

INSPECTION REPORT

GROBY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Groby, Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120270

Headteacher: Ms C Wilkins

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Thompson
15640

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 221168

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of college: Comprehensive

College category: Community

Age range of students: 14 – 19 years

Gender of students: Mixed

College address: Ratby Road
Groby

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Prattley

Date of previous inspection: February 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15640	Mr DJ Thompson	Registered inspector		What sort of college is it? How high are standards? The college's results and students' achievements How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to students? How well is the college led and managed? What should the college do to improve further?
19436	Mr M O'Malley	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the college care for its students? How well does the college work in partnership with parents?
11830	Mr J Banks	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19957	Mr L P Blaylock	Team inspector	Religious education	
20156	Ms J Curle	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	
12973	Mr G Dickens	Team inspector	English	
10170	Mr A B Drane	Team inspector	English Theatre studies	
01839	Mr M N Edwards	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19858	Mr J W Follett	Team inspector	Physical education	How well are students taught?
10327	Mr PA Garnham	Team inspector	Science	
05028	Mrs MA Jones	Team inspector	History	
29510	Mr N Mayfield	Team inspector	Music Performing arts	
08119	Mr D Milham	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12968	Mr J Parker	Team inspector	Design and technology	

20533	Mr D Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design	
12957	Mr JW Stout	Team inspector	Geography	
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15595	Ms J Felce	Team inspector	Business education Travel and tourism	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Groby Community College is a mixed comprehensive college for students aged 14 to 19. It has 869 students of which 258 are in the sixth form. The college is of average size but numbers in Years 12 and 13 are larger than average. There are more boys than girls, especially in the sixth form. Students are predominantly of white British heritage but 22 have English as an additional language. The college largely serves an area of relatively high social advantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Standards of attainment on entry to the college are above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs (SEN) is below the national average. Of these, the proportion with statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The college has applied to become a specialist language college.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

Groby Community College is an improving college. The college is led well and effective strategies have been introduced to raise standards. These have resulted in better teaching and improved examination results. Funding is prudently managed and the college gives satisfactory value for money. Increasingly ambitious targets have been set for the future and the college has a good capacity to achieve these.

What the college does well

- The college is led well; effective strategies are being used to improve achievement.
- High standards are being achieved in GCSE examinations and students are making good progress in the sixth form.
- A wide range of courses is offered in Years 12 and 13.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good in Years 12 and 13.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop their interests beyond lessons, especially in the performing arts.
- Assessment is used well to support students' academic performance.
- Relationships between students and teachers are positive and enable students to become mature, independent learners.
- There are close links with partner institutions which promote students' learning well.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in integrated humanities are too low.
- Provision for religious education and a daily act of worship do not meet statutory requirements.
- Students have insufficient access to computers to improve their learning in many subjects.
- Gifted and talented students make too little progress in some subjects.

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

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in February 2000, when it was categorised as underachieving. This is no longer the case. The leadership team have introduced carefully considered strategies for raising achievement since the last inspection and these have been successful. The quality of teaching, behaviour management and assessment practices have all improved. Standards in GCSE and Sixth form examinations have risen. Students are making better progress in lessons. However, statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education are still not met and the college's accommodation remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	D
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	C	B

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

At age 16 examination results in 2001 were above average, overall. The proportion of students obtaining five or more A* - C grades at GCSE was well above the national average but standards at GCSE were below average when compared with schools* taking students from similar backgrounds. Boys attained better results than girls. Good results were obtained in English, English literature, mathematics, science, history, theatre studies and music. In lessons standards are above those seen nationally. At age 18, results in A, AS or vocational examinations were above the national average in 2001. Girls attained higher standards than boys, as they do nationally. Good results were obtained in biology, design and technology, mathematics, general studies, business studies, chemistry, geography and sports studies. In lessons the performance of students is above average. The college sets performance targets annually for examination results. These have had a strong element of challenge and have been met in 2001. Students make sound progress in Years 10 and 11. They make good progress in Years 12 and 13. Students with special educational needs make sound progress.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Good. The majority of students are motivated and keen to learn. They work hard and concentrate well in lessons. Many students take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, music, and drama.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of students behave well in and out of class. They are trustworthy and courteous. However, a significant minority easily get distracted and behave badly. They disrupt the learning of others in some classes.
Personal development and relationships	Students' personal development is good. The majority are considerate and sensible. They respond well to the opportunities to take initiative and responsibility outside class and accept responsibility for their own learning. Relationships throughout the college are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance last year (90.4%) was below the national average (90.9%), but attendance during the autumn term of this year improved to 92%. There is some lateness to registration, but lessons start promptly.

* similar schools are those taking broadly the same proportion of students that receive free school meals
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. More than nine out of ten lessons are at least satisfactory. In over half of all lessons teaching is good or better. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching occurs mostly in integrated humanities, including religious education, where quality has deteriorated. The overall picture across all other subjects is of significant improvement since the last inspection.

Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is consistently good in English, mathematics and science. Almost all subjects are taught by teachers who are specialists in their area and have good subject knowledge, which they use well to develop students' understanding. This is a particular strength in English, mathematics, physical education and French. Teachers plan lessons well in English, mathematics, science, art, music, physical education, French and German. In these subjects, teaching activities are matched well to clear objectives and examination syllabuses. Teachers have high expectations of students, except in geography and integrated humanities where too many low-level tasks are set. Most teachers are enthusiastic and create good relationships with their students. This is very effective in dance where students respond positively to being treated in a mature way. There is effective marking of work in English and history, but it varies across teachers in other subjects and there are too few comments to help students improve in physical education and integrated humanities. Homework is sometimes too easy for more able students.

Teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory. Numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics but insufficiently in other subjects. There is too little teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) skills across subjects. In the vast majority of lessons students make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Students enjoy their work and co-operate well. They become increasingly able to study independently. Students do not develop their investigation skills sufficiently in integrated humanities. The college meets students' learning needs in a satisfactory manner. Students with special educational needs receive sound teaching, although individual education plans do not always identify learning needs sufficiently well. Teachers do not place enough emphasis on meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a broad range of courses with very good opportunities in performing arts. The college provides good extra-curricular opportunities and there are very good links with partner institutions. Co-ordination of opportunities for ICT skills are insufficient and provision of religious education is inadequate. Careers education is satisfactory.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Satisfactory. A broad curriculum is provided including an effective personal development course. There is good use of computers to improve basic skills and good access to a specialist careers advisor. Teaching is insufficiently focused on some students' complex learning needs or behavioural difficulties.

Provision for students with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The learning needs of the small proportion of students for whom English is an additional language are identified and supported in a sound manner.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Personal development is promoted well by tutors and by the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The college works well with outside agencies to give extra support. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the college cares for its students	The college cares well for its students. The teachers know the students well and the college works effectively to meet their needs. Students are well aware of their progress and target setting is used effectively to raise standards.
How well the college works in partnership with parents.	There is an effective partnership with parents. The arrangements for keeping parents informed on progress are better than normally seen, but the full reports are unclear on what students need to do to improve. The college responds well to parents' concerns and is quick to involve them when there are problems.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The principal has set a clear vision, supported by appropriate goals and a very good strategic plan. An effective leadership team has implemented well-chosen strategies to improve teaching, behaviour and assessment. These have raised students' achievement. Subject management is mostly good but is ineffective in integrated humanities and religious education. Heads of year support students well but do not ensure effective use of tutor time.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They work in a productive partnership with teachers to shape the college's strategic direction. The chairman and committee chairs provide capable leadership but have not ensured that statutory requirements for providing religious education and a daily act of worship are met.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Good. The college's strategic plan links increasingly ambitious targets for students' achievement to strategies for attaining them. The strategies are monitored through observation of lessons, discussion with students, scrutiny of their work and analysis of data on examination success. The college has attained its targets and uses evaluation outcomes well to refine the strategies.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staff are encouraged to bid for funds to support the raising of achievement and these are carefully examined by governors and the leadership team. Implementation of successful bids is already producing higher standards, and National Opportunity Funding is being used to improve teachers' use of computers. Different providers of services are considered to ensure that best value is gained. Teachers' skills are well matched to subjects taught. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but there are some shortages. Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students like college.• Students make good progress.• Teaching is good.• They feel comfortable about approaching the college.• The college expects students to work hard.• The college is helping students to become mature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The information on how well students are doing.• How closely the college works with parents.

The majority of parents returning the questionnaire and attending the meeting for parents agreed with the positive comments. Relatively few parents expressed negative views. The inspection confirms the positive views of parents. The arrangements for keeping parents informed are better than many colleges but reports on students' progress are ineffective. The college does work closely with parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

There are 258 students in the sixth form, which is a larger than average number. Almost all are of white British heritage. There are significantly more boys than girls. The majority of students are of white British heritage. Almost half of students from Year 11 continue into the sixth form. Standards of attainment on entry have been broadly average in recent years. Groby Community College offers an appropriately wide range of courses, mostly at the college, with a few provided in collaboration with a college of further education. There is a wide range of AS/A2 courses (General Certificate of Education) and a good range of AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education) courses. There are also opportunities for students to improve their GCSE results in English and mathematics and to study GCSE music. Almost all students embark on a two-year programme of study. Four GNVQ courses are offered, in conjunction with the local education college.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The college provides continuing education through to the sixth form for all those who wish to continue their studies. In over three-quarters of lessons observed, the teaching was at least good and it was very good, and sometimes excellent, in about one-third. Students' learning is monitored effectively and they receive good information from teachers on how well they are performing. Examination results are above average and students make good progress in Years 12 and 13. Girls attain higher standards than boys, as happens nationally.

The subject curriculum is organised well. Tutors monitor students' learning and personal development effectively but use of registration time is not managed well enough. There are many opportunities for students to enrich their learning beyond their examination courses but too little emphasis on personal, social and health education, spiritual development or preparation for life in a multicultural society. There is inadequate provision for religious education and a daily act of worship. There is a good spirit in the sixth form and many students appreciate that the college is enabling them to become independent learners and preparing them well to take part in the world around them. The sixth form is cost-effective and overall provision is good.

Strengths

- Much of the teaching is of good quality and a third is very good.
- Students make good progress in their learning to achieve above average results overall.
- Examination results are well above average in mathematics, biology, design and technology and general studies.
- Students' attitudes and personal development are very good; they become mature, confident, independent learners.
- There is a wide range of courses providing good opportunities for students.
- Advice about future careers and educational opportunities is of good quality.

What could be improved

- Examination results in French, history and theatre studies are too low.
- Provision of religious education and a daily act of worship do not meet statutory requirements.
- Registration time is not used effectively.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Very good. Examination results have improved and were well above average in 2001. Current students are achieving above average standards as a result of high quality teaching and very positive student attitudes. Leadership of the subject is excellent.
Chemistry	Good. Results have improved and were above average in 2001. Students are achieving well. Teachers make good use of their expert subject knowledge and carefully chosen resources to enable students to develop skills effectively and become increasingly independent learners.
Business	Good. Results were above average in 2001. An appropriate blend of direct teaching and individual student assignments leads to students developing skills well and becoming mature, independent learners.
Information and communication technology	Good. Intermediate GNVQ results are above average. Teachers have very good up-to-date knowledge and work hard in order that students achieve success. Students have very positive attitudes and current standards are above average. Key Skills courses are planned well.
Physical education	Good. A-level results were above average and represent an improving trend. Good teaching, including very good subject knowledge, is enabling current students to make good progress. Good support is provided for recreational physical education and the Community Sports Leaders' Award.
Travel and tourism	Satisfactory. The course attracts sound numbers of students. Standards are average. Students are enthusiastic and develop their confidence and knowledge in a sound manner. Teaching is satisfactory.
Art	Good. Examination results, based on a small number of entries, were average in 2001, but teaching of current students is very good and standards are above average. Drawing and painting skills are developed well and students become increasingly independent and confident.
Performing arts	Good. The first group of students entered for an AVCE course will take examinations in 2002. Good teaching, with teachers making effective use of their experience as performers, is producing above average standards. Students are enthusiastic and committed.
Theatre studies	Satisfactory. Results were below average in 2001, with too few students achieving the higher grades. A change of examination board, good teaching and enthusiastic students demonstrate good capacity for improvement. Current standards of practical work are very good.
Geography	Good. A-level results were above the national average in 2001. Good teaching in all lessons, and a carefully planned course, provide effective challenge and interest. Students are reliable and hardworking, and are producing currently standards which are above average.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
History	Good. Examination results have been below average in recent years. Recent improvements in coursework, the quality and use of resources and the quality of teaching and assessment are producing average standards in Year 13 and above average standards in Year 12.
English	Good. Examination results were average in 2001. There has been improvement in attaining high grades at A-level. Good teaching, with teachers demonstrating thorough knowledge and understanding, is producing good progress for current students. The recent introduction of film studies has been very successful.
French	Satisfactory. Results were well below average in 2001 with too few students achieving the highest grades. Current students have adequate reading, listening and writing skills but speaking is weaker. Teaching is satisfactory with very thorough preparation of coursework, but the range of teaching styles is too narrow.

In other subjects, a small sample of lessons was observed. All of these were at least satisfactory, except for one sociology lesson, which was unsatisfactory. Teaching of music was good and biology was satisfactory. Physics and design and technology each had one good and one satisfactory lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good. There are effective systems for advice and guidance, including information about sixth form courses, good preparation for university entrance and high quality, impartial advice on careers. There are very effective systems for monitoring students' progress and there are good links with outside agencies to provide additional support. Use of morning registration time is insufficiently productive.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. There is a clear vision to build on Years 10 and 11, to improve capacity for independent learning and increase preparation for adult life; these aims are achieved successfully. The nationally recommended transition of post-16 courses has been achieved very quickly. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and financial planning is good. There has been too little co-ordination of the development of students' skills using computers.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses are suited to individual talents. • Students are helped to settle into the sixth form. • Students are taught well and challenged to do their best. • They are helped and encouraged in their studies. • Teachers are accessible if students have any difficulties. • Students are treated as responsible young adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on what to study and on careers. • Listening and responding to the students' views. • The range of activities.

The strength of the positive views outweighed aspects that students felt could be improved. The inspection endorses students' positive views. The inspection finds that students receive high quality advice on subjects and careers. The recently formed student council has a good capacity to provide formal recognition of, and response to, students' views. There is a wider range of activities offered than is normally seen.

COMPARING PROVISION IN COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and students' achievements

Standards on entry

1. Students enter the college at the beginning of Year 10 with standards which are above the national average.

Performance in examinations at age 16

2. Results in GCSE examinations show an improving trend. In 2001 the proportion of students achieving five or more A* - C grades was well above the national average. This represents a strong improvement on the previous three years, when standards were close to the national average. The improvement has resulted in the college being listed in a national newspaper as one of the top 100 most improved colleges in the country. The college has also been awarded a School Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills to recognise substantially improved results between 1998 and 2001. The proportion of students obtaining five or more A*-G grades also improved in 2001, following a dip in the previous year, to be above the national average. The percentage of students gaining at least one A*-G grade was well above the national average. Boys attained better results than girls. The trend of rising results has been more rapid than the improvement nationally. However, the average total points score was only in line with that seen nationally. This is because students have been entered for fewer subjects than in many colleges. The college has addressed this issue and numbers of entries are now higher.
3. GCSE results were significantly better than the national picture in English, English literature, mathematics, science, history, drama and music. Students did particularly well in science and music when compared with their average performances in other subjects. Students achieved results which were worse than their average for other subjects in art and design, design and technology and integrated humanities. Factors contributing to the low performance in art and design and design and technology have been carefully analysed and newly introduced strategies have good potential for improvement. There has been insufficient action to address low standards in integrated humanities.
4. GCSE results, in comparison with similar colleges, based on the number of students eligible for free school meals, have improved since the last inspection. However, national statistics place Groby Community College in the same category as schools with the most favourable contexts, and standards at Groby were below these colleges. Analysis of students' GCSE results, when compared with their previous performance in national tests at age 14, shows that students make sound progress to maintain high standards. Results analysis over the last three years show that students with similar previous national test performance at age 14 achieved increasingly better GCSE results. College targets for 2002 represent a further increase.

Standards of students currently in Years 10 and 11

5. Overall, standards are above average. Students make satisfactory progress through Years 10 and 11.
6. Students make sound progress to achieve above average standards in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. A particular strength is that

most speak with confidence and display good reading and listening skills. Students achieve well in history, music, dance and physical education to attain high standards. In history students demonstrate in-depth factual recall and use sources well to extract meaning. In music their composing and performing skills are much better than normally seen. In dance, students have little knowledge when they enter the college and quickly achieve above average standards. In physical education students acquire a good range of performance skills and understand the health-related exercise programme well. Students make satisfactory progress to achieve average standards in art, design and technology, geography and information and communication technology (ICT). Drawing and painting skills are developed well in art but there is insufficient use of ICT to develop research and experimentation. Standards in design and technology are higher in food, resistant materials and textiles than they are in graphic products. In geography, students develop sound understanding of a range of topics and gain valuable investigative skills but there are too few opportunities for them to develop these to higher levels. Students make good progress in some lessons using ICT, but their experience across all subjects is insufficiently co-ordinated to ensure thorough development of skills.

7. Students make too little progress in integrated humanities. They often gain only superficial knowledge as a result of being given low level activities such as the copying of information. They do not have enough opportunities to achieve as well as they should. Standards in religious education are low. Students have far too little chance to consider responses to religious issues as the programme of study is inadequately covered.
8. Students with statements of special educational need who receive support across the curriculum and specialist teaching make good progress. Most SEN students achieve at least one A*-G at GCSE and make satisfactory progress. Some students make considerable progress and achieve A*-C grades in some subjects. Students for whom the full range of GCSE courses is not appropriate achieve success in a small number of Certificate of Achievement courses. In some lessons, where support is not well focused and students' learning needs are not clearly identified, progress is limited. Students with reading and spelling difficulties who receive specialist teaching make good progress. When withdrawn from lessons some students make good progress in acquiring basic skills in literacy and numeracy. A small minority of students make insufficient progress, as teaching programmes are not well matched to students' individual learning needs and interests.
9. The standards of students from ethnic minority backgrounds, and students for whom English is an additional language, are in line with other students.
10. Gifted and talented students make insufficient progress overall. There are often too few opportunities for them to demonstrate the highest level skills because of a lack of challenge. However talented linguists do produce work of outstanding quality and a good proportion of students achieve the highest grades in music.
11. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are above average. Students speak with clarity, confidence and expression in most subjects, particularly in English, science, art and history. Listening skills are less well developed but are satisfactory overall, apart from some English and science lessons. Students read very well and show understanding of a range of textual material across all subject areas, although use of ICT sources is less effective than usual as students have limited access to ICT across the curriculum. Students' comprehension skills are good, particularly in English, science, history and modern foreign languages. Writing skills are generally developed well across subject areas but there is scope for extending written work and opportunities for some of the most able students, particularly in science and English.

