying to improve.
28. All staff have been trained in Team Teach (*an approach in working with pupils with difficult and disturbed behaviour*) and this has enabled them to have an understanding of how to manage aggressive behaviour. There is a sense of calm around the college

and staff know their students well. Often they will see a situation building up and diffuse it before it starts. For example in a Year 9 PSHE lesson a student wanted to sit next to another and the teacher checked that he knew he had to behave before agreeing to him moving. Because the student was aware of the teacher's expectations he behaved and worked well throughout. Staff build very good relationships with students and this together with the good use of humour, results in students working hard.

29. The tutor system supports these good relationships and the college has also introduced a "staff friend" so that students can go to someone for support. The college provides an external counsellor who is available to all students and students are aware that they can seek help and guidance whenever necessary. The reward system is very effective for the majority of students but teachers have recognised that for a few the weekly reward is too far off and have introduced a system at the end of lessons. All staff use praise well and much is done to boost students' self-esteem. Students are keen to gain recognition when they have done well and this all contributes to students improving their behaviour.
30. The college has developed very good systems for checking and recording students' behaviour. Data is published each week that show how those students, whose behaviour has been of concern, have responded. Analysis of this information has enabled staff to recognise which times of the day are flash points for each individual and when there are quieter times. This information is often shared with students and targets set for them to try and improve. Teachers are well supported in lessons with an on-call system that enables them to bring in another teacher who will help calm the situation and if necessary remove a student experiencing problems.
31. In order to consider ways of improving how they operate, a behaviour working party has been established and this, together with the termly leadership group meetings, is used to feed back on the college's systems and how they are working. Staff also have opportunities to discuss any concerns during meetings and with senior staff. The daily report sheets are checked and the college has recently introduced a system by which Year 11 students mentor younger ones. This is a fairly new system and its impact is not yet clear. However it is seen as having a two fold benefit in that older students, some of whom have had challenging behaviour, are given additional responsibilities, whilst the younger students have someone who is not an adult to go to for help and advice.
32. During the week of the inspection there were very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour observed. There is very good supervision and the changeover of lessons and break and lunch times are orderly. Where there is the odd incident of difficult or inappropriate behaviour it is handled well, with little fuss. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson one student was removed from the lesson as he refused to work. He left with another member of staff and the other students got on with their work as if nothing had happened. Students often show very good control and resilience. For example in a Year 9 maths lesson taken by a supply teacher the work was unchallenging, not well explained and not very interesting but students although somewhat disgruntled did, with the support of the support assistant, co-operate and stay in the class.
33. There are appropriate plans in place to provide a more work related curriculum for those students who cannot cope with the structure of the college day. The college has applied for a grant to support this work and enable disaffected students to have an increased range of work related experience and college visits. Discussions are also appropriately being held with the LEA in looking at the admissions criteria of students

whose needs are not primarily moderate learning difficulties. It is hoped too that this will encourage the small number of older students whose attendance is unsatisfactory to attend college more regularly.

34. The college has consciously used fixed term exclusions as a method of encouraging students to behave. Staff have been very aware that these are high but have felt that it has been appropriate. As a short sharp reminder it has been effective and this method, together with all the other systems in place, has resulted in behaviour improving for the majority of students. The college now feels confident enough to change its approach and has very recently started using internal exclusions by which students still attend college but are kept out of class. Ellesmere is recognised locally for its good work with difficult students and staff now provide in service training to other schools.

The college works very effectively with parents to ensure they are fully involved in their children's education.

35. Parents' views of the college are very positive and a lot of this is the direct result of the importance the college places on its links with parents.
36. The college has worked hard to ensure that information sent out is helpful and easily accessible to all parents. Where there is a need this is translated into different languages so that all parents know what is going on in college. The college prospectus is a very good example. All the relevant information is included and very well presented with many photographs of the students at work. The same can be said for the governors' report to parents, which is succinct and provides relevant details including, for example, giving the information about finances in a pictorial form as well as written. Reports to parents are very good, giving details of what the students have studied during the year and the progress they have made. Parents appreciate meetings with staff and most attend their child's annual review. The college funds a bi-lingual manager who provides very good support for those who need it and all parents are involved with their children in setting them targets for improvement.
37. A great deal of time is spent ensuring that parents are kept informed of any concerns about their child and parents are confident to contact the college about any matter that is worrying them. Parents commented that telephone calls are always returned very quickly if they need to speak to a specific member of staff. This was evident during the inspection when a student's carer contacted the college in the morning about concerns and the tutor 'phoned back during the day to let them know how the student was. Where there have been behaviour problems parents are invited to support meetings and, for those excluded, the "re-entry" meetings; parents are positively involved in solving difficulties. There are training classes for parents, for example, in numeracy and literacy and the college provides a great deal of support to parents such as in completing forms.
38. Parents are very welcome into the college. they have opportunities to shadow their child in lessons. This gives them insight into the college day and often helps to allay any concerns they may have especially when their child first starts college. Parents are very appreciative of the support they get from teachers and the understanding they have of their child's needs. One parent recalled how a teacher had phoned him late one evening because she would not be in the next day and as his child was autistic it would help to let the child know before he/she went into college that there would be a different teacher in class.

39. Parents very much recognise what the college has done for them and their children. As one parent commented “We are lucky to have our children here”.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no significant areas for improvement. However, the Principal, staff and governors should consider further ways of improving attendance of the small number of students whose attendance is unsatisfactory.

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	15	4			
Percentage	3	39	45	12			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage point[s].

Information about the college's students

Students on the college's roll	No of students
Number of students on the college's roll	249
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free college meals	126

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	62

Pupil mobility in the last college year	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
%	%

College data	88.76
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College data	2.84
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9) (2001)

No students were entered for tests in English or mathematics.

12 students were entered for science and 7 obtained level 3 and 5 obtained level 4

ASDAN – award scheme development and accreditation

Year 11

Number of students entered	40
% of students obtaining all qualifications or units for which they are entered	72.5%

Further Education Unit (6th Form students)

Number of students entered	11
% of students obtaining all qualifications or units for which they are entered	27.5%

AEB Literacy

Level 1 achievements	11 students
Level 2 achievements	18 students
Level 3 achievements	1 student

Achievements tests in literacy

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	44
Pakistani	17
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	
White	184
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian	1	
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	62	2
Other minority ethnic groups	10	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	33.6
Number of students per qualified teacher	7.4
Average class size	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	740

Financial information

Financial year	01 - 02
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	£
Total income	2010205
Total expenditure	2013560
Expenditure per pupil	8087
Balance brought forward from previous year	139000
Balance carried forward to next year	135645*

* the college has actively worked to reduce surplus funding and there are clear plans within the improvement plan to reduce this amount still further

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	5.6
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	6.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	249
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	32	3	3	5
My child is making good progress in school.	40	46	8	5	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	42	9	4	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	27	28	15	12
The teaching is good.	56	32	4	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	26	9	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	35	8	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	35	13	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	59	29	1	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	31	8	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	27	5	1	12