12. Students' standards in numeracy are satisfactory. In lower attaining mathematics groups, students are able to create a variety of calculations based on a target answer, but they do not demonstrate a range of calculating strategies. They find difficulty using mathematical terminology to describe the strategy they have used. However, there are examples of the use and application of number in some curriculum areas. In integrated humanities, students' personal research studies include a few outstanding examples of data use, and most students focus on gathering data from primary sources and analysing it. In history, Year 11 students considered the graphical representation of deaths in Northern Ireland and were asked to relate this to political events.
13. The college sets targets to predict examination performance for each year in conjunction with the local education authority. Recent targets have been ambitious, representing an improvement in results year-on-year. The college has achieved the targets and is on track to sustain this improvement in 2002.
14. Attainment was found to be broadly average at the last inspection, in 2000, and students were underachieving. Attainment is now above average and achievement overall is satisfactory. Students' performance has improved but is still below the standard of similar colleges.

Sixth form

Performance in examinations

15. Results in GCE A2/AS examinations in 2001 were above the national average. Girls attained slightly higher standards than boys, as happens nationally. Candidates entered for GCE VCE (Advanced GNVQ examinations), also gained results which were above those seen nationally, with girls doing better than boys. Analysis of students' examination results, when compared with their previous attainment at GCSE, shows that they made better progress than in most other colleges nationally.
16. Standards in examinations were well above the national average in biology, design and technology, mathematics and general studies. Students attained above average standards in business studies, chemistry, geography and sports studies. Examination results were in line with the national average for art and design, English literature, physics, sociology and psychology. Results were below average in history and theatre studies. They were well below average in French.

Standards of students currently in Years 12 and 13

17. Standards of current students are above average overall. This judgement is based on evidence of lessons observed during the inspection and from a scrutiny of students' work. Standards are well above average in mathematics; students are proficient at interpreting functions and can quickly learn and apply mathematical rules. Above average standards are attained in English, chemistry, art and design, performing arts, theatre studies and business studies. Students often show well-developed independent learning skills and skilled research techniques. They demonstrate considerable maturity, such as when putting on performances in theatre studies. Students are making very good progress in film studies.
18. Speaking and listening skills are of a high standard; students are confident and articulate about what they know, for instance in chemistry. They discuss texts maturely in English, showing a strong appreciation of character and narrative structure. High level research skills and confident use of computers are evident in business studies. Students prepare well for performances and backstage work in performing arts.

Standards are a little above average in geography and physical education. In geography, students have a good understanding of principles affecting the changing global economy. Standards in most aspects of physical education are good, but written work is only in line with that typically seen elsewhere. Attainment in history is satisfactory in Year 13 and above average Year 12 where students analyse historical sources critically and produce convincing arguments. Students following the travel and tourism course attain in line with course expectation. Standards are average in French; students read well but are hesitant in pronunciation and lack confidence when constructing sentences.

19. Since the previous inspection standards have improved. They were close to the national average in 2000 and are now above that.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Students' attitudes are good. The majority like college life and willingly take part in what the college has to offer. Their interest in the performing arts, noted at the last inspection, continues to flourish and there is now more involvement in extra-curricular sport. A good number of students make very good use of the extra help from teachers outside class. However, even though there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, some students do not take part.
21. Similarly, students' attitudes to learning are good. The majority are well motivated, willing to learn, and consistently apply themselves to the task in hand. For example, during the inspection Year 10 German students were learning to cope with 'shopping conversations'. They clearly enjoyed speaking and listening in German and concentrated very well on the tasks set. In this way they made very good use of time and made good progress. However, a significant minority of students, mostly Year 10 with some in Year 11, lack interest in class. They easily get distracted and find it hard to concentrate. This slows their progress in learning.
22. Students' behaviour is good. Many behave very well and this has a significant positive impact on their learning. They are trustworthy and show respect for each other's and college property. However, again there is a significant minority, mostly the younger students, who behave badly both in and out of class. In class they disturb the learning of others. They are discourteous and their language is unacceptable. The narrow corridors make it difficult for large numbers of students to move around college, but there is some unnecessary pushing, which on occasions is dangerous. There is little bullying and, when it occurs, it is quickly addressed.
23. The rate of exclusions is high compared with similar colleges. The college uses very short periods of exclusion to make clear to students what is expected and to give them an opportunity to reflect on what they have done. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last three years. There is good support for students who are at risk of exclusion.
24. Students' personal development is good. The majority are polite, thoughtful, and helpful. They learn to listen, think, and consider the consequences of what they do. They respect each other's contributions, and support each other. A good example of this is in music, drama, and dance. Students work with each other and other members of the community and present high quality productions. Large numbers of students attend the productions to applaud their colleagues' contributions. Many students respond well to the opportunities to take initiative and responsibility in Project Week. During the inspection a student confidently explained that all Year 10 and 12 students take part in Project Week. 'We learned a lot about ourselves, and it gave us the opportunity to take initiative and work as a team. I felt much more confident'. Students'

relationships with each other, with their teachers and other adults in the college are very good. They work effectively in pairs and small groups, such as organising role play in drama, and collaborating with their work in subjects such as design and technology, science, and mathematics. The majority of students are quick to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning. For example, during the inspection Year 11 drama students were working independently in groups on a drama realisation test. A mature contribution from all involved ensured purposeful activity. They collaborated well and performed the drama with confidence and conviction. They evaluated each other's work sensitively and supportively, but with good critical insight. This helped them make good progress with their learning.

25. SEN students are supportive of one another and, in some lessons they are eager to assist one another in their learning, for example when measuring wood to make bird boxes. Students work well with the business advisor in the Team Enterprise programme. Some students with complex learning needs do not always engage well in lessons or small group sessions, particularly when they are unclear about learning or behaviour targets and when teaching does not meet their learning needs effectively. Relationships with learning support assistants in small group sessions are good. Students are very appreciative of the support provided for them by teachers and learning support assistants.
26. Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance last year was 90.4%, which is below the national average (90.9 %). Attendance during the Autumn term 2001 improved to 92%. Unauthorised absence last year was 0.6%, which was better than the national average (1.1%). Too many students take holiday during term time and this interrupts their education. There is some lateness to registration at the start of the day, but students arrive in class punctually and lessons start promptly.

Progress since the previous inspection

27. The high standards in attitudes, values, and personal development noted at the last inspection have been maintained, but there has been no sustained improvement in attendance.

Sixth form

28. Attitudes of students are very good. They are enthusiastic, keen to excel, and work very hard. Commitment to, and interest in, subjects studied is excellent. They enjoy the challenge of more demanding work. For example, during the inspection Year 13 ICT students were using 'Turbo CAD' to draw an aerial view of the computer areas. They enjoyed the challenge of this new software package. They were engrossed in their work, and keen to work things out for themselves. This high level of application and concentration ensured they made rapid progress with their learning. A large majority willingly involve themselves in enrichment activities such as community service, work experience and projects like Young Enterprise. They continue to be involved in the full life of the college, through sport and taking part in the performing arts.
29. Students' personal development is very good. They are mature and confident. They work effectively in groups and respect each other's views. The relationships between students and teachers are very good and this has a significant, positive effect on learning. For example, students rigorously pursue their questioning both with the teacher and their peers to make sure they fully understand what is taught. There is no embarrassment or fear of showing ignorance, and students willingly co-operate and support each other. Students are prepared to take initiative and responsibility for their own work. For example, during the inspection the food technology group were working

on the coursework unit 'developing practical and management skills to produce a variety of products'. They confidently researched the internet, analysed the data, and synthesised the material from various web sites. Outside lessons, students are willing to take responsibility by helping to organise activities and events. Their work includes making contacts in the community, and organising their own portfolios. They help with Project Week and the summer play scheme. Many take part in either youth work, the sports leader award, or in music, dance and drama performances. They show a consideration for others through community service and raising funds for charity.

30. There is no summary record of attendance for the sixth form. During the inspection attendance at lessons was satisfactory. Students were punctual and lessons started promptly.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

31. Teaching in the main college (Years 10 and 11) is satisfactory overall. During the inspection 111 lessons were seen across Years 10 and 11 and teaching was satisfactory or better in the vast majority of these lessons. In over half of all lessons it was good or better. The quality of teaching has improved slightly since the last inspection, two years ago. There was, however, a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and this occurred almost entirely in integrated humanities, which includes religious education where quality has deteriorated. The overall picture across all other subjects is of significant improvement since the last inspection.
32. Teaching was a key point for development in the last report. The report acknowledged that although there was a shared commitment to improvement, some aspects of teaching lacked rigour and did not sufficiently develop good learning skills. The college embarked on action to tackle this, including a number of whole-college development days devoted to promoting effective teaching and learning styles. A comprehensive teaching and learning policy, with clear guidance on aspects of teaching, including classroom management, homework and assessment procedures, has also been introduced. A new code of conduct outlining acceptable student behaviour and the consequences of not following this code has been implemented. This work is now having a positive impact in all subjects areas, apart from integrated humanities.
33. A real strength of teaching across the college is the fact that almost all lessons are taught by teachers who are specialists in their area and as a result they have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject and are effective in developing students' knowledge and skills. This aspect of teaching is a particular strength in English, mathematics, physical education, and French. For example, in a Year 11 English literature lesson the teacher demonstrated a very good knowledge of the stylistic use of language in a set book and was very effective in developing students' understanding of how the author used this for effect. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson the teacher had very good knowledge and understanding of the application of vectors for solving problems. This was used very effectively to enable students to learn about this aspect of the syllabus. In a Year 10 GCSE physical education lesson the teacher's knowledge of anatomy was very good and an interesting range of activities was used well to enable students to make good progress in learning the names of the major bones and their functions. In a Year 10 French lesson the teacher's very good knowledge of the language and the subtleties of accent was used to model good pronunciation and enable students to improve their speaking skills.
34. In integrated humanities, teachers' knowledge and understanding is unsatisfactory. This is particularly apparent when teachers are unable to respond accurately to questions, such as, 'Why was the Berlin Wall built?' Students, as a result, make unsatisfactory progress in their learning in this subject. There is no specialist teacher

of religious education to lead developments in this subject. The result is that insufficient religious education is being taught and students are achieving little.

35. The teaching of basic skills overall is satisfactory. In history students' literacy skills are being developed well. For example, in a history lesson good teacher questioning, for example "What does the term 'charismatic leader' mean?" ensured that students' understanding of key vocabulary was extended well. Mathematics teaching is effective in developing numeracy skills, but there is a need for other subjects to plan opportunities for the development of numeracy. The development of ICT skills across subjects is just satisfactory, however for many subjects the planning, coverage and development of these skills, through planned opportunities in lessons, needs further development. This is not helped by the shortage of accommodation, which is creating difficulties for access to ICT facilities during lesson time. There were some good examples seen, during the inspection, of teachers using ICT to enhance learning in subjects, particularly in science, mathematics and design technology. Some students do make good use of computer facilities after college and during lunchtimes, and many students have good access to computers at home. As a result, many have developed good ICT skills and often use these to produce work at home.
36. Teachers' planning is usually good, with detailed schemes of work in most subjects, although there is a need for further development in some subject areas, especially science, history and physical education. Where lesson planning is good, for example in English, mathematics, science, art, music, physical education, French and German, a common feature across these subjects is a sharing with students of the key objectives for the lesson. This is usually very effective in clarifying to students what they have to achieve, enabling them to take purposeful responsibility for their own learning. Other strengths include the use of well thought-out teaching activities, well matched to the requirements of the GCSE examination syllabus. However, planning for individual lesson is often less secure in integrated humanities, where teaching takes little account of students' high school experience in the subject, and the objectives for lessons do not focus sufficiently on developing students' investigation skills. This results in students making little, or no progress.
37. Overall, teachers' expectations and the demands they place on most students are good. However, in many subjects teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for gifted and talented students. In geography and integrated humanities, expectations of students' capabilities are too low and use of low level tasks, including copying and the use of closed questions, is not stretching students sufficiently. This leads to slow progress.
38. Students are usually managed well by teachers and on the whole good relationships exist between teachers and students. In many subjects specialist teachers create a secure learning environment and inject their enthusiasm for their subject into their teaching and as a result students enjoy their work and generally make good progress. This is particularly true of the teaching in dance, where students are treated in a very mature way. Students generally respond well to this approach and make good progress in their learning. Some students are not easily motivated and try to gain attention through unsatisfactory behaviour. In almost all instances observed teachers skilfully managed the situation so that the learning of others was not disturbed. Poor management of behaviour however was a significant feature in many of the unsatisfactory lessons seen in integrated humanities and as a result little learning took place in these lessons.
39. The quality of marking and assessment of students' work is satisfactory. In many subjects students receive regular feedback from teachers about the quality of their work. However, the quality of marking and the value of the comments made are

variable and at times inconsistent between teachers in the same subject. In English and history there are examples of effective use of marking to improve standards. In physical education and integrated humanities, however, although marking is generally used positively to encourage students, it is less effective in informing students how well they are doing and what it is they need to do to improve further.

40. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of homework to extend students' learning. Although the tasks are usually appropriate and extend students' learning they do not always take into account the different abilities of the groups of students in the class. Thus, on some occasions, more able students find homework tasks considerably easier than other students.
41. In the vast majority of lessons students make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Many have positive attitudes to college and respect for their teachers, they want to do well and respond well to good teaching.
42. The teaching of students with special educational needs within subjects is most effective when strategies take account of individual students' learning needs, detailed in statements and individual education plans. Teaching is most productive when subject teachers and support staff share the planning and preparation of activities and resources, and when support staff are actively engaged in lessons. Good teaching was seen, for example, in a French lesson where the subject teacher and the support teacher worked collaboratively. Both teachers supported individuals and used assessments of students' learning needs and behavioural targets to motivate students in their learning and to plan activities matched to students' interests and abilities. This practice, and the use of working records to inform planning and progress of individual students, is inconsistent both within and across subjects. Individual education plans do not always make clear the contribution subject teaching can make to address individual learning needs. Teaching programmes designed to improve literacy and numeracy skills do not give sufficient attention to the specific or complex learning needs of some students. There are insufficient opportunities for these students to address their individual learning needs. Assessment procedures for SEN students are good on entry. Procedures for ongoing assessment for some SEN students are not sufficiently focussed on their individual learning needs to enable teachers and support staff to teach effectively to individual targets. Although there is evidence of good practice in and across subjects, compared with the previous inspection teaching and support sessions are more inconsistent in providing appropriately for the full range of students with SEN than previously reported.

Sixth form

43. Teaching is good and students learn rapidly. In Years 12 and 13, teaching was at least good in 76% of lessons and very good, and sometimes excellent, in 31% of lessons. All lessons, apart from one, were satisfactory.
44. Very good teaching was seen in mathematics and art. Teaching was good overall in English, theatre studies, science, IT, history, geography, PE and business education. Teaching was satisfactory overall in French.
45. Where the teaching observed was at least good, teachers demonstrated a thorough knowledge of, even a passion for, their subject and a secure understanding of the requirements of the examinations. In a Year 13 English lesson, this led to very clear analysis of the details set out in the assessment criteria, helping the students to concentrate on making appropriate personal responses. In a Year 13 geography lesson, the teacher's expert knowledge enabled him to use specialist technical language to explain the vegetation of oak woodlands. This helped the students to gain a good understanding of plant succession. In a mixed Year 12 and 13 film studies lesson, the teacher's uncompromising use of technical language reflected a high level of knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject and resulted in the students becoming really committed, interested and involved in good discussion about films and film techniques. Similarly, in a Year 12 ICT lesson, the teacher's appropriate use of technical terms helped students to deepen their understanding of the technology, gaining a lot of expert knowledge in a short time.
46. Most teachers express their high expectations through challenging questions, which spur students on to make perceptive responses. For example, in a Year 12 art lesson, the teacher's succinct and informed overview and probing questions helped to keep the good pace of the lesson going. All students participated, were well motivated and committed to their work. In a Year 13 business studies lesson, the teacher's skilled questioning challenged the students' understanding of customer services and reflected the teacher's high expectations. This led to students taking responsibility for their own learning and being highly involved in their work.
47. Teachers are particularly effective at developing independent learning skills, post-16. In drama, for instance, the teachers promote collaborative group work which gives students the confidence to perform and experiment with ideas. They become sensitive and responsive to each other, offering developmental comments.
48. It is common for teachers to make effective use of assessment to strengthen students' learning. For example, in mathematics teachers make sure that students know their predicted examination grades and what they have to do to achieve them. Teachers provide high quality oral feedback in lessons which enables students to overcome any misconceptions quickly.
49. The quality of dialogue between teachers and students is rooted in mature and positive relationships, leading to high levels of commitment, understanding and respect. It also means that most students clearly understand how well they are doing. This is a very widespread feature across the vast majority of teaching.

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

50. Students have a good range of learning opportunities. However, the college does not meet the statutory requirements for religious education and this makes the curriculum unsatisfactory overall.
51. The college's goal, of enabling students to make the most of opportunities around them, is reflected well by the curriculum. There is a broad range of courses for all students; all the required subjects are included and opportunities in the performing arts are greater than is normally seen. There is a good choice of options incorporating subjects not offered in some colleges, such as sociology, dance and drama. There is a humanities course for all students, which includes an element on 'beliefs and values'. This is insufficient to provide adequate coverage of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A few students are following an art and design course instead of design and technology and are not, therefore receiving the full, legally required, curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is provided within other subjects. This arrangement includes pockets of effective practice but is not well enough co-ordinated to ensure full coverage of the programme of study.
52. Students with special educational needs benefit from access to a broad and balanced curriculum. A small number of students benefit from additional teaching by a specialist teacher and others improve basic skills using a computer programme designed to help students improve literacy and numeracy skills. There are too few opportunities for regular, targeted teaching for some students with complex learning needs and to assist those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Additional, alternative courses such as Personal Development help students to gain confidence and self esteem and students appreciate the relevance of these to their future when they leave college.
53. The college has improved its approach to homework since the last inspection. There is now a comprehensive policy with well-defined responsibilities for students, staff and parents. The policy is promoted strongly; there are summaries in the college prospectus and in the staff handbook. Students are required to enter homework details in their personal organisers and parents are encouraged, in induction meetings and in newsletters, to check these. Monitoring of entries in organisers is also a responsibility of tutors, but not all do this consistently. The leadership team's commitment to homework is demonstrated well by the recent introduction of a systems review involving a governor and senior manager. This has good potential for further improvement.
54. The SEN co-ordinator and other members of the SEN team attend Year 9 transition reviews. Careers guidance for SEN students is good. Students have access to a specialist careers adviser and transition planning for students with statements of special educational need is thorough. Students have clear, realistic goals; Year 11 students are confident about moving on to the next phase of their education or training. Students who continue their education in Years 12 and 13 have their needs met effectively and are well supported by the SEN co-ordinator.
55. There are satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Students have many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills across a wide range of subjects. Teachers provide good opportunities for the use of accurate terminology, for example in science. Curriculum planning does not emphasise the use of vocabulary sufficiently in some subjects, such as mathematics where there is no use of key words in wall displays. There are good opportunities to develop numeracy skills in a few subjects, such as integrated humanities and geography, where students can display and interpret data. However, there is no co-ordination of numeracy or literacy across

the curriculum, resulting in students' experience being too patchy.

56. Opportunities provided for participation in extra-curricular activities are good. Students value the wide range of activities and believe that they have a strong impact on helping participants to become independent learners and prepare for adult life. There are regular visits to art galleries, the theatre and music concerts. Students can attend a wide range of evening classes because of the college's community education status. Opportunities to be involved in performing arts are much more extensive than is usually seen. They include a five day Performing Arts Festival, a Youth Theatre and very frequent 'showcases' where everyone is encouraged to be involved. These are very successful, and attract large numbers of participants. Extra curricular sport has improved since the last inspection and is now similar to that seen in most colleges. There is a wide range of societies, such as Amnesty International, Christian Union and a poetry club. There are language exchanges with France and Germany. Students can also work with adults in Easter and summer play schemes. Learning is also enriched by a good range of organised events as part of the standard curriculum provision, such as fieldwork in geography, poetry days and an art and design convention morning.
57. There is a well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) course, which provides a good coverage of the issues that are important to students' development. This includes topics such as personal relationships, study skills, citizenship and financial management. There are effective policies and materials for health, drugs and sex education. Members of parental and year teams work effectively with others, such as careers representatives, the college nurse and advisers on drugs education, to continuously improve the PSHE curriculum so that it meets students' needs. No PSHE lessons took place during the inspection week, but students were positive about the course and were able to identify benefits for themselves in being better equipped to deal with life.
58. No careers lessons were observed in the course of the inspection but evidence acquired from scrutiny of the Partnership Agreement, careers documentation and discussions with the careers co-ordinator, students and the two careers advisers, indicates that provision for careers education and guidance is at least satisfactory.
59. There is a new but highly committed careers co-ordinator who has been in post for a term. He is working closely with Leicestershire careers service to ensure that almost all Year 11 have careers interviews according to partnership agreement arrangements, starting with students identified by tutors as having most need, and then by teacher and pupil referral. A useful summary leaflet is given by the college to students to help them prepare for interview but not all students read this. High quality provision with a specialist careers adviser is available for those students with special educational needs.
60. The careers education programme is delivered mainly through the pastoral structure during tutor periods and is a key part of the pastoral programme. Students have an annual careers convention and post-16 day, workshops and taster days. However, there is insufficient time in Year 10 for students to develop investigative skills, or in-depth knowledge of options and the nature of qualifications. The quality of careers education lessons is not monitored. All Year 11 students undertake a valuable and well planned two-week work experience placement, but only half these placements are visited by teachers to ensure quality of provision.
61. The careers library is being up-dated as the quantity of occupational literature is thin and many of the display boxes are empty. There is no dedicated computer in the library for the use of students and the library has been kept locked recently because of theft. A

positive feature is the help of an administrative assistant who arranges careers interviews and looks after resources. The college has not achieved the regional quality award for careers education and guidance: Career Mark.

62. The college has very good links with local high schools. Representatives of Groby have worked with high college representatives to plan GCSE courses which begin immediately after Year 9 students have completed their national tests. Projects are in place for English, mathematics, science and art and design. A further project for modern foreign languages is planned for this year. The college also collects assessment information for Year 9 students and makes good use of it to set targets for students' future performance.
63. Since the last inspection the college has improved extra-curricular sport and further strengthened the links with high schools. There is no longer a discrete course for developing ICT skills in Year 10 and this has not yet been replaced with sufficient coverage of computing skills in other subjects. There continues to be insufficient provision of religious education and requirements for a daily act of worship are still not met.

Sixth form

64. In the sixth form, subject provision for post-16 accreditation is very good. It serves well the great majority of students who benefit from continuing their education at the college. Most aspects of provision for students' personal development are good, but some elements of study that contribute to students' general education are not well enough covered. The college fails to deliver the the locally agreed syllabus for religious education post-16 through an appropriately planned course.

Course provision

65. The college promotes an inclusive approach to post-compulsory education. Its sixth form prospectus provides an appropriately wide range of courses for all who will benefit. These may be studied either wholly at the college or in collaboration with a college of further education. The college offers a very wide range of twenty-three advanced courses for the Advanced General Certificate of Education (AS and A2). As well as these advanced courses there is a good range of vocational options. The college offers Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in business, single or double units, ICT, travel and tourism, and performing arts. There are four intermediate GNVQs: business, health and social care, ICT, and travel and tourism. The vocational elements of these courses are taught at the local further education college and the Key Skills are taught at Groby. Next year the college has an agreement to work with a different further education institution to provide an even greater range of courses, for instance in construction. In this way the college has responded appropriately to its local circumstances. The college works well with other educational and training institutions to provide students with a choice of subjects to study at a number of levels, and to meet individual needs.
66. Students are given careful counselling before being admitted to courses, in line with the college's policy of providing continuing education for those who will benefit. Almost all students who start sixth form courses complete their studies. There is a relatively low drop-out rate of 6% compared with 10% for the country. All students who have gained 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C are given access to AS/A2 courses. GCSE repeat courses are provided for students who are seeking to upgrade their previous English and mathematics results to A*-C grades and an opportunity to study GCSE music is provided.

67. There is good provision of careers education and guidance, including opportunities to consider option choices, university entrance and employment. There is a productive partnership with the local careers service, including workshops for specialist careers.
68. Students' learning in subjects is extended well through a range of activities. These include local and residential fieldwork in geography, the Engineering Education scheme, theatre trips, professional drama groups coming into college to run workshops, English writers residency, film trips and an informal film club. Many students participate in productions, for example, 'Duckling' a seventies musical written by staff, and 'Joseph', which provided opportunities for set design, dance, acting and music
69. Students taking AVCE and GNVQ subjects have useful links with local companies, including work simulations, shadowing and placements and a Young Enterprise company. Last year all students in Year 12 attempted all three key skills. This proved a great burden to students and now only vocational students study key skills, and twenty-eight other students are following the ICT key skill. There is very good provision in this area.

Enrichment and extension opportunities

70. Many students are taking advantage of the many opportunities provided for personal enrichment by participating in the good range of less formally structured opportunities, such as community placement and charity work. Many students benefit considerably through the personal self-reliance they develop working with, and for, others: for example, a student who spent time in a local hospice found it 'very rewarding'. The provision of sporting activities has improved since the previous inspection and now about fifty students take part in sport on Wednesday afternoons with some male students completing the Sport Leadership award.
71. The enrichment programme is provided through assemblies, tutor time, events and Project Week. Students do not action plan for them and although some do have a clear view of how the enrichment complements their subject studies a significant minority do not. Students are encouraged and expected to take advantage of opportunities but some students do not take advantage of the opportunities available.
72. Students have very good relationships with their tutors. The tutorial programme covers study skills, time management and careers education and guidance, but there is little emphasis on personal, social and health education, spiritual development or preparation for life in a multi-racial society. There are plans to review the programme in the summer. There is an embryonic student council in operation but only seven students are involved, and there is little real understanding among students of the purpose of such a council. Apart from assemblies and input in individual subjects, particularly for those who take general studies, there is no teaching of religious education. This was an issue in the previous inspection report.
73. Registration time for the sixth form is not well used. Some students negotiate leave of absence from certain registrations and others just do not turn up. Little purposeful activity takes place; accommodation is often unsuitable and the experience is not a good start to the day. The college is exploring the use of swipe cards to alleviate this problem.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

74. The provision to support students' personal development is satisfactory overall. A few opportunities to enhance spiritual development are found in English and theatre studies

and occasionally in science which encourages students to reflect on their lives, the meaning of their existence and to empathise with each other's views. The limited provision of RE gives little time for further reflection and consideration of these issues. Assemblies are not acts of collective worship although they deal with moral and social issues. Moral issues are addressed well by English and drama through topics such as celebrities' right to privacy, law and justice, and racism. Social development is enhanced for some students through good links with the college pastoral staff and the youth service. Students' social skills are further developed through co-operative work in science, performing arts and physical education. There is a cultural dimension to the arts curriculum but too often opportunities are missed by many subjects, at tutor times, in assemblies and other aspects of college life, to further support students' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

75. The college provides a secure and caring environment. Teachers, tutors, and senior members of staff are readily accessible. Students know that they will be supported if they have concerns.

Promoting and monitoring personal development

76. Students' personal development is promoted well by the work of tutors and through the PSHE programme. There are very effective systems for monitoring students' progress. A good range of information is received from the high schools. Heads of year and tutors stay with the same form group for two years and know students very well as individuals. Tutors help students complete their records of achievement. This process gives students an opportunity to reflect on their personal qualities, note achievements, set aspirations and raise concerns. The college works well with outside agencies to give extra support where necessary. Parents state they are confident to approach the college with their concerns. In these ways the college ensures that individual needs of students are met. However, the use of morning tutor time is insufficiently productive. There is little purposeful activity for the majority of students.

Promoting and monitoring good behaviour

77. Arrangements for monitoring and improving behaviour are good. Since the last inspection the behaviour policy has been revised and all staff have been trained in behaviour management. The college's code of conduct lists clear expectations of behaviour. Students are praised for responsible behaviour. Sanctions are appropriate and encourage students to think about the consequences of their actions. Specific incidents are noted on complaint forms and the conduct log. Heads of faculty, heads of year and tutors are kept well informed. Personalised targets are set where behaviour lapses. Parents support the college's high expectations of standards of behaviour by signing the home/college agreement, and the behaviour management reports. The college is quick to involve parents wherever there are problems. The majority of teachers maintain high standards for students' behaviour in class. However, some are unable to manage the poor behaviour of a significant minority of students, and this disrupts their lessons.
78. The college is effective at eliminating oppressive behaviour. The humanities course taken by all Year 10 students includes a topic on resolving conflict and discourages bullying. Any bullying, racism, or sexism is quickly addressed and dealt with effectively.

Promoting and monitoring attendance

79. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance in the main college are good.

There are good systems. Telephone calls and a new texting system are used to check first day absence. Attendance is registered in the morning and during lessons. The education welfare officer is based at the college and works closely with the heads of year. Letters are sent to parents of students with poor attendance. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates and assemblies are used to explain how attendance relates to exam results. Attendance is discussed as part of the review process and students are set targets for attendance. However, at this stage these good systems have had insufficient impact. Tutors have an important role in improving attendance and this needs monitoring. Some absence is not sufficiently challenged by tutors and attendance is not given sufficient priority. Lateness is monitored and addressed.

Promoting and monitoring health, welfare and safety.

80. Procedures for child protection, health and safety are satisfactory. Health and safety practice is audited annually. Risk assessments are carried out in subjects. The arrangements for first aid are good and there is good support from the college nurse.

Promoting and monitoring students' academic progress

81. Assessment processes are good and continue to be developed. The procedures for monitoring and promoting students' academic progress are very good. The college has comprehensive policies on raising achievement through assessment and target setting. In mathematics, English, science, history, and modern foreign languages students are more aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve than is normally seen. In these subjects there is good consistency in the way assessment is used by different teachers to help students achieve. Students receive frequent information from teachers about their strengths and they are given clear target grades for the end of their courses. Teachers use assessments from tests and other pieces of work to track each individual's progress. Students who underachieve are identified and good support ensures they improve. The arrangements for individual students to discuss their overall progress with tutors, followed by termly reports to parents, are better than normally seen.
82. Assessment procedures for students with special educational needs are good on entry. Procedures for ongoing assessment for some SEN students are not sufficiently focused on their individual learning needs to enable teachers and support staff to match their teaching to students' targets.

Use of assessment information to guide planning

83. Teachers make widespread use of assessment to make sure that students have understood all aspects of their course. They use this assessment to note improvements or shortfalls in standards. There is particularly good practice in modern foreign languages, history and English.

Progress since the previous inspection

84. The college's provision in promoting and monitoring students' welfare has been maintained and developed further. The behaviour policy has been revised and staff have been trained. First day calls are used to chase up unexplained absence and the college is trialling a texting system for contacting parents. Use of assessment data to track students progress and raise achievement continues to improve.

Sixth form

Assessment

85. Assessment practices in the sixth form are good. Students receive regular accurate information. Assessment and marking are accurate and clear so that the students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The diagnosis and provision for individual learning needs are good. Students receive frequent information from teachers about their strengths, and are given clear target grades for the end of their courses. There is regular feedback on results and extra support is given to students as necessary. There is good use of assessment to guide curricular planning, such as in history, where coursework was introduced following assessment which showed that there were too few opportunities to demonstrate independent learning.
86. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress. Tutors know the students well and, together with the heads of year, ensure help is available, as they need it. Progress is tracked systematically. The student review process is better than normally seen. Students and parents receive regular reports on progress, and these are discussed with tutors. Tutors agree targets with the students and follow up wherever there are problems. Teachers are quick to pick up where there are difficulties, and interim reports are used to track students who are having difficulties. There is particularly good practice in mathematics and English. In mathematics there is a good tutorial system, and in English students regularly receive support at the end of the college day. Relationships are excellent and students are confident to ask for help.

Advice, support and guidance

87. Provision is good. The college provides students with high quality, impartial advice. Students receive guidance to help with their initial choice of options in Year 12, the transition from Year 12 to 13, choice of university or employment, and support and guidance when the examination results are published. The college maintains a helpful and co-operative relationship with the careers service. However, the guidance provided by the careers service is not popular with students, who tend to rely more heavily on the guidance provided by the heads of year and tutors in one-to-one interviews. Only 60% of Year 12 students have accessed their entitlement to an interview with the careers adviser.
88. Students are very well prepared for university entrance, through a planned programme in the tutorial programme and visits to higher education fairs. The careers adviser runs well-attended workshops for occupational groups prior to university application, such as medics and dentists. There is good liaison with local higher education institutions and a useful, informal heads of sixth group.
89. Advice and support are not always as readily available for those seeking employment and these students feel rather sidelined. The head of Year 13 has put together a booklet of useful web sites for job seekers. A recently introduced feature includes workshops on job applications and interview techniques, run by the pre-16 careers adviser. These have been well received and are to be extended to the university applicants.

Monitoring and improving attendance

90. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. The tutors monitor attendance and teachers use slips to inform tutors about absence from lessons. Unexplained absence is followed up and unsatisfactory attendance is discussed as part of the regular individual reviews. The student contract promotes good attendance. Where there are problems letters are sent home and attendance is discussed with parents. However there is no summary statistic for monitoring

attendance and the tutors' role needs monitoring.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

91. Most parents are pleased with what the college provides and achieves, although a minority feel the college does not work closely with them and they are insufficiently well informed about their children's progress.
92. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters are regular, informative, and well presented. These, together with the prospectus, options booklets and governors' annual report, provide a comprehensive and clear summary of the college's provision and achievements. Parents receive reports three times in Years 10 and 12, and twice during Years 11 and 13. On each occasion there is the opportunity to meet with teachers or tutors to discuss progress. The college seeks to make appointments with parents of students experiencing difficulties, but all parents are invited. However, the full written reports are unsatisfactory because they do not make it clear what progress students have made and what they need to do to improve. Records of achievement provide a good summary of students' personal development and achievements.
93. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. The partnership with parents is made explicit through the prospectus and home/college agreement. The college works closely with parents, and regularly consults with them through a questionnaire. Parents state that they are confident to approach the college with problems. Teachers are readily accessible and respond positively to parents' concerns.
94. The college is quick to involve parents whenever there are concerns and parents support the behaviour policy by signing daily reports. Telephone calls and text messages following up first day absence keep parents well informed and involved. Coursework deadlines are made available to students and parents by letter and newsletter, but the homework timetable is not sent to parents. There has been some improvement in the use of students' organisers, but many parents do not regularly sign them. Many parents support their children at review meetings, transfer and careers evenings, and college productions. The parent teacher association is used to discuss curriculum and other college issues, but support from parents has been poor.
95. Parents of SEN students are invited to attend annual review meetings. Many parents choose to attend and are actively involved in supporting their children's learning. For those parents who are unable to attend, arrangements are made for them to contribute to the review and planning process. Informal contact between SEN teachers and parents makes a positive impact on the learning of some students, particularly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Progress since the last inspection

96. The college has maintained its commitment to a good partnership with parents. The new system of first day calls to check unexplained absence is a good initiative to keep parents informed and involved.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

97. The college is led well. The principal has set out a very clear vision to create a learning organisation which fosters the growth of all who work within it. This is supported effectively by the choice of pertinent goals, centred on ensuring high academic standards whilst preparing students to take full part in the world around them. The

number of goals has been simplified recently, from five to three, in order to ensure that they are fully understood. This has been very effective; students, parents, teachers and governors understand them very well.

98. The principal and four other teachers form a leadership team. They work together very effectively and are strongly committed to raising achievement and preparing students for later life. The team has produced a very good strategic plan which has set increasingly ambitious targets for performance in external examinations on a year-by-year basis. The targets are supported by highly appropriate strategies for raising standards, such as improving teaching and learning, introducing new approaches to behaviour management and making better use of assessment. New policies have been carefully written so that they have a positive effect on the actions of teachers and students. For example, the teaching policy defines characteristics of high quality teaching very clearly and is being used as a basis for observing lessons. As a result of these approaches there are improving standards of attainment at GCSE and students are making good progress in the sixth form.
99. The quality of middle management is mostly good. There is very good subject management in mathematics and science, where strategies to raise students' standards have been very successful. The leadership team has worked effectively with most subject teams. They have sought advice and support from a variety of sources, including local education authority advisers, (as in mathematics), national consultants, (to deliver training on teaching), and representatives of successful schools, (such as in art and design).
100. Research findings have been used extensively in some subjects to select and implement modified approaches to improve learning; for example, in science the introduction of a modular course, to raise boys' performance, and the insistence on deadlines for completion of coursework, including use of 'catch-up' sessions beyond lessons.
101. However, the drive to raise standards has not yet had a positive impact on all subject leaders. Leadership of humanities is unsatisfactory and standards are too low. Leadership of religious education is poor and students do not experience an appropriate curriculum. Heads of year know and support students well as individuals, but are not ensuring that teachers make good use of tutor time.
102. The special educational needs co-ordinator leads a committed team of teachers and learning support assistants. Clear aims and direction are given for ensuring students' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Arrangements for specialist teaching to meet the needs of students with specific learning difficulties are good, and the contribution made by other external agencies for students with visual or hearing impairment is well organised. Some learning needs are not appropriately supported; procedures for monitoring and supporting students' individual progress in and across subjects are in place, but they are mainly used to record tasks completed and to make generalised comments on behaviour. Although there is good practice in some subjects, for example in French, and in some individual lessons, overall the monitoring of teaching and students' individual progress is unsatisfactory. The SEN team, including learning support assistants, have insufficient opportunities to share practice and expertise. More direction is needed to assist teaching colleagues and learning support assistants to meet the needs of all students with special educational needs effectively. The SEN co-ordinator has begun the process of implementing the revised SEN Code of Practice and is beginning to address some of these issues. Although there has been some in-service training on SEN issues, since the previous inspection little progress has been made in training support teachers and in monitoring the

effectiveness of in-class support. The SEN base is cramped and the range of resources is limited.

103. There is an effective governing body. Governors meet frequently and are fully involved in strategic decisions. They receive good quality information from representatives of the college, on a wide range of issues, and this enables them to understand the college's strengths and weaknesses very well. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the college. He often tours the college, interviews students and meets with teachers to assess the effect of agreed changes. He has frequent meetings with the principal to discuss improvement and to ensure that governors' meetings have an appropriate agenda. The governing body is very supportive of the college and has been active in working, in partnership with college representatives, to determine strategies for improving achievement. The governors play a key role in holding the college to account; for example, in terms of finance. They intervene when they believe it to be necessary, such as when influencing the college's participation in graduate teacher training.
104. Governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well. However, at the time of the inspection they had not ensured that the college provided a daily act of worship or that compliance with the locally agreed syllabus for religion education had been met.
105. There is a good system of supporting educational priorities through financial planning. Subject teams are allocated funds to cover their basic provision and are also invited to make bids for further funding. A committee of governors and staff examines bids very carefully and expects a detailed analysis of how additional funding will improve provision for students. This is increasingly encouraging staff to focus on how standards can be raised. For example, in science, a bid for student homework books has been approved, based on its identified potential for increasing learning. Alternative sources of provision are considered, thoroughly and regularly, when allocating contracts, such as for catering and grounds maintenance, ensuring that the best value is obtained. National Opportunities Funding is being used to improve staff confidence and competence in using computers but this has not yet resulted in sufficient use of computers for students. Specific funds for raising achievement are focused very well on practical strategies which are already demonstrating success. For instance, in design and technology, funding is being used to enable teachers to work with high school representatives to offer students an early start to their GCSE course immediately after Year 9 national tests.
106. The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers match the demands of the curriculum very well. Almost all teachers are specialists in their subject field and their depth of knowledge is having a positive effect on students' progress, particularly in Years 12 and 13. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were too few specialists teaching art and design.
107. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The college's finance committee is constantly looking to make improvements which are within its means, such as carpeting rooms, re-varnishing tables, replacing blinds and providing new benches. However, most of the significant weaknesses identified in the previous inspection remain in place. Many teaching rooms are cramped and inhibit the use of a range of teaching and learning styles. The 'open plan' design results in disruption to learning as students move through one room to gain access to another. Facilities for design and technology are unsatisfactory; workshops are inappropriate for designing and making resistant materials, and rooms for textiles are too cramped. The use of shared space for dance and drama activities makes it difficult to produce a theatre atmosphere because of noise transmission. The use of non-specialist rooms, such as science laboratories for modern foreign languages, is not conducive to effective learning. Provision for physical

education is satisfactory, overall, with a very good sports hall and artificial pitch.

108. Learning resources are mostly sufficient for students' needs, but there are notable exceptions. Equipment for modern foreign languages is basic and does not provide students with sufficient stimulation. Resources for humanities are inadequate, with too much emphasis on photocopying materials and too few books in the library. Students have to share equipment in design and technology and there are no graphical calculators to support mathematics. The number of computers has been increased since the last inspection but there is still too little access to them in some subjects.
109. The college provides satisfactory value for money. The above average income per student is used to provide a broad curriculum. Students make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 and good progress in the sixth form.

Sixth form

110. The sixth form is led well. There is a clear vision to build further on work done in Years 10 and 11 so that students continue to improve their capacity for independent learning and prepare for adult life. Overall this is very successful; there are many examples within subjects of students becoming mature learners and students are clear that they feel well prepared for life beyond college.
111. There are two sixth form co-ordinators, one for Year 12 and one for Year 13. They are caring, hard working and committed to making high quality provision for students. They have managed the transition of post-16 courses very well, incorporating changes in national guidance very quickly. The college provides a wider range of AS, A and Vocational courses than is normally seen and students are positive about their involvement. The introduction of the Key Skills of communication, number and ICT has been successfully accomplished. All students were involved in discrete provision of Key Skills last year. This year the provision has been developed so that all students following a vocational course have discrete sessions, a few have discrete lessons in ICT, and remaining students develop their skills within other subjects. This has proved effective for most skill areas, although there is too little co-ordination of the development of skills using computers.
112. The management of the curriculum enrichment programme is not fully effective. Although the sixth form leaders have ensured that there is a good range of opportunities available and students are encouraged to participate, some do not.
113. The heads of sixth form lead experienced teams of tutors. There are positive relationships and a shared keenness to support the personal and academic performance of students. However, there is no monitoring of tutors' work during registration time resulting in too much variation in the quality of what goes on.
114. Governors have been fully involved in strategic decisions for shaping the changing face of post-16 education. However, they have not ensured that statutory requirements for provision of religious education and a daily act of worship are met.
115. Financial planning is good. Income is used well to provide a very wide range of courses for students and there are viable numbers of students on most courses.
116. Sixth form accommodation is inadequate. Tutors often have to register in open areas which suffer disruption as students pass through. This makes it difficult to hold one-to-one interviews with students and establish a tutor group identity. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. There are a few exceptions such as basic equipment for modern foreign languages and insufficient books in the library.

117. Overall, the sixth form is cost effective. The college offers a comprehensive post-16 education. Students have very good attitudes, make good progress and have a positive opinion of the college.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

118. The governors, principal and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in integrated humanities by:
 - improving the quality of teaching;
 - providing greater challenge for students;
 - improving students' attitudes to learning;
 - improving the management and organisation of the subject.(Paras: 3, 7, 31, 32, 34-39, 153-158)

- (2) Ensure that the provision of religious education meets statutory requirements by:
 - allocating sufficient time for the subject;
 - planning a curriculum which enables the locally agreed syllabus to be covered;
 - improving the quality of teaching;
 - improving students' attitudes to learning;
 - improving the management and organisation of the subject.(Paras: 31, 34, 50, 51, 64, 74, 104, 114, 202-209)

- (3) Further increase students' access to computers by:
 - improving the co-ordination of the use of ICT across all subjects;
 - introducing a system for recording and reporting on students' development of ICT skills, so that they can progressively build on their prior attainment;
 - improving the availability of computers.(Paras: 11, 28, 35, 51, 65, 105, 108, 111, 136, 141, 148, 151, 155, 163, 170, 172-176, 187, 218, 226-229, 261)

- (4) Improve the progress of gifted and talented students by:
 - using existing assessment systems to identify gifted and talented students;
 - ensuring that curriculum plans and lesson plans identify activities designed to provide challenge for all.(Paras: 10, 39, 40, 119, 120, 122, 133, 134, 153, 154, 159, 167, 178, 192)

- (5) Provide a daily act of collective worship by:
 - determining how it can be included in the college day;
 - implementing the decision.(Paras: 74, 104, 114)

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 10 – 11	111
	Sixth form	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		190

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 10 – 11

Number	3	17	40	40	10	1	0
Percentage	3	15	36	36	9	1	0

Sixth form

Number	5	20	36	17	1	0	0
Percentage	6	26	45	22	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number observed in either the main college or the sixth form is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for [enter Years [] – [] and/or the sixth form here] as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100 in both, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the college's students

Students on the college's roll

	Y10 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the college's roll	624	245
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free college meals	22	

Special educational needs

	Y10 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	25	0
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	149	18

English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last college year

	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	154	136	290

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	88	140	149
	Girls	85	133	136
	Total	173	273	285
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	College	60 (51)	94 (94)	98 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	College	40.2
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and	College	0	N/a
	National		N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
College	Number of candidates	58	54	112
	Average point score per candidate	13.8	16.3	15.0
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18.0	17.5

For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations

For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations

		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
College	Number of candidates	40	46	86	18	8	26
	Average point score per candidate	16.6	17.3	17	7.7	10.5	8.5
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	834
Any other minority ethnic group	13

Exclusions in the last college year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian	3	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	46	
Other minority ethnic groups	1	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y10 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	53.44
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.3

Education support staff: Y10 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	456

Deployment of teachers: Y10 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.9
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Average teaching group size: Y10 – Y11

Key Stage 4	23.1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2,520,621
Total expenditure	2,553,705
Expenditure per pupil	2,959
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,506
Balance carried forward to next year	62,422

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	11.8
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	11.8

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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

869

Number of questionnaires returned

77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	32	58	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in college.	36	55	1	1	6
Behaviour in the college is good.	16	48	14	1	21
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	58	16	5	3
The teaching is good.	14	71	6	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	43	30	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	39	44	12	1	4
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	49	8	1	5
The college works closely with parents.	9	44	32	10	4
The college is well led and managed.	10	58	5	8	18
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	61	4	1	5
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	42	18	3	26

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGE 4

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Good and improving attainment in GCSE English and English literature.
- Improving performance of boys.
- Very good standards of speaking (and listening in structured situations).
- Good teaching overall with a significant proportion of very good teaching.
- Very good contribution of the subject to students' moral, social and cultural development.
- Good, well-planned curriculum with a range of challenging texts studied.
- Good improvement since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Students' listening and concentration are too weak in a significant minority of lessons.
- Higher attaining students receive too little challenge in some classes.
- The role of staff supporting students with SEN is not defined clearly enough.
- Poorly designed accommodation restricts the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

119. In 2001, GCSE results in English and English literature were above the national average. Girls' results were above the results of girls nationally but boys' results were significantly above the results of boys nationally and this strong performance of boys has been a feature of recent years. There has been a clear trend of improvement over the past few years in English and significant improvement in English Literature, apart from disappointing results in 2000. The improvement at A*-C is a particular strength. Attainment at the highest grades (A*-B) is higher than average in English Literature but only average in English.

120. Standards of current work are above average. Higher attaining students respond well to the excellent range of reading and writing assignments set on some challenging texts. They have produced fluent critical and creative essays on texts ranging from 'Much Ado About Nothing' to Patrick Suskind's 'Perfume'. They produce mature and perceptive analyses of character and language, (for example one student's study of the changing relationship between Othello and Desdemona), and are able to use a variety of registers and sentence structures. Some higher attaining students write effective comparative studies and demonstrate a strong level of personal response, but there is little evidence of the flair that characterises the very highest grades. Middle attaining students make good progress over the course and develop appropriate critical vocabularies. Many show considerable imaginative insights; for example confident handling of narrative fiction inspired by a Poe story. Writing is generally technically accurate and essay technique is good. However, in some cases, critical analysis is limited to listing stylistic features without necessarily commenting on their effects.

121. Lower attaining students and students with special educational needs make good progress over the course, although irregular attendance affects the attainment of some. These students show evidence of personal response and attempt to use wider vocabularies but there is little variety in their sentence structure and critical writing is at a basic level. Overall, students enter the college with above average standards in English and maintain these standards, demonstrating satisfactory achievement. Good progress is made in listening in formal situations and speaking overall.

122. Teaching in English is good with a significant proportion of very good teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge of texts studied and of the requirements of the examination. They convey their own enthusiasm for the subject effectively and plan lessons well, sharing learning objectives with students. This was particularly evident in a Year 11 lesson on 19th century women poets, where skilled and energetic modelling of the critical process proved very successful. Teachers make very good use of a wide range of teaching methods, including the effective use of questioning, as in a very fast-paced Year 11 lesson on 'A View from the Bridge', but some more active approaches are constrained by cramped accommodation. Very good use of assessment is made, particularly GCSE target grades, in order to challenge students to improve, but they are not always clear what specific strategies to adopt. Most teachers manage students well and are skilled at cajoling good work and behaviour from them. However, on occasions, teachers are not sufficiently effective at extending the most able, for example a basic storyboarding task in response to Keats' poem was set for gifted and talented students who could see little purpose in the activity. Students learn well and show good appreciation of each other's efforts but do not always listen or concentrate well. Students with special educational needs make good progress overall but do not always respond well to support in lessons.
123. English is led well. There is a strong partnership approach to developing the curriculum and a shared commitment to securing higher standards. There is very good use of performance data to set high expectations. Effective monitoring of provision, including teaching, ensures consistency.
124. Drama is a strength of the college. Attainment at GCSE is consistently high, although results at the highest levels were disappointing in 2001 and are still subject to appeal. Students achieve high standards within drama lessons, particularly in Year 11 when they demonstrate confidence, conviction and very good speaking and listening skills. Their collaborative skills are very good and they negotiate the next stages in learning very well. They have good critical vocabularies, evaluative skills and imaginative insights, although variable use is made of working notebooks. Teaching is consistently good and effective in developing independence and creativity. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' cultural development and the life of the community. There is very good extra-curricular provision, enabling students to participate in and experience a range of high-quality drama. Drama is led with creativity and commitment but the accommodation is not always sufficient, given its current use; for example, a Year 11 drama realisation test was adversely affected by the high level of noise from the dance class sharing the studio space.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average and are improving.
- Assessment information is used well to identify and address underachievement.
- Students are well supported by their teachers in their preparation for the GCSE examinations.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to provide challenging work that develops good understanding by students.
- Leadership and management of the mathematics faculty are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not receive sufficient written feedback to inform them of how they can improve
- There is no planned programme for enhancing and using students' numeracy skills across the curriculum

125. Results at GCSE have improved since the last inspection. In 2001, the percentage of students achieving grades A*-C was significantly better than the national average. The average point score in mathematics has continued to rise and in 2001 was above the national average. The proportion of students achieving the higher grades of A and A* has continued to rise. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
126. The standard of work seen in lessons, students' exercise books and coursework is above average. There is very good progression through topics and students have a good understanding of basic concepts. Lower ability students are able to measure accurately and draw angles up to 360° , to the nearest degree. They progress to measuring and recording bearings accurately and use these skills to solve problems associated with location of ships and aeroplanes. Most students are able to use sine, cosine and tangent in a right-angled triangle. They approach problems logically by first drawing a diagram and then selecting the appropriate trigonometric ratio to be able to calculate unknown sides and angles. Higher attaining students are able to use the sine rule to solve problems in a non right-angled triangle. Students make very good use of ICT in their coursework. They use spreadsheets to make repeated calculations when using trial and improvement to locate a maximum or minimum point. Coursework marks are continuing to improve. The achievement of students has improved since the last inspection. They arrive at the college with above average standards and this is maintained throughout their GCSE course.
127. Teaching is good overall and this leads to good learning. The teaching and learning in all lessons observed was at least satisfactory, and was good or better in the majority of lessons. There was some very good and excellent teaching. Where teaching is good or better, teachers are using their very good knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the examination requirements to plan for progression and provide increasingly challenging tasks. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, when using the sine rule, students progressed from calculating an unknown side, to calculating an unknown angle and then the most able in the group investigated the ambiguous case when an unknown angle may be acute or obtuse. Students listen carefully to teachers modelling the solution of examination style questions. They then ask sensible questions to check and develop their own knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on vectors, the teacher used the solution of examination style questions to teach the importance of direction when working with vectors. Students were then able to apply

this correctly to a range of further questions. Teachers generally plan for a range of activities, which maintains student interest and increases the pace of learning. When necessary, teachers challenge inappropriate behaviour and refocus students back on their work. Teachers make very good use of laminated cards to emphasise the main learning points in a lesson. The cards are then displayed and students use these for reference in future lessons on the topic. Where teaching is weaker, the tasks either lack challenge or last for too long and the pace of learning is then slow. Teachers are marking students work in exercise books and investigative tasks, but students do not generally receive sufficient written feedback to help them know and remember what they have to do to improve.

128. Students generally enjoy their mathematics lessons and the majority of students respond well to their teachers. Teachers do not allow the unacceptable behaviour of a significant minority of students to affect the learning of the majority. Students work well individually, in pairs and in small groups. They help each other with their mathematics in a mature manner.
129. The mathematics faculty is led very well and management is very effective. The teachers work well together as a team. The head of faculty monitors the quality of teaching. She is aware of any relative weaknesses and has developed appropriate strategies for supporting the needs of all mathematics teachers. Faculty meetings are used for developmental work and focus on teaching, learning and raising achievement. The faculty has developed very good liaison with feeder schools. Transition projects begin as soon as the students have completed their Key Stage 3 tests. The faculty has a very good system for tracking student progress. Excellent use is made of assessment data to predict grade expectations for students, which are then tracked against actual performance. Having identified underachievement, appropriate support is then given. Teachers give a lot of time outside the classroom to help students prepare for their GCSE examinations.
130. Progress since the last inspection has been very good. There is no longer underachievement in the GCSE examination. Students' written work provides a good basis for revision and students have good recall of previous learning. Assessment and the tracking of student progress are now very good.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average.
- GCSE results at A*-C are well above average.
- Teaching is good.
- Assessment is used well to help students make progress.

Areas for improvement

- Gifted and talented students and less able students make too little progress.
- Marking is often too infrequent and does not offer sufficient advice on how students can improve.
- There is too little use of computers.

131. At the end of Year 11 in 2001, GCSE results were above average overall. The proportion of students gaining grades A*-C in double award combined science was well above average. Results at A*-G were just above average. Boys and girls achieved

similar results.

132. In the work seen in lessons and from students' written work standards are good and most students make satisfactory progress. For example, in scientific enquiry a majority of students can carry out a systematic investigation, make consistent observations and draw appropriate conclusions; most students can consider the impact on their experimental results of changing other variables. Older students use their scientific knowledge to explain findings and consider carefully the experimental reliability. This was evident in a Year 11 investigation into the properties and behaviour of light when it is refracted through a glass block, and students' explanations of anomalous results in velocity/time graphs. Standards are similar in physics, chemistry and biology. Students' literacy and numeracy standards are good and this enhances the quality of their science work.
133. Students with special educational needs usually make good progress, because there is good individual help from teachers and learning support assistants. Progress is less evident in lower attaining groups in Year 10 and for girls in particular, who have an unsure grasp of key scientific concepts, and tend to see little relevance in the subject. The most able students also make insufficient progress as they are not identified and challenged appropriately.
134. Teaching in science is good and students learn well in lessons. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it well to challenge, broaden and enrich students' understanding of science. For example, in a Year 10 lesson the teacher's knowledge of molecular structure greatly enhanced the quality and precision of questions to students, improving and refining their responses to consolidate understanding of the topic. In lessons where students make good progress teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of the quality and quantity of work to be completed. Progress is slower when learning expectations are less clear and challenging. For example, in a Year 11 lesson students searching a web site on the computer, and using a text book and worksheet to investigate waves and radiation, were not rigorously organised or challenged to find and learn specific scientific knowledge in a specified period of time. Other lessons, although satisfactory, lacked sufficient range of strategies and resources to extend capable students fully, or challenge with rigour their analytical research, and presentational and evaluative skills. Assessment data and information are used effectively to provide feedback to students about their progress and to set targets for improvement. These are also used well to evaluate courses and modules. Marking is inconsistent. It rarely makes reference to targets for improvement, or strategies to assist students to improve, and is often too infrequent.
135. Students' attitudes to science are usually good. The majority of students are diligent, well behaved and careful when completing tasks. Students are less motivated and interested in science in some lower attaining groups and other groups when they fail to see the relevance and usefulness of the subject. This occasionally leads to unsatisfactory and disruptive behaviour, which adversely affects learning.
136. The department is managed well. Appropriate policies are in place, with practical guidance provided for teachers in schemes of work and lesson plans. Challenging targets have been set, which the department has met, and there is good capacity to meet future targets. Developments at present lack a tight enough focus on how to further improve teaching and learning in science. Advice to teachers lacks sufficient detail to enable them to plan for a diverse and rich experience for students which will interest, stimulate and challenge them fully. Because of this, opportunities are missed to excite students about science in the world around them and their immediate environment. This is particularly evident in low attaining groups. ICT resources have improved considerably in recent years but they still make too little impact on students'

attainment and progress, although plans are well advanced to develop the resource further. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, with many laboratories requiring upgrading, including a need for new furniture and flooring. Display lacks a sense of care and value, and students' work is rarely used to exemplify high standards.

137. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have improved considerably. Teaching is consistently more effective and the department has the capacity to improve further.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- There is a broad range of two and three-dimensional experiences.
- Independent learning skills are developed well.
- Critical studies are used well to inspire and extend students.

Areas for improvement

- There is too little use of computers.
- Students with literacy difficulties receive too little help on their written work.
- There are too few opportunities to reflect on the work of other students and famous artists.

138. The overall proportion of students who gained A*-C grades at GCSE in 2001 was well below the national average, continuing the trend of recent years. Results in the drawing and painting options have been close to national averages, but results overall have been adversely affected by continually poor outcomes of three-dimensional courses. This has now been addressed by discontinuing the separate three-dimensional course and its non-specialist teaching. The team of art teachers has introduced a range of effective strategies for improvement and current students' work indicates a significant potential improvement in 2002 results.
139. Levels of attainment in art are broadly average on entry. The majority of students make satisfactory progress and others exceed this, in an improving situation. Overall, students make sound progress to achieve average standards. Students know the processes that lead to improved painting and drawing outcomes and many apply these successfully. They understand the importance of research and experimentation as an essential part of the decision making process. Many are able to combine the skills and produce two and three-dimensional pieces that are original in concept and completed to good standards. The skilful and individualised paintings inspired by the pop art theme in Year 10, and the imaginative and well-constructed three-dimensional works based on metamorphosis in Year 11, are good examples.
140. Students with special educational needs are integrated well and make satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented students do not make sufficient progress because there are too few planned strategies to challenge them. The progress of students with literacy difficulties is adversely affected because there is too little support for written work during initial studies and self-evaluation. The majority of students make sound progress in a range of techniques. The recent changes in course options, their delivery and management, are having a very positive impact on raising standards.
141. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which

they relate well to the students' needs. The range of strategies used has a positive impact on the quality of learning. Lessons are planned well and classes are managed effectively. The most effective lessons are characterised by brisk starts, clear aims, challenging tasks and high expectations. In some lessons the pace is insufficiently demanding and end of lesson reviews do not identify students' successes or targets for improvement. The frequent use of assessment, with regular and informative marking, contributes well to target setting and students' progress. The use of individual action plans in Year 11, where students are fully informed of assessment criteria and involved in evaluation of their work, is particularly effective. Teachers develop students' independent learning skills very well and use critical studies regularly to improve and extend the quality and range of students' work. There is good use of computers for research and experimentation, but too little use as a medium for creativity and insufficient access for some students.

142. Students' behaviour and attitudes to work are good. Working relationships are very productive. Many students are enthusiastic about their work and they acknowledge the impact that good teaching has had on their progress. They mostly settle to work quickly and listen attentively.
143. Art is managed well by an experienced and enthusiastic specialist. There are well-planned schemes of work for all year groups. Students' learning is monitored carefully and this has resulted in improvements to curriculum provision, such as replacing ineffective courses and teachers. There is a good partnership with the high school teachers, which has improved the art course for Year 9 students. Assessment methods have been revised and are now applied more consistently. Tighter coursework deadlines are timetabled and made known to students. Homework is now set and marked regularly. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities and a strong team spirit with commitment by all to raising standards.
144. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, as outlined above. The recent changes have good potential to raise standards of attainment, but inadequate storage and the use of one art studio as a thoroughfare remain a constraint to learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Students' attitudes.
- Relationships between staff and students.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject specialisms.
- Advice and guidance to students when undertaking GCSE coursework.
- Assessment sheets which help students to know how to improve their GCSE coursework.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not achieve well enough in GCSE graphic products.
- There is too little use of computers.
- The accommodation for resistant materials is not effective for designing and making.

145. Students' results in the GCSE examinations over the last three years have been below the national average at grades A* to C, but show a gradual trend of improvement. Results vary considerably across subjects within the department. Students have achieved well in resistant materials, but results have been well below average in graphic products. Overall, students' results in 2001 were lower than those in their other subjects. Boys achieved grades close to the national average in design and technology, whilst girls' results were some 8% below. Students generally performed better in their coursework project than in the written paper.
146. In Years 10 and 11, progress and achievement are sound overall, but vary across different aspects of the department. They remain generally higher in food, resistant materials and textiles than in graphic products. In the current Year 11, the attainment of students in the design and technology subjects overall, is similar to that normally seen at this age.
147. In Year 10, students make sound progress, learning a range of skills before starting their GCSE projects. For example in food, students develop their knowledge and understanding of healthy eating by trialling a variety of recipes for 'cook chill' products. In textiles, students learn a range of constructional and decorative techniques which they use to design and make a variety of bags. In resistant materials, students demonstrate a good understanding of basic mechanisms by constructing working models in wood, and heat treatment processes by brazing together metal sculptures. In graphic products, students design and make containers and packaging for a new range of toiletries. They investigate a range of existing packaging techniques, but are not yet sufficiently confident to model and develop packaging solutions of their own.
148. In Year 11, students are successfully completing a range of coursework projects in all subject areas that are matched closely to the requirements of the examinations. Gifted and talented students are producing work of the highest grades. In many cases, these students have made good use of computers to carry out research and to present their work. In food, students have completed a good variety of dishes for a children's menu in a restaurant. Their coursework folders demonstrate a very good understanding of the brief set and they have tested and evaluated a wide range of individual ideas. In textiles, students are completing a good range of garments that have enabled the group to practise and apply the constructional and decorative techniques developed in Year 10. In resistant materials, students demonstrate confident use of hand and machine processes to assemble traditional wooden toys. In graphic products, the GCSE work of

a significant number of students does not demonstrate the range or the depth of work required to reach the higher grades. For example, students have made comparatively little use of computers to generate, model and communicate their designs. Students with special educational needs make sound progress overall. SEN students in the Young Enterprise group are making good progress, producing a range of projects for sale at a local craft fair.

149. Teaching is good in over half of lessons, and in the remainder is satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of their material specialisms whilst preparing students for their coursework project. They give clear introductions to lessons, describing the work to be undertaken. These provide students with a clear picture of what they are expected to achieve within the session. Teachers provide detailed help and advice on an individual basis, discussing the work completed and helping students to prioritise on how to proceed. They make good use of resources to support learning. For example in graphic products, video was used effectively to familiarise students with the production of packaging in industry. In textiles, the teacher shared an extensive collection of artefacts from the Far East to stimulate students' interest in an interior design project. Good assessment procedures are in place which provide students with detailed advice about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Where teaching is less effective, insufficient opportunities are taken to demonstrate skills to raise the standard of students' designing and making. In resistant materials, teachers need to ensure that students are made aware of the hazards involved in the various machine processes, so that, for example, they do not need to be constantly reminded about the need to wear eye protection.
150. Students respond well and show a good level of interest in the subject. They work well together and relationships between students and their teachers are good. In Year 11, the GCSE coursework provides good opportunities for students to take more responsibility for their own learning. In food and textiles in particular, students have responded well to this opportunity and their folders demonstrate a high level of involvement in their individually chosen projects.
151. The head of faculty is providing good leadership and management of the teaching team. Since the previous inspection, the team has worked together well to address the issues raised and teachers have introduced a range of strategies to improve performance at GCSE level. There are, however, resource and accommodation shortfalls which are still restricting attainment. Teachers have very limited access to computers for whole-class teaching. For example, for students in graphic products, the opportunity to use computer aided design and manufacture is very restricted at the present time. The accommodation for resistant materials is outdated and does not provide an effective learning environment for students engaged in designing and making.
152. Since the previous inspection the department has made satisfactory progress. GCSE results show a gradual trend of improvement and standards overall are now similar to those normally seen.

HUMANITIES

Overall, the provision in humanities is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- A broad subject curriculum.
- Well-organised coursework with opportunity for research.

Areas for development

- Standards of attainment in examinations and lessons are too low.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and produces unsatisfactory attitudes to learning from students.
- Underachieving students are insufficiently challenge to do better.
- The management of the subject does not provide enough guidance on planning effective teaching and learning.
- The range of resources used, including ICT, is too narrow.

153. Students are underachieving in their examinations. Many students are not reaching their full potential in humanities. In last year's GCSE, less than half the students gained grades A*-C. This compares favourably with national subject standards, but is unsatisfactory when compared with results in other subjects in the college. Standards in these have improved in the last three years, but results in humanities have remained the same. Only a small proportion of students gained the highest grades in the subject. Boys performed slightly better than the girls.

154. All students take humanities in Years 10 and 11, but they make slow progress in their lessons. Much of their knowledge is limited to low-level information. For example, in their lessons on the Vietnam War students gain only a superficial knowledge of events. They show little understanding of the political background, or about the important moral issues of modern warfare. Their work is of a similar standard in other topics. For example in lessons on modern society, students learn about bullying. They gain only a very superficial understanding of the causes and effects, and of strategies to deal with the problem. Many lessons make little demand on the learning skills of the students. They spend a significant amount of time engaged in low level activities including copying, and answering simple questions. Work in their folders shows that they make better progress in some aspects of the subject. For example, in a project on science and religion, a student showed he had the ability to organise his own work, and demonstrated a sound grasp of research and analytical skills. Consequently his work gained good marks. The progress of students with special needs varies from lesson to lesson. In some they are well supported and can get on with their work. In one lesson seen, however, they were simply given some copying to do, resulting in very limited learning. Progress of the gifted and talented students is slow. For example, in work on the Berlin Blockade, written work lacked focus and showed only a superficial and confused knowledge of the facts.

155. The main reason students underachieve in humanities is the unsatisfactory standard of teaching. There are a number of key weaknesses. The teachers have sound knowledge of the humanities topics, but are less secure in their understanding of how the subject should be taught. They do not make full use of a range of methods, including hypothesis testing, investigation and group discussion, to engage students in exploring the subject. In some lessons the teachers lack confidence in answering questions, for example about communism and the Berlin Wall. Lesson planning does not take sufficient account of work students have already covered. For example, many students have studied aspects of the Vietnam War in history, and have learned about global warming in geography, before entering the college, but Year 10 lessons still

cover these topics. Teachers sometimes have low expectations of their students and set simple tasks. In a lesson on the Cuban missile crisis, the students were all set the same task. They spent most of the lesson cutting and pasting photocopied information. They gained only limited knowledge of the key personalities and events. None showed any real understanding of the global significance of the crisis. Teachers do not demonstrate confidence in dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour. In some lessons they ignore inattentive students who continue talking when they should be getting on with their work. Resources to support learning in humanities are limited. Teachers rely too much on photocopied booklets containing simple information. These are not used sufficiently to provoke discussion. Where other resources such as video are used, the opportunity to challenge students to reflect critically is often missed. This was apparent in a lesson on life after death in an RE module. There is insufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Although many students use ICT to enhance the presentation of their work, the teachers do not make sufficient use in lessons to add interest and stimulation.

156. The unsatisfactory teaching produces an unsatisfactory response from the students. Many regard the subject as a low priority. They enjoy topics perceived as relevant, such as that on socialisation, but have little respect for much of their work. For example, some see little point in learning about recent political history. They lack concentration in lessons. In some, a significant minority are boisterous, talkative, inattentive and occasionally discourteous. Consequently they do not try as hard as they could and their progress is limited.
157. There are weaknesses both in the leadership and management of the subject. Schemes of work do not provide an adequate structure to support effective teaching and learning. They simply give the order in which work should be taught, rather than providing guidance on planning lessons to challenge all students at an appropriate level. There is insufficient reference to core skills of literacy and numeracy. There is insufficient guidance on how to capitalise on the richness of the subject to support students' personal development as future citizens. Monitoring has not identified key areas for development to improve the effectiveness of the teaching.
158. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Improvements in standards of attainment in the subject have not kept pace with other subjects. The quality of teaching has deteriorated. The attitude of students to their learning is still unsatisfactory and therefore their progress is slower.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- A broad curriculum including opportunities for fieldwork.
- Satisfactory teaching.
- Sound management and organisation.

What could be improved

- There are too few students attaining the highest grades in examinations.
- The range of resources used, including ICT, is too narrow.
- There is too little monitoring to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

159. Standards of attainment have improved recently. In last year's GCSE examinations three quarters of students gained grades A*-C. There is some underachievement by

the gifted and talented students. Only a small proportion gained the highest grades. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.

160. Students gain a sound knowledge of a range of topics. For example, work on volcanoes and earthquakes helps them understand the processes shaping the world. Analyses of census data, in lessons on settlement in the local area, give them a sound understanding of social geography. They gain valuable investigative skills from topics which include fieldwork in the local area.
161. A small number of lessons were observed during the inspection. Overall the teaching was satisfactory but the quality of individual lessons varied. In one lesson all students were set the same task. They spent most of the time copying a map from their text book to show the location of a major retail centre. From this they only gained simple knowledge about factors that affect location. A significant number of students in this lesson were underachieving. In a similar lesson the teacher introduced a much broader range of activities to help students understand location. She gave good support and well timed explanations to help students. She provided good materials to help less confident learners get started, and useful extension questions where appropriate. She sensibly allowed time at the end of the lesson to recap and consolidate learning. As a result the response of students was very good. They all worked hard throughout the lesson. They gained valuable skills of analysis and interpretation from the mapwork, and a good understanding of locational factors. Teachers mark students work carefully and provide helpful feedback to help students improve. In one of the lessons, very good use was made of students' homework essays to explain how to improve written work in the subject.
162. The attitude of students in the lessons observed was generally satisfactory. A small minority of students lacked concentration in one lesson observed, so time was wasted and progress slow.
163. Management of the GCSE geography course is satisfactory. The scheme of work provides adequate guidance on coverage of the syllabus. It does not however provide sufficient structure to help teachers take account of students' prior attainment in the subject. More could be done to help individual students reach their full potential. Resources are barely adequate. Students share text books in class, and cannot use them for homework. There is too little use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
164. Progress since the last inspection has been slow. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory, but there is still some lack of challenge in lessons. Although attainment has improved, there is still underachievement by some students.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Results at GCSE are well above the national average.
- Students produce high quality coursework, making effective use of the history of the local area.
- Relationships between students and teachers are good.
- Assessment is highly effective.

Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching opportunities and resources used is too narrow, including too little use of computers.
- Tasks are not planned well enough to challenge all students.

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165. GCSE results in 2001 were well above the national average. 86% of candidates gained a grade A*-C compared with 58% nationally, although this is a fairly small option group of 22 students. Results have been improving consistently since 1999 and students do better in history than in other subjects in the college. Girls achieve as well as boys and students achieve above the national average for higher grades. Most students achieve above what would be expected from their performance at the end of Year 9, apart from a few of the highest ability who underperform.
 166. Attainment in lessons is above average. Students have in-depth factual recall of historical events. They use sources well to extract meaning. For example, in a Year 10 lesson students used maps and text to deduce accurately the patterns of movement of the Mormons around America and the reasons for this. Students produce high quality coursework, using the Groby census and directories from 1871 and a site visit. They make well-supported statements about the reliability and usefulness of these sources and carefully illustrate their work with examples and photographs.
 167. The majority of students make good progress and achieve well. Those with special educational needs make slower progress because the tasks they are set are not sufficiently broken down into stages for them. The highest attaining students are not sufficiently challenged. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on Northern Ireland the more able students were not encouraged to consider economic forces or the forces of nationalism in their analysis of the situation.
 168. Teaching is satisfactory, with some instances of very good teaching. The two history teachers have very good subject knowledge and explanations of historical events are clear and easy to follow. They also possess an up-to-date working knowledge of the examination requirements, which is used to good effect. Positive relationships are maintained with students and a good working atmosphere has been established. In the better lessons, teachers use their knowledge and experience to fully engage all the students in the work. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson when, after watching a video on the events of 'Bloody Sunday', the teacher shared his personal feelings with the class in a sensitive way to enable them to reflect on the events and the repercussions of this tragedy. Spiritual and moral issues were explored and the students were given an opportunity to make their own response. Assessment of students' work is accurate and based on the examination criteria. Mark schemes are shared with students so they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Work is regularly marked with helpful comment. Where teaching is less effective the work is not closely matched to the needs of individual students. Weaker students struggle and only complete written tasks to a low level because they are too complex for them. Ineffective use is made of learning support assistants who have not been fully briefed on lesson objectives. Top ability students are not sufficiently challenged. For example, in a different Year 11 lesson on Northern Ireland students were asked to write a narrative account of events for a newspaper. The lesson did not enable students to address the complex issues or to develop subtle responses to different political perspectives. The teaching strategies seen were restricted to a fairly narrow range. There was little use of ICT, role-play, group or paired work or use of artefacts to make the study of history more engaging.
 169. Students' learning is satisfactory in all years. Most students listen well and because of the clear exposition of their teachers they acquire detailed knowledge and understanding of historical events. They are able to use historical terminology confidently to express their views and they read with fluency and expression.
 170. History is an efficiently managed subject area, which has received favourable

comments from the examination board on the quality of its marking and administration. Well thought-through changes have been made to the history curriculum: introducing Northern Ireland instead of China as a topic and turning the 'History of Medicine' into a modular unit. This has had a positive effect on examination results. However, schemes of work are not up to date and do not plan specifically to include spiritual, moral and cultural aspects. Training for the use of ICT in history has been unsuccessful and no remedial action has been taken. Monitoring and support for history teaching is carried out by the head of humanities but has not proved fully effective in sharing good practice between the teachers.

171. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Attainment in GCSE results has risen and the quality of teaching has been maintained. Students now make very good oral contributions in lessons prompted by skilful questions from teachers. However, students are still not challenged sufficiently to work at a level commensurate with their ability.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The use of ICT is being developed across the curriculum.
- Investment in ICT is putting more equipment into subject areas.
- Students are confident in the use of ICT.
- ICT is being used effectively to reinforce learning for SEN students.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough co-ordination of the use of ICT across all subjects, and insufficient availability of specialist rooms, resulting in too little use of computers overall.
- ICT is not included as a subject in reports to parents.
- Control technology is not available to students.

172. In Years 10 and 11 standards of work seen are satisfactory. ICT is being used and developed in the majority of subjects in the curriculum with varying degrees of success. For example, in Year 10 science, students use a GCSE revision program for forthcoming tests in earth materials and electricity. Students test their knowledge against a choice of possible answers. They use investigation and memory skills well in order to improve their scores, especially when questions become progressively more difficult in some topics. All SEN students use Successmaker to reinforce learning in mathematics, reading and spelling. The software provides students with statistics which show them making sound progress. In Year 10 mathematics lessons students incorporate ICT very well to enhance their learning. They can design a water tank to hold the maximum volume from a given size of sheet. By investigating the relationships between the sizes of corners cut from the sheet prior to bending, and incorporating these statistics into graphs, students are able to work out precisely the optimum length, breadth and height of the tank for maximum volume. Students also use formulae in their spreadsheets; an excellent example of how ICT can be used to stretch students of all abilities. Further good use of ICT is found in English where work is carefully word processed, and double-sided advertising leaflets are produced incorporating text and images. In design and technology students develop graphics in packaging design and can design logos. Students in food use their ICT skills confidently for researching, questionnaires, graphs and word processing; some folios are of a very good standard. Personal development programme students working on the Young Enterprise scheme successfully use ICT to design posters and advertising materials for their business enterprise. They benefit from the expertise of an IT manager from a local business.

Generally students are confident users of ICT and their skills are developing as they get older. However, in some subjects students do not get the opportunity to improve their ICT skills and this is preventing standards from being higher.

173. Overall the quality of teaching and learning using ICT is satisfactory, but higher level ICT skills are not yet being developed, in many subjects. Teachers observed using ICT during the inspection demonstrated good subject knowledge and used ICT to impart or reinforce students' knowledge quickly. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured and move at a good pace. Well presented topic sheets are given to all students as an aid to independent learning. In lessons teachers and support staff constantly move around, helping and advising students. In a Year 10 science revision lesson, SEN students were well integrated into the lesson with learning support. They used the software confidently and were able to see their progress as test scores were totalled on the monitors. The lesson moved at a very good pace with time limits being imposed. Attitudes and relationships in the group were good. Students enjoyed using the program and agreed that it was a help with their revision. The software used in the majority of cases is appropriate for the majority of students and the tasks set. For example in a Year 11 food technology lesson, students were using diet analysis software to research the nutritional contents of their final project recipes. The teacher advised them carefully how the data could be selected and presented by inserting it into 'Word' or 'Publisher'. They were selecting information for different purposes, using the software tools confidently and finally presenting the data in their folios. Students were developing independent learning skills and the teacher was developing the use of ICT in all folio sections. In mathematics the tasks are challenging more able students well. In some cases in science insufficient use is made of the 'help' command to provide detailed information when revising. Students use the equipment confidently and remain on task throughout lessons. They make good use of ICT facilities in the library before, during and after college hours.
174. In all lessons relationships between staff and students are very good. Students are attentive and keen to learn. Their behaviour is very good. This allows lessons to progress quickly and students learn well. They respond well to teachers' high expectations of them. Students enjoy using ICT facilities and the majority could appreciate how their learning is enhanced. SEN students are fully integrated into lessons.
175. Responsibility for the cross curricular delivery of ICT now rests with heads of faculties and subjects, but co-ordination of this is not effective at the moment. However the ICT co-ordinator has audited the use of ICT in subjects and has an overview of this. The co-ordinator continues to train staff on a regular basis and advises when required. A good development plan is in place, and a whole college ICT policy is spreading good practice across subjects. ICT has benefited from a large investment recently. This has been carefully targeted through the development plan. Many staff are gaining in confidence in the use of ICT as their training takes effect. An able network manager maintains the equipment to a high standard. However, a lack of sufficient bookable specialist rooms is restricting the development of ICT use across subjects and is hindering the progress of students.
176. The use of ICT has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed this time. The structure and content of lessons is better but there are still too few opportunities for students to develop their computing skills. Art, design and technology and science have incorporated some ICT, but music and history have not. The overall provision of computers has improved. Old machines have been replaced and reliability is much improved. However, the quality of accommodation remains inadequate.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- A strong commitment to language learning for all: almost all students enter GCSE French.
- Planning for exams: teachers help students to prepare thoroughly, particularly for coursework.
- Relationships are good.
- Assessing and monitoring students' progress is a developing strength.
- The leadership provides a strong vision and direction.

Areas for improvement:

- There are too few students able to speak with confidence.
- Students do not receive sufficiently precise information on how to improve their language skills.
- Activities do not engage the interests of all students, especially the less capable, sufficiently well.
- The range of teaching and learning styles is too narrow, including too little use of ICT.

177. GCSE results for French show an upward trend, apart from last year, 2001, when results were in line with the national average but down on the year before, when results were more than 10% above the national average. This dip was due mainly to staff absence and lack of time given to the subject. However, more students gained A*-B grades than in 2000. Over 90% of students are entered for GCSE, a much higher proportion than in most other colleges. Taking this into account, attainment is good. A small number of students who cannot cope with GCSE are successfully entered for the Certificate of Achievement. German GCSE results were well above average in 2001, reflecting the high ability of most of the small number of students who take German.

178. In lessons, standards in French are above average. Observations, departmental assessments and completed coursework indicate that students are working towards significantly better grades than last year. This reflects good achievement by most students. Coursework is particularly impressive: the most able write confidently and accurately, expressing their opinions on a variety of topics, such as work experience, using a wide range of expression and different tenses, including the imperfect and conditional. A few talented linguists produce work of outstanding quality. Students in the middle ability range write well, using reasonable vocabulary and different tenses, although with some inaccuracies. Some of the lower ability students, including those with special educational needs, write straightforward French and, although their grasp of structures is insecure, they put understandable sentences together. A few low attainers show little understanding or accuracy. Reading and listening levels are above average: most understand substantial passages, both written and on cassette. However, few speak with confidence, particularly for routine conversation or to respond to unprepared questions. Language lessons contribute well to literacy through the emphasis on grammatical understanding and accuracy in writing. Girls achieve better than boys. There is a very low number of students from ethnic minorities and there are no significant differences in achievement. Students are grouped in broad upper and lower sets. Students in the upper groups make sound progress, achieving creditable levels. The same is true for those in the lower groups who work hard but a considerable minority show little interest, make little effort and consequently underachieve. A considerable amount of extra support is provided for SEN students. The specialist teacher support is particularly useful and helps most to make reasonable progress but does not solve the problem of those with very low motivation. In German,

most have limited or no previous knowledge of the language before starting here. They steadily increase their understanding and ability to use the language over the two years of the course. The present Year 11 group has a wide range of ability and motivation: a third of the students can quite confidently say what they do, did and will do in their free time, using correct word order and subordinate clauses, and they are on course for high grades; about half speak reasonably accurately but need some support, and they are working towards C grade and above; the rest need constant support, find the course very demanding and are likely to gain low grades. The Year 10 group consists mainly of able students. Although they are starting from a low base, they can already adapt and apply new language accurately, so they are on course for good grades next year. Spanish is offered this year in Year 10 for the first time. There is one mixed group and most are still working at a low level of language.

179. Teaching in French, German and Spanish is good. It is never less than satisfactory, and there are some very good features. Teachers know their languages and GCSE requirements very well. They plan carefully the build-up to coursework, giving helpful guidance, models of good practice and displays on classroom walls, so students know what is expected for a C grade or an A grade piece of work. Teachers have a good rapport with most students, based on calm and firm but understanding and good-humoured respect. This helps teachers to manage most students' behaviour well and encourages all but the most reluctant to work hard. However, these strategies are not effective with a small minority of uncooperative students. There are some common strong features across the department like the warm-ups at the beginning of each lesson, which settle students and get them quickly tuned in to the language. Teachers present new language and explain grammar points clearly but do not provide enough opportunities for students to practise speaking intensively. Broad objectives are shared with students but they need to know more precisely, in lessons and through marking, how they can improve their language skills, rather than just completing a set task. In the best lessons there is a rapid pace and a buzz of creative interest, as in a Year 11 French lesson, where students were encouraged to think of their own ideas for complaints in a hotel. They appreciated the chance to be creative whilst still practising the correct language structure. Some lessons give students too narrow a range of experiences. Activities do not always engage the interest of the full range of students and there is not enough learning by doing. There is too rarely a real purpose for using the foreign language.
180. Most students are positive and hardworking. However, a significant number of students in lower groups lack motivation and they tend to go through the motions of learning, doing the minimum required. A handful of students, mostly boys, are severely disaffected and are sometimes disruptive, not learning themselves and distracting others. This slows the progress in these groups, despite the teachers' best efforts.
181. The head of department, also a member of the senior management team, understands well the strengths and weaknesses of the department and has a clear vision and direction for improvement. She has been in post for less than a year, so it is too early to see the impact of the strategies she has already put in place. Small rooms, lack of access to ICT and a shortage of stimulating resources make the teachers' task harder. The foreign language assistant provides useful speaking practice. Assessing and monitoring students' progress is a developing strength, leading to good identification of students' potential and needs.
182. Progress since the last inspection, only two years ago, is modest as many things remain the same. Lack of continuity in staffing has contributed to the dip in the trend of improvement. However, the new head of department's strong lead bodes well for the future.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Well above average results at GCSE, AS and A-level.
- Very good provision for cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for students to use new technology.
- Assessment procedures do not provide enough information on how students can improve.

183. GCSE music is a popular subject and recent results have been consistently well above average. A good proportion of students achieve the highest grades. Students show particular skills in performing and composing in lessons and in work seen. Compositions show sensitivity to texture and structure. Students start the course with above average attainment and they achieve well during the course.
184. Standards of music seen in lessons are well above average. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson in composition students built rapidly on clear expectations. With able tutorial support they work with a good level of independence. In a Year 11 GCSE lesson students became more confident and accurate in discussing musical style because questions were carefully targeted. No students with special needs were seen in class. Talented students make appropriate progress.
185. Music is taught well. Lessons are challenging, teaching is knowledgeable and discipline is good. As a result standards of learning are good. The good relationships between staff and students are significant factors in promoting good learning.
186. Attitudes in lessons are good and behaviour is very good. Students appreciate the opportunities they are offered, use resources responsibly and make sustained effort in their work.
187. The music curriculum is satisfactory but there are insufficient opportunities for students to explore music through new technology. The music department is a busy area in the college and makes a very good contribution to the cultural development of students. There is a wide range of concerts and lunchtime clubs to help students develop their work and their interests.
188. The department is led by a capable and adaptable musician who is experienced and well trained. She has a clear vision for the subject and has taken effective action to meet the college's targets. She also has a perceptive view of how students should progress and how achievement can be enhanced. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but some aspects need refining. The accommodation for music has not kept up with the demands being made on it and is poor. Resources for music are satisfactory.
189. Since the previous inspection, the good quality of teaching has been maintained and standards have improved. Accommodation is still inadequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- A significant improvement in GCSE exam results, which were above the national average in 2001.
- Good leadership of the subject with a clear purpose and direction for the subject's future development in the college and good support given to the more inexperienced members of the department.
- Committed teachers who have very good subject knowledge and deliver a well-balanced curriculum.
- Teachers who work hard to enable all students, whatever their ability, to participate in all aspects of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- There is too much inconsistency in the marking of GCSE work, with students receiving too little advice on how to improve.
- Teachers do not plan enough opportunities to assess students' work, including opportunities for student self-assessment.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently to support and develop gifted and talented students.

190. GCSE results for 2001 were good and a significant improvement on the previous two years' results. The percentage of students gaining A*-C grades was above the national average of 52%. Students tended to perform better in physical education when compared to their other subjects. The subject tends to be a far more popular choice with boys and this makes a comparison between boys', and girls' performance difficult. However, the few girls who do opt for the subject tend to achieve as well as boys.

191. Students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress so that by the end the end of Year 11 most students are working at or above a level which is typical for their age. Knowledge and understanding of physical education is generally better for those who opt to study the subject at GCSE, where it is a popular option. The college's policy of open access to the subject means that students of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, are represented in the groups. They are well supported by subject teachers and make good progress. Students are acquiring a good range of performance skills in the main games and a good understanding of the benefits of exercise through the health related exercise programme.

192. Teaching is good. Teachers establish good working relationships with their students. They set clear objectives for every lesson, explain these fully to their students, and often review them at the end of the lesson to ensure they have been met. Teachers have appropriate expectations of students, work hard to instil in them an enthusiasm for the subject, and support them well so that most achieve a good standard of performance. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education is a particular strength and they make good use of student questioning to ensure students have understood what they have been taught. Lessons are usually well planned and teachers make very good use of methods that will capture students' interest and so enhance their learning. For example, in a Year 10 GCSE lesson the teacher organised students in groups with one student acting as a 'human skeleton' to which others in the group had to attach sticky labels indicating where major bones were located. This active involvement of students in their own learning had a positive impact on their rate of progress and understanding of the location of the major bones of the skeleton. Teachers know their students well. Those with special educational needs are set tasks appropriate to their abilities, are given good support, and make good progress. The talents of more able students are similarly encouraged, but teachers do not plan sufficiently to support and develop gifted and talented students. For example, in a Year 11 GCSE badminton lesson several students of exceptional ability were used well to

demonstrate particular skills. Lesson planning does not, however, provide enough opportunities for students to develop their observational and evaluative skills. This has an adverse effect on helping them to improve their own skills or to improve the performance of others.

193. Standards of behaviour are usually good and students respond well to the teaching. Most students are keen to do well, listen carefully, follow instructions and show good levels of effort but there are some students, particularly in the non-GCSE groups, with poorer rates of participation. Teachers work hard to ensure these students are kept on task and that the curriculum covers areas of activity which interest the majority. Working relationships are usually very positive. Students generally show respect for each other, for teachers and other adults and work well to improve their own standard of performance. For example in a GCSE badminton lesson students showed their appreciation of others' performance by clapping and shaking their opponent's hand at the end of a game.
194. The head of the department provides good leadership for his relatively inexperienced colleagues. At the same time he is well supported by these colleagues in the drive to raise standards in the subject, and there is shared purpose and direction for the subject's future development in the college. The spacious sports hall and the floodlit astro-turf area provide very good accommodation for teaching the subject. The multi-gym area in the sports hall viewing-gallery, although used well, is a difficult teaching space because of the cramped conditions. The provision of two dedicated classrooms for teaching theory elements of the GCSE syllabus enables teaching resources to be readily available and displays appropriate to the subject to be mounted and have an impact on learning. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the department has worked hard to offer a range of extra-curricular activities which students want to engage in. However, the curriculum time for non-GCSE students, at one hour a week, is less than the recommended two hours entitlement. Teacher assessment of students' performance still requires refinement to include opportunities for students to assess their own progress in each activity. Assessment against GCSE requirements is generally sound, but marking is not thorough enough and often does not tell students what they need to do to improve. There is a need to relate grades better to the standards of the GCSE syllabus.
195. The subject received a mixed report at the last inspection and has made good progress in some important areas. Standards of attainment have risen and are now slightly above national expectations. In the GCSE examination the proportion of students achieving the highest grades is now above the national average with a points score which is significantly above the college average. The inconsistent degree and level of challenge and expectation in some girls' lessons has been dealt with and the department is working hard to ensure activities are more attractive to girls. Students' attention levels have improved and now students are better at listening to teachers' instructions. Resources for learning were judged as insufficient; they are now satisfactory. The need to support and develop newly qualified teachers in the department has meant that monitoring of the quality of teaching is now better. There is still a need to increase opportunities for students to develop their skills of observation and evaluation of others' performance in order to raise standards further.

DANCE

Overall, the quality of provision in dance is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Committed teacher who has a very good knowledge of enthusiasm for the subject.
- Very good and supportive teacher/student relationship, which motivates and encourages

students to work well.

Areas for improvement

- There are too few students gaining higher grades at GCSE.

196. Dance is part of the Physical Recreation and Performing Arts (PREPA) faculty and taught as a GCSE option for students in Years 10 and 11.

196. The small cohorts of students studying the subject at GCSE make it difficult to make a judgement about the trend in standards over the last three years. Over this period the percentage of students attaining a grade C or above has been well below the national average. In 2001, of the seven students entered, only one gained a higher grade. This is a dip on the previous year when two out of five gained higher grades. By the age of 16 students' attainment is at a level which, in terms of performance in lessons, is slightly above that which is typical for their age.

197. Because dance is set against physical education in the option system, it was only possible to see one Year 11 lesson during the inspection. This indicated that the majority of students were achieving at a level which is slightly above average. Students have limited experience of dance when they come into the college. They make good progress and are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the main elements of dance terminology and are able to present performances of a satisfactory standard.

198. Teaching in dance is good. Teacher/student relationships are very good. The quality of their relationships, combined with the teacher's subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, leads to sound standards of performance in dance. The teacher provides a model of good practice in developing performance techniques and, as a result, students make good progress in their development, interpretation and performance of dance routines. Students generally have good observational skills, and are able to follow the teacher's lead as they work on developing their set study. In the lesson observed, however, the opportunity for students to observe and feed back ways in which their partner could develop their performance was not used effectively.

199. Students respond well to the teaching and show high levels of interest, concentration and enthusiasm for the subject. They work well in pairs and groups and show a good appreciation for others' good performance.

200. Whilst the accommodation and arrangements for changing are adequate the floor surface is hard, has no spring, and is not the ideal floor surface to work on.

201. There was no specific mention of dance in the last report.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

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

Strengths

- There has been a conscientious attempt to begin teaching RE in Years 10 and 11, which has resulted in some discussion work that interests students.
- Some students have done good personal studies, motivated from their own interest, on religious topics in GCSE humanities.

Areas for improvement

- Statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education are not met; syllabus

requirements are not covered.

- The quality of teaching is too low; there is a poor match of staff expertise to the demands of the RE curriculum.
- Students are not challenged sufficiently and attain low standards.
- Lessons are not planned well enough, with too little thought on choosing effective tasks and resources to promote learning.
- The potential to examine spiritual, philosophical, moral and cultural issues has been neglected.

202. Students do not take GCSE examinations in religious education.

203. Through Key Stage 4, integrated humanities GCSE classes aim to provide opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of religion, ethics, beliefs and values. Standards of achievement across the ability range, and particularly among the most able students, are low. Good study skills are sometimes applied to religious and ethical questions in personal research studies, but this is sporadic and occasional. Some of the material that all students study is peripheral to religious and ethical enquiry; for example, emphasising the paranormal, or superstition, rather than philosophic and ethical questions rooted in religious traditions. Students often raise important questions, but they have little chance to examine ideas, thinking or experience that offers a response to religious issues. Due to the very small amount of curriculum time spent on RE, the subject makes little or no contribution to developing general educational skills.

204. Standards of teaching and learning in RE are low. The teaching of RE is planned and implemented by teachers with other specialisms. Lessons on beliefs and values are a conscientious attempt to increase RE provision, but no good teaching of RE was seen during the inspection. Worksheets contain inaccuracies and misrepresentations of religions. Discussion is closed down because teachers lack subject knowledge; as, for example, when students ask questions, but get little opportunity to explore ideas from religious or secular perspectives, being directed back to the completion of simple information processing tasks. The pace of learning is sometimes slow, and the expectations of standards are low: even very able students in Year 11 are set tasks at levels appropriate for Years 7-9. For example, discussion of a near death experience as evidence for life after death was dismissive; there was no consideration of what the nature of such evidence might be, or its interpretation, within or beyond religious communities. Consideration of the views of atheists and theists in worksheets, and students' written work is rushed, shallow and over generalised. Teaching is satisfactory where case studies stimulate whole class discussion and students are asked to justify or elaborate their views. However, the potential for deeper debate, sharper critiques, and the examination of religious experience are often underdeveloped. Good examples of students' personal research studies show that high standards can be set in research enquiry and other skills, but in terms of RE, even these examples suffer from the insecure subject knowledge of teachers. A good programme of student visits to local places of worship has been undertaken: this has many benefits, including making a good contribution to cultural development, but an hour's visit to a Mosque is not a substitute for the proper curricular provision for studying religion across Years 10 and 11. Provision for assessing RE is not in place: reports to parents about integrated humanities do not refer to progress or attainment in RE.

205. Students' responses to RE vary. Some have many interesting ideas to explore, but no opportunity to do so. Others dismiss the subject as unimportant: such a perception is never challenged by the college's provision.

206. At the last inspection, weaknesses in provision of curriculum time, management and attainment were identified. Action taken since then has not led to the college meeting the requirements for RE. Some small-scale innovation has been conscientiously approached in the humanities faculty, but has been inadequate. Current plans to introduce an option in religious studies GCSE next September, and to give subject leadership to a member of the humanities faculty, who has no qualification or training in RE, have poor potential to enable the college to meet the requirements of the law, or give all students the chance to achieve the gains in knowledge and understanding in RE to which they are entitled. In the light of this, leadership and management of the subject are judged to be very weak.
207. Curriculum planning is imprecise. There is no awareness among staff of the potential of RE to challenge and engage students, and expectations are low. There is a very poor match of teachers' qualifications and experience to the demands of the curriculum. Despite the large number of teachers involved in teaching humanities, there is no-one with any specialist qualification in RE, and no member of the faculty has taken any opportunity for professional development in RE since the last inspection.
208. Resources for learning are poor. There are no sets of textbooks for RE in the college, and the use of some good videotapes is slight. Copied worksheets, made within the college, often reflect the lack of subject knowledge of teachers.
209. Religious education at Groby Community College was judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection. The provision, teaching, learning and attainment are still unsatisfactory, because the college has not addressed effectively the issues raised previously.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, thirteen subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the college.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Mathematics	4	100	62	50	15	3.8	1.5
French	1	0	78	0	13	0	1.7

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
English	32	100	95	16	37	5.6	5.9
Mathematics	26	100	87	50	43	6.5	5.8
Chemistry	22	100	90	45	43	6.5	5.9
Business education	21	100	92	38	32	6.0	5.5
Information technology (New this year)							
Physical education	10	90	92	30	25	5.6	5.1
Performing arts (New this year)							
Geography	7	100	92	43	38	6.6	5.7
History	7	86	88	14	35	4.3	5.5
French	6	83	89	0	38	3.7	5.6
Theatre studies (Drama)	11	100	93	18	31	4.6	5.5
Art and design	5	100	96	20	46	6.0	6.6

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Travel and tourism	10	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	8.4	10.1
Business	16	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	8.6	10.5

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on mathematics and chemistry but biology and physics lessons were also sampled. Group sizes in all the sciences have traditionally been strong, though few girls opt for physics and a significant proportion leave the course before completion. Biology results are above the national average and have been improving steadily over recent years. One biology lesson was observed which, though satisfactory, was teacher dominated. The students were passive and had little control over their learning. Physics results have also improved steadily over recent years and are now in line with national averages. Two physics lessons were observed and were satisfactory or better.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Standards of work at AS and A-level are well above average.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject.
- Teachers use the assessment system effectively to monitor and track student progress.
- Student attitudes towards their work is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There is a 100% pass rate in A-level and further mathematics courses.
- Leadership of the mathematics department is excellent and there are very effective strategies in place that are raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' written comments in students' books do not provide enough information on how students can improve.
- There are only a few examples of teaching mathematics in exciting and innovative work.

210. The inspection covered the AS and A-level mathematics courses offered by the College. Students study a modular course selecting options from pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics modules. Provision for those students re-sitting GCSE mathematics was not inspected.
211. Examination results in the 2001 examinations at A-level were well above national averages and show improvement over recent years. There was a 100% pass rate for those students taking A-level mathematics and further mathematics examinations. This represents good progress for these students given their starting points. Currently there are fewer girls than boys studying the subject, especially in Year 13. However, the department has a vigorous recruitment and retention campaign undertaken towards the end of Year 11, and numbers of girls have increased in the current Year 12.
212. Standards of work seen in lessons and in students workbooks were correspondingly well above average. High attaining further mathematics students are proficient at interpreting complex rational functions. They evaluate these functions at critical points and draw accurate sketches indicating asymptotes. A-level students quickly learn the rules for integrating products and can apply them correctly to integrals containing algebraic and trigonometric functions. In mechanics, AS students use equations of motion to determine unknown forces and are becoming more confident at finding

elegant solutions to the resulting simultaneous equations. Statistical simulations directly involve students and give them the insight to see the connections between reality and mathematical modelling. A Year 13 group examined the action of placing a full cornflake package on a smooth table and increasing the slope by lifting the table. This was repeated for different orientations of the package and inferences drawn about critical factors affecting when the package slid or toppled.

213. Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning. In the lessons observed, there were several examples of the very best teaching and learning in mathematics. All teachers have a very good understanding of mathematics and communicate this with passion. Students gain and value this understanding. It enables them to apply their knowledge to new problems and they grow in mathematical confidence. A Year 12 group was starting a lesson on permutations and combinations. A group of four were asked to show, in front of the class, the different orders they could stand in. More students joined in and the problem was extended to permutations when two students were required to be together and occupy 4 out of 6 seats in a railway compartment. Other students joined in giving instructions for movement and after 20 minutes of exciting activity, the majority could clearly see the reason for the factorial notation in the standard formulae for permutations and combinations. All students quickly understood the factorial notation for selecting first, second and third from a horse race with sixteen entrants and could argue successfully how to apply permutation and combination theory to selecting six numbers from forty-nine - the National Lottery challenge. They also knew that 'knowing this' did not improve their chances of winning! It was a very successful lesson and students made very good progress. Not all lessons involve students in this way. The mathematics department should build on these highly successful lessons and extend student involvement in lessons. All teachers use the assessment system effectively to track students' progress. Students know their predicted examination grades and what they have to do to achieve them. Oral feedback in mathematics lessons is of very high quality and enables students to learn quickly and accurately. Written comments in their notebooks are of lesser quality and often are non-existent. Teachers should match their very good oral comments by comparable appropriate written guidelines for improvement.
214. Students are highly motivated in lessons and work hard. They enjoy the positive relations with staff and the sense of humour often used to alleviate some of the more tedious parts of the theory work. They value the teaching and know it leads to them obtaining good results. There is often a magical atmosphere in lessons and this captivates and delights the students.
215. The leadership and management of the department are excellent. The vision for teaching and learning is overt and shared by the team. They know their mathematics extremely well and are strategically paired for each teaching group. There is determination and commitment to raise standards. It is reflected in the department development plan. The link with the college senior management team provides positive and significant support. It keeps a sensitive overview of the rate of improvement. The quality of the teaching and learning is thoughtfully monitored against agreed criteria and evaluations provide the key to action planning for the future. This is a highly effective department which has made good improvements since the previous inspection and is a strength of the college.

Chemistry

Overall the quality of provision for chemistry is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge.
- Students are able to develop their independence and self-motivation.
- Good use is made of published course materials and teachers' own resources
- Students develop good practical skills.
- Students are fluent in their use of chemical technical terms.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not receive sufficiently frequent or detailed assessment of their learning to let them know how to improve.
- There is too little use of ICT.

216. A-level chemistry results show a recent rising trend. In 1999 results were below what would typically be seen for both boys and girls. They have risen steadily since then and are now above the national average for both boys and girls. In 2001, for example, all students passed their chemistry A-level, with 46% achieving the higher grades of A and B. This is above what would be typically seen. Boys and girls achieve equally well in chemistry.

217. Standards of work by current students in Year 12 are up to expectation and most students are achieving in line with, or slightly better than is typical. Students demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of charge on complex ions and are able to use appropriate terminology to describe and explain phenomena such as activation energies, dynamic equilibrium, and reversible reactions. Their understanding of these phenomena in practice is developing well, as are their practical skills and their confidence in following written instructions. Year 13 students are also achieving well. For example, they show very good understanding of reactions involving the transition metals. They can use theory to predict the nature and completion characteristics of reactions. They are able to test these predictions using well-developed practical skills. They are confident and articulate about what they know, and not afraid to ask when they find certain aspects challenging. This is evident across the ability range.

218. In the lessons observed, the teaching of chemistry was generally good, with a small proportion of lessons satisfactory and very good. Teachers display good subject knowledge and this is used in their questioning, explanations and structured approach to teaching key ideas. It is also used with students as individuals or in small groups to add 'every day' relevance to some learning or to extend the more able. The Nuffield course books are used and the work is based on the topics within this course. Good use is made of teachers' own resources to amplify, clarify or extend students' understanding. The students are appreciative of this way of working as they feel it provides them with an appropriate blend of support whilst encouraging them in their quest to become independent learners. Regular assessment is unsatisfactory. Students do not receive enough frequent and detailed information about their learning and how they are progressing in relation to their targets. Though homework is set and marked, the feedback aspect of it is underdeveloped. Computers are seldom used in lessons and this is an area for development. The teaching strikes a good balance between being lively, engaging and teacher-led, and giving students the opportunities to develop their own skills and take charge of their own learning.

219. Overall, learning is good. The vast majority of students learn well and develop a good level of motivation and independence which enables them to develop their skills,

knowledge and understanding of chemistry to a good level. One or two students in Year 12 are clearly struggling with their motivation but the response of the vast majority of students to the teaching within the department is good and they appreciate the efforts that staff are making to teach them effectively.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No subject was inspected in this curriculum area, however, a small number of lessons were sampled.

In design and technology, examination results were well above the national average in 2001. Three lessons were observed in the department: the AS and A2 level design and technology; product design groups and the AS level design and technology; the food technology group. All groups are working on aspects of the coursework units. In food, students are making good progress trialling a variety of recipes on relevant topics, for example dishes using organic products and dishes for vegetarians. In product design progress overall is sound. The AS level students are making steady progress, sketching a range of creative ideas for body adornment. The A2 level students are successfully completing the designing of their final coursework projects. At this stage of the course, their making skills are less well developed.

BUSINESS

Business studies is the only subject provided in this curriculum area. It was a focus of the inspection.

Business studies

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Students make good progress.
- An appropriate blend of direct teaching and individual assignment work.
- A wide range of opportunities to promote independent learning.
- The social skills, maturity and personal development of students are good.

Areas for improvement

- There are too few opportunities for students to research, discuss and present ideas in some lessons.

220. Standards in business education examinations in 2001 were good. A-level results showed levels of attainment above the national average, with all students gaining pass grades and almost 40% attaining A/B grades. The AS results were declined by the school in 2001 and some resits will occur. The number taking the AVCE course was relatively small but three students gained distinctions and three were awarded merit passes. In Intermediate GNVQ business all students gained a qualification.

221. The standards of current Year 13 A2 students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are in line with the average for this stage in their course. There are no significant differences between the standards reached by boys or girls. Current students following the AVCE course in Year 13 are making good progress in the knowledge and understanding of the units of work being followed. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in students' files during the inspection shows that standards are rising, particularly for the most capable students. They demonstrate a higher level of analysis than normally seen, as shown in their findings in their chosen case studies. All students in Year 12 are making good progress and are achieving standards expected

for this stage of the advanced course. When taking account of their previous attainment in GCSE this represents good progress for many students. The most capable students achieve particularly well in understanding the methodology needed for their course requirements. All students develop a range of relevant terminology, which they use effectively. Students have good research skills and use ICT with confidence.

222. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some satisfactory lessons in Year 12. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teachers' expert subject knowledge underpins discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. When teaching is good, as in a Year 13 lesson on factors affecting the UK economy, a good framework is provided which enables students to make good progress. There were good relationships which gave students confidence to ask questions and volunteer ideas. Oral feedback was given to students at the end of the lesson to reinforce the learning that had taken place. In a good Year 12 lesson students were giving a lively presentation on the 'Government's role in the Foot and Mouth crisis', the pace was fast, with a variety of activities covering the skills of listening and speaking. However, in a Year 12 lesson where the teaching was otherwise satisfactory, there was too much teacher talk, so that students did not have enough active practice or participation in the work to consolidate their learning.
223. Students' response to learning is good. All students show good levels of interest and concentrate productively on tasks. Relationships are excellent. Students treat their peers with warmth and respect; they are mature and conscientious young adults. Their ability to work independently is being developed and most take advantage of the opportunities to use the college ICT facilities available to them.
224. The good range of business courses provides a real opportunity for all students to be able to access the subject. This also supports progression between the different courses such as Intermediate to AVCE. Potential students are guided and allocated to courses best suited to their individual needs, taking account of prior attainment, relevant diagnostic assessments and the likelihood that students will achieve in the work.
225. This is a well-managed department. The head of department has set about ensuring clear educational direction. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. There is a strong sense of purpose and a determination that the students will do well. Responsibilities for overall vocational management are located at a senior level and ensure institutional support. There are regular team meetings for curriculum planning and development, monitoring course delivery, assessment planning and review of student progress. The department is well placed to make further progress. The subject now benefits from a dedicated teaching room.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

AVCE, AS GCE, and Key Skills Levels 2 and 3 were inspected. Both AVCE and AS are new courses being examined for the first time this year. The Key Skills Level 2 course is taught to all intermediate GNVQ students who attend Hinckley College for the vocational elements of their courses. Level 3 Key Skills is available to AS students from all subjects as an option.

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- Marks achieved in the AVCE unit so far indicate that the majority of students are achieving in line with expectations and some are above.
- The Key Skills courses are carefully structured and well planned.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and keep abreast of the latest technological developments.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are very positive.
- A good recording, reporting and target-setting procedure is in operation.
- Teachers work hard in order that students achieve success.

Areas for improvement

- Methods of assessing and recording students' progress are insufficiently rigorous.

226. Intermediate GNVQ results over the last three years range from 88% passes in 1999, 100% in 2000, to 75% in 2001. The vocational elements of this course are taught at Hinckley College. Students were entered for Key Skills tests for the first time last year and achieved good results. Twelve passed Level 2, eighty passed Level 3 and there were twenty-one exemptions. Students have not been entered for GCE A-level in recent years.

227. Overall standards are good. In AS, students start the course without the background of a GCSE in ICT. They are given an introductory course to bring them up to the required level quickly before starting the main course. Students' portfolio work is well ordered and shows good progression from a low starting point to confident use of a database and spreadsheet. Students working on their projects have identified real end users for their spreadsheet designs. Their spreadsheet specifications are derived from interviews with parents or business managers in the local community. Work is of a good standard. It shows imagination and reflects students' understanding of the software. For example, a student working on a Rental Invoice Based System has written a good introduction and listed the objectives of the system clearly. The student has a good understanding of the hardware and software needed for the system design. All students use the marking criteria when producing their projects. In the AVCE course students are working on their database project. From the given scenario, working for a computer maintenance company, students identify entities and define the attributes for the entities. They have a good understanding of the task requirements and, by using well-constructed handouts, are able to work independently on their projects. In Year 13 students use Turbo-CAD to draw an individual plan view of computer hardware. Students investigate the capabilities of the software drawing tools in order to draw the components. A lot of thought and experimentation is needed, but students quickly appreciated the capabilities of the software. All students are challenged by the task and made fast progress. Good, accurate, detailed drawings are produced. In a key skills Level 2 course, GNVQ students are drafting a report to a manager as part of their project. They have used ICT to research various modes of transport which could be used to travel between factories in different parts of the

country. Costs are carefully calculated, all students use their ICT skills confidently to draft their reports, and they are achieving well. Other AS students are involved in more detailed research and are working independently to confidently develop skills which would enable them to respond to the demands of more complex situations at Level 3. All students make good progress in lessons and are achieving Level 3 comfortably.

228. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All teaching is well planned and the scheme of work is used effectively to co-ordinate teaching. Lessons are broken down into clear introductions before moving on to practical work. Teachers share knowledge and share the teaching of elements of courses according to their strengths. Teachers have a wide range of knowledge and one has industrial experience which is very beneficial to students. They have kept abreast of changes in the subject. In a theory lesson students were given the benefit of this knowledge when they learnt about past and present backing storage methods. They gained a good understanding of technical terms and very good use was made of redundant components as visual aids by the teacher with expert use of technical knowledge. Good individual support is given to all students in lessons. A strength of all learning is that students must produce individual project work. Students must identify real end users and work with them to design systems which will work and save time. In AS lessons a wide variety of projects were seen. One in particular will save teachers in the adjacent high school considerable time and effort when collating students' marks across subjects. Students put considerable homework time and effort into their work. They are enthusiastic learners and keep on task in all lessons. Teachers have high expectations of them. Some students use elements of their coursework in the college web site. More ICT is being incorporated into lessons in English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education, physics, film studies and general studies. The science department is also developing the college web site and video conferencing. All of this will soon have an impact on the curriculum for Years 10 and 11. Software is also being designed in this year's engineering education scheme project linked to the gas industry.
229. Leadership is good. A good ICT policy is in place and clear progress has been made with the development plan. The scheme of work showing individual teaching responsibilities is well documented. There has been a large investment in hardware and software recently. Use is being made of student data to aid target setting. Methods of recording students' progress are being developed. Performance management and staff monitoring procedures are in place and are being used successfully. Good technician support is provided by an enthusiastic network manager.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus for the inspection was on physical education and travel and tourism. No other subjects are offered.

Physical education

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

Strengths

- A-level exam results have continued in a steady upward trend in recent years and AS level results for 2001 compare well to national figures.
- Good leadership of the subject with a clear purpose and direction for the subject's future development at post-16 and good support to the more inexperienced members of the department.
- Committed teachers who have very good subject knowledge and deliver a well-balanced post-16 experience which includes both recreational physical education and the Community Sports Leader's Award.

Areas for improvement

- Marking of examination work is too inconsistent; there are too few comments on how students can improve.

230. The 2001 GCE A-level results showed a steady improvement on previous years. The average points score for the subject was higher than the national figure with more students gaining A and B grades than is seen nationally. AS level has been introduced successfully and of the sixteen students entered for the 2001 examination all but one gained a pass grade with almost a third gaining grades A and B. The numbers entered were relatively small and only include two and three girls respectively so it is not possible to compare girls' performance with that of boys'. Overall results for students achieving the higher grades is slightly better than colleges nationally and in line for all students gaining a pass grade. Students also do well when compared to their performance in the subject at GCSE.

231. The standard of written work produced by current students is in line with that normally seen. Their speaking and listening skills and understanding of difficult concepts are slightly above those normally seen. All teaching groups contain students across the ability range and the majority are making good progress. Most students are able to understand and relate some of the more difficult theoretical elements of the syllabus to their own experience and the practical work they undertake. For example, in a Year 12 AS level group two students were working on their personal study, focusing on the effect of fatigue on skill levels in basketball. They understood how to conduct a fair test, were able to use heart rate monitors to monitor and maintain their work level and were able to develop and refine a series of tests to explore their theory.

232. Overall, teaching is good and students make good progress and learn well as a result. A particular strength of the teaching is teachers' very good subject knowledge. For example, in a Year 13 A-level lesson focusing on the social context of sport, the teacher was able to illustrate the way sportsmen can be pressured into using performance-enhancing drugs. At the same time he dealt effectively with the inherent physical dangers these pose in a way which enabled students to more fully understand the issues. Teachers set clear learning objectives for the lesson, share these with students and often recap at the end to ensure coverage. There were some good examples seen of teachers using different learning styles and providing students with opportunities to develop their skills for independent learning. This was illustrated by the

example in the Year 12 AS level lesson above. Here, with good teacher inputs, the two students worked well to plan and develop their topic for research. In the Community Sports Leader's Award lesson one student took responsibility for organising and officiating in a hockey tournament. Much of the written work demanded of students takes the form of specific worksheets prepared by teachers, students' own notes, and structured tests. Whilst this is usually marked accurately and contains comments encouraging the student it often lacks comments informing students about what they need to do to improve further. Percentage marks are given on tests but students are not usually given information which relates this to a grade in the examination course. There is a need for a more consistent approach to this involving all teachers in the department.

233. Students respond well to the teaching and as a result learning is effective. They are generally attentive and participate well in discussion and small group work. They listen to others' views and contribute in a mature way to support, or counter, points being expressed. For example, in a Year 13 lesson where the focus was on Sport in Society, students were able to explore the subtle differences between what constitutes 'deviance' and 'cheating' in global sport, with both boys and girls participating equally. This participation was particularly effective in moving the learning forward.
234. The Sports Hall and floodlit astro-turf provide very good facilities for practical work and the provision of regular classrooms for the teaching of theory lessons gives teachers ready access to their resources and greater opportunity to enhance the learning environment with displays and key words. The good teaching and learning are a result of the good management and leadership of the head of department, ably supported by a strong team of teachers. There is a shared commitment in the department to develop the subject at post-16 further, both at A and AS level and as an enrichment and extra-curricular experience for all post-16 students.

Travel and tourism

Overall the provision for travel and tourism is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students develop confidence and increase their knowledge of this vocational area.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of the students.
- Extra curricular and enrichment experiences for the students.
- Development of the Key Skills, particularly communications and ICT.
- AVCE/GNVQ courses make an important contribution to the post-16 curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Only small numbers of students are recruited on to the course.
- Standards of work are only satisfactory.

235. In 2001 four students entered leisure and tourism AVCE and one gained a merit award and three gained pass grades. Of the five students on the Intermediate GNVQ course, one gained a distinction, two gained merits, one a pass and one did not complete the course. Only a small number of students are attracted to the course, with five currently in Year 12 studying AVCE travel and tourism. Intermediate GNVQ students spend two whole days at the Hinckley base of North Warwickshire College where they follow the vocational units of their GNVQ. The remaining three days are spent in Groby where they study Key Skills.

236. The standards of work being produced by current students in Year 12 are in line with course expectations. These students, including some lower attainers, who achieve

their best results, do so because of their high motivation for sustained, productive and increasingly self-organised work. The accuracy of written work is generally good and most students are able to present information in graphical form. Almost all students make satisfactory progress on Intermediate courses and many achieve well compared with their prior general performance. Students have appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities in a range of work related contexts. Overall, good progress is made in the Key Skills of communication, number and information technology which are related to realistic situations in the world of work.

237. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but with variations in the quality of individual lessons. In a Year 12 lesson, strategies did not succeed in securing the involvement of all students. The teacher was allowing the students to work slowly at low-level tasks and not challenging students on the level of work set nor ensuring a sense of urgency and pace. However, the same group, with a different teacher, was able to take responsibility for their own learning; planning and making decisions about the workshops they would attend at the VESA conference they were going to attend. They showed interest and were motivated by this opportunity. The effectiveness of question and answer techniques is variable. In some lessons skilful questioning allows students to express their views and understanding. In others the questioning denies the students the opportunity to work out their own solutions.
238. Travel and tourism is co-ordinated well by the head of the vocational studies faculty. Although there are other individuals with particular responsibilities for the delivery of the courses, there is effective communication and co-ordination between them. All staff teaching in the area are well informed of current developments in the subject and are open and receptive to new ideas. Courses are enhanced by visits, work placements and case studies; for example, the link with personnel from Lunn Poly makes a positive contribution to student learning.
239. There is a very carefully planned scheme of work. The students benefit from a planned programme of assessment that enables them to set targets for improvement

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art, performing arts and theatre studies. Film studies was sampled, as part of English. A and AS lessons in music were also sampled; the subject is well taught and examination results are above average. Students show particular strengths as performers. In lessons very effective use is made of tutorial methods as well as whole class teaching. A good standard of learning is maintained. Students are well supported with a wide range of extra curricular activities and they are enthusiastic about their work.

Art

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

Strengths

- Students develop increasing independence and confidence in their learning.
- Teaching is very good.
- There is a wide range of opportunities to develop drawing and painting skills.
- Assessment is used well to help students learn.

Areas for improvement

- Results in examinations are only in line with national standards.

240. In 2001, results in A-level art and design were similar to those seen nationally, although comparison is difficult because only five students were entered.
241. Standards of work currently seen are above average. At this stage in Year 12, students are already aware of the limitations of the work they originally perceived as pinnacles of their achievement in Year 11. Progress in Year 12 is marked by the ways in which students are helped to move to a more individualised approach to work, are encouraged to be more prolific and wide ranging in their research, and become more proficient in their observational drawing skills and painting techniques. Their work becomes more adventurous in concept and the range of artistic influences broadens considerably. Many of them develop a real enthusiasm for the pursuit of varied stimuli, the recording of detail, the analysis of shape and form, and the experimental effects of different and mixed media. Their work is rooted in observational drawing and sketchbooks show a good understanding of compositional principles and a range of technical skills, tonal effects and creative options. Work resulting from the themes Still Life and Figures in Isolation shows good examples of artistic and personal development. Progress is more marked in Year 13 where independent learning skills are very well developed and research work is often prolific and very skilful. In several cases, finished work is developed to a high standard of detailed completion and technical competence. Some of the work inspired by the theme 'Faces' is of a particularly high standard.
242. Teaching is very good and expectations are high. The groups benefit from two specialist teachers who have good subject knowledge, good technical skills and high expectations. Teachers show good knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses. Individual tutorials focus on targets for improvement. Marking is consistent, thorough and diagnostic. The department makes use of a good array of visual resources, although no effort is made to reflect on our multicultural society. Visits to galleries have extended students' knowledge of art and design, and staff have built on these experiences. Departmental links with a local art and design foundation course have provided useful perspectives on vocational routes.
243. Almost without exception, students respond very positively to the demands of the course. In Year 12 students develop a mature attitude to work: they make good use of their own time and become increasingly independent of mind. They are all clear on their own progress and how standards can be improved. In Year 13, those improvements are more marked. Several students demonstrate real drive and determination in their work, and the influence of famous artists is considerably strengthened and effective. Artistic skills also develop into very personal styles and much of the work demonstrates great individuality and high artistic output.
244. The designated sixth form teaching area is a valuable and well used facility, offering

work space to sixth form students at almost any time. The dedicated computer facilities in the room are an invaluable aid to learning.

245. The department is well managed and staff work closely together in planning and delivering the course. Strengths identified in the last report have been maintained. The more consistent and rigorous approach to assessment and target setting is aimed at pushing standards higher and securing more of the higher grades at examination level.

Performing arts

Overall, the quality of provision in performing arts is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of the students.
- The culture of mutual respect.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is poor.
- Procedures for tracking students' progress are not developed well enough.

246. The college has recently introduced an AVCE course in performing arts, covering dance, drama and music and the first intake of students were preparing for their final examinations during the inspection. In class and in recent assessments attainment is above average. Students show strengths in preparing for performance and in their backstage work. Students were responsible for good quality technical and design aspects of a recent production written by the course leader.
247. Teaching standards are good and teachers make effective use of their considerable experience as performers. Lessons are well planned, students are well managed and expectations are high. Standards of learning are good. In a Year 12 lesson on planning a rehearsal schedule, teaching was very good as students' assumptions were delicately challenged. Students and staff were allowed to state their own points of view which were then maturely discussed at length. As a result of very good management students were given the opportunity to change strongly held views without embarrassment. After a full length discussion they deepened their understanding of the rehearsal process.
248. In a Year 13 lesson on preparing a performance in the community, standards of teaching were good. The teacher had already made course requirements very clear to the students and regularly reminded them of these as a focus to the lesson. The teacher used local knowledge and good guidance in helping students to prepare a list of suitable audiences and venues. Students worked hard on this. As a result, learning standards were good and students gained confidence and independence in negotiating with each other.
249. Students show very positive attitudes to the subject and have high expectations of themselves. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom and relationships are very good. Students feel valued and appreciate the advice and care that they receive from staff.
250. Schemes of work for the course are satisfactory. The curriculum meets the diverse requirements made on it. Extra-curricular provision is very good and there is a wide range of opportunities for students to perform in college, including a weekly showcase and the Youth Theatre. Students are also encouraged to provide evidence of

performance in other courses and out of college. There are good links with local businesses, venues and theatre companies to promote students' learning.

251. The course leader is a capable manager who leads a well-trained team who are practitioners in their own right. They meet regularly to review the course and the progress of the students. The culture of mutual professional respect runs through the day to day working of the department and is a strong factor in its achievements. Teaching and assessment are effectively monitored. The procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Students regularly assess their own progress and are supported with helpful marking of written work. However, procedures to track students' progress through the course are relatively underdeveloped. The resources for the subject are satisfactory, but the accommodation is poor, particularly for dance.

Theatre studies

Overall, the quality of provision in theatre studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of the students.
- Creative and committed management of the department.
- Provision of extra-curricular and enrichment experiences of live theatre, links with Youth Theatre.
- Working relationships between pupils and staff.

Areas for improvement

- A-level results are well below the national average, with too few students attaining the highest grades.
- There are too few reference books and play texts in the library to support A-level studies.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

252. Overall, A-level results were below the national average in 2001. Although there was a very good pass rate at grades A-E, students did not achieve the highest grades. In 2001 results improved, maintaining the 100% pass rate at grades A-E, while including two B grades. The quality of performance is often graded highly with the outcomes of the written components more variable. There are no specific requirements for entry to the course and, as a consequence, the ability of groups varies year on year. However, students gain considerably from the course. The department realises that the focus for future development needs to be the securing of higher grades and, as a consequence, has moved to a new examination board, which will allow more teacher intervention to challenge students.
253. Standards of practical work in Years 12 and 13 are very good. Students generally make good progress over the two-year course, most continue their studies at A2 level. They demonstrate excellent drama discipline and can sustain roles well. By the time they come to develop their presentation pieces in Year 13 they are capable of performance work of considerable maturity. A good example of this was seen in both Year 13 lessons where pairs of students worked hard at their devised and extract pieces, with accents particularly well achieved and sustained in the extract from *A View from the Bridge*. Effective levels of literacy are fostered well through the drama work, particularly in developing speaking skills through collaborative and performance approaches. Listening skills are also developed very well, with students able to listen critically and frame developmental comment sensitively.

254. The quality of specialist teaching in drama is good. Very secure teacher subject knowledge and understanding inform the creative learning strategies employed during class-work. The teaching team is enthusiastic and committed to theatre studies and drama. There is very good provision for extra-curricular experience of theatre; for example, visiting theatre groups, theatre trips, drama workshops and a range of school productions and participation in local drama festivals. Lessons are generally planned and organised well, which contributes to the interest and pace of activities. Teachers expect students to strive for success, and give generously of their time to help pupils do well. Lessons are characterised by excellent working relationships between staff and students. There is too little support on the written component of the course for some students with performance talents, and this depresses their grades.
255. A feature of real excellence is the independent learning demonstrated by all the post-16 students who clearly enjoy, and are stimulated by, their drama work. While the students enjoy their drama work they are also very serious about performance, rising to the challenges of the course and appreciating the practical content. Collaborative group working is a strength, with mature listening and discussing skills shown. There is also very effective group support and trust, which gives students confidence to perform and experiment with ideas. As a consequence, students are sensitive and responsive to each other, particularly when offering developmental comment. Many of the students are very ambitious about their performance and staging. One Year 13 pair, for instance, has planned a powerful exploration of the Holocaust for their devised piece with quite complex staging requirements.
256. The head of department, who is also head of the Physical and Recreational Education and Performing Arts (PREPA) faculty, provides creative and committed leadership to the work of the drama and theatre studies department. There is an enthusiasm for drama and theatre work, which manifests itself both in school and in the wider community. Consequently, good links are made with the Youth Theatre, which extends drama opportunities for the college's students. Though the theatre is an excellent performance space, it has limitations as a split classroom for dance and drama classes. The 'sound-proof' divider is not sufficiently effective to allow atmosphere and dramatic tension to be built up in drama lessons when dance lessons are taking place next door. The mobile classroom is a useful dedicated space but requires customising and clearing.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography and history. No other subjects were sampled.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are above average.
- The standard of teaching is good in all lessons.
- Courses are planned well; the students have positive attitudes.
- Monitoring of the progress of individual students is good.

Areas for improvement

- There is too little use of ICT.

257. Results in recent years have been good. In 2001, A-level results were above the national average. Although the number of students entered for A-level geography has declined, most gained a pass grade. Last year seven students took geography and all passed. The college has successfully introduced the new AS level course. Last year eight students entered and six passed.
258. Provision in geography includes courses leading to examination at AS and A-level. The number of students who choose geography is increasing. There are currently 20 students studying the subject in the sixth form.
259. The work seen in students' folders and in lessons shows that they are currently working at standards a little above average. Students have a sound knowledge of physical and human geography. For example lessons on coastal features help them understand the processes that shape the landscape. Work on trans-national industry gives them a good understanding of the principles and theories of the changing global economy. A lot of their work relies on their own personal research. They work hard at this and it makes a valuable contribution to the development of their skills of analysis and presentation.
260. Teaching was consistently good in the lessons observed. Students benefit from a carefully planned curriculum in geography. This includes a variety of approaches in lessons, plus opportunities for fieldwork both locally and, last year, in the Lake District. This experience is also valuable in supporting the personal development of students. Teachers make good use of the fieldwork. For example, in a lesson on ecology, the teacher asked students to recall knowledge gained on a local investigation to help their understanding of oak woodlands. In another lesson the teacher started by returning homework essays on nuclear waste. These had been well marked and included good constructive feedback. He then set an activity that challenged students to analyse a geology map of part of the south coast of England. He explained it well, so students had a clear understanding of their work. They valued the feedback on their essays and the help given with their class work. Consequently they worked with commitment and interest. They gained a great deal from the lesson, particularly in improving analytical skills. In another lesson on industry, the teacher made effective use of her subject knowledge to explain principles of newly industrialised countries and the concept of core/periphery.
261. Students' attitudes to their work are good. They are reliable and hard working. They

show interest and commitment, both in lessons and on homework. They make good use of available resources, including their set text, as well as appropriate periodicals and journals. They make some use of ICT, mainly in presenting their work. More effective use could be made of ICT in teaching.

262. Organisation and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a small team of specialists who work well together and provide a worthwhile experience for students.

History

Overall the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Improvement since last inspection in the oral work and contribution of students.
- Good quality teaching which engages all students.

Areas for improvement

- Standards attained in examinations are too low.

263. Students' performance in GCE A-level examinations over the past three years has shown results slightly below the national average. The proportion of students who gained an A or B grade was half the national average for 2001. In 2001 all female students gained a grade. This is an improvement on previous years.
264. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of samples of students' work show that in Year 13 the standard of work is average. Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of significant historical events and can assess information and make comparisons. For example, they are able to compare Hitler's rise to power with how Stalin took control in Russia. They are confident in the use of historical terminology to express their ideas, as when one student referred to Stalin 'aligning himself with Lenin's ideology', and another, when listing the reasons for Napoleon's conquest of Europe, spoke of his 'advanced generalship'. Standards in Year 12 are better. Students analyse historical sources critically and evaluate evidence effectively to produce convincing arguments. They are able to discuss with each other and back up their views with evidence.
265. Across both years, students produce a substantial range of notes, essays and analysis of sources. Notes are detailed and well-organised and are presented with care and pride. Essays are well structured and focused, using evidence to support answers to historical questions. Weaker students tend to present more narrative accounts rather than using an analytical approach. Sometimes students lack in-depth critical knowledge of facts and events and this holds back their progress. In two of the lessons observed a couple of boys did not take notes when model answers were being explained. They therefore missed a valuable learning opportunity.
266. Students learn well in their study of history, and they show clear progress in their quality of thinking and writing. The quality of teaching is good and teachers set high expectations. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding lead to clear explanations. Teachers challenge students to think and reflect for themselves. They use questioning effectively to check understanding. Some interesting techniques, such as students marking each other's work against a model answer, and the introduction of a coursework component, are beginning to be used. They have good potential to raise achievement.
267. Students have mostly positive views about their study of history. They enjoy their work

and feel that it stretches them.

268. History is an efficiently managed subject area. Since the last inspection improvements have been made in order to raise standards. A coursework component has been introduced that will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their independent learning skills and will build on the successful experience of coursework many students have had in Year 11. The quality of resources has improved, with all students now having a core textbook for each topic and access to a range of other texts. Effective use is made of historical journals for additional reading around the subject. Further work needs to be undertaken in analysing performance data to ensure that each student achieves to their maximum capacity and in increasing the sharing of good practice between the two teachers.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English, including film studies, and French. Work in German was also sampled. In recent years, few students have chosen to study German: only five over the last three years. That is not enough to make a reliable judgement about standards. This reflects the small numbers taking GCSE. There are no students in the current Year 12 and there are only two students in Year 13. One A-level lesson was observed: standards were in line with expectations and teaching and learning were good.

English

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

Strengths

- The breadth of course choice post-16.
- The quality of the majority of teaching and learning is good.
- The very good quality of marking and assessment of coursework linked to effective support for individual students.
- The good leadership and management of the English department.
- The working relationships between students and staff.
- The success of the new courses, particularly the Film Studies AS/A2 course.

Areas for improvement

- Results at A-level are only similar to the national average.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory; people can pass through teaching areas, interrupting learning.

269. The English department achieves sustained year on year sound results at AS/A2 level English literature and AS/A2 level English language and Literature. In 2001 Year 12 students gained more grade A passes at AS level than in previous years and maintained a very good pass rate at grades A-E. A-level results were similar to the national average. All Year 13 students achieved passes at A-D, with the majority attaining A-C grades. In previous years students have not always achieved the highest grades and this is an on-going focus for the department.
270. The breadth of choice of courses post-16 is good and this has increased the number of boys doing English. Members of the department also work hard to ensure that the boys achieve as well as the girls. The quality of course work written responses is generally very good. The work sample and class written work inspected were structured well and showed considerable technical accuracy, with the content securely rooted in the texts studied. Students develop effective skills for accessing texts and good noting

strategies for organising ideas. Students are able to discuss texts maturely with an appreciation of character and the subtleties of narrative structure. In conversation, students stated that the area of language study in the English language and literature course was initially very challenging. However, by Year 13 they had developed considerable fluency with narrative theory and text structure. The recent addition of AS/A2 level film studies has been a great success and the course is developing well. Coursework demonstrates that students are making very good progress. They are learning the associated technical vocabulary and they can apply the terms and concepts related to film studies appropriately. This was exemplified well in the quality of the Year 12 film noir screenplays where some students used very effective Chandleresque dialogue and scenes to explore the genre.

271. The quality of specialist teaching in English is a strength. Teacher knowledge and understanding of the texts to be studied, the course content and the examination process are very secure. The booklets provided at the beginning of each of the three courses are a very good feature and they help students understand what is expected of them. Lesson organisation and planning are very secure and these contribute significantly to the interest and pace of activities. Teaching and learning strategies are imaginative and rigorous, using practical approaches to access texts, which challenge students well. The use of practical approaches was exemplified well in the year 12 lesson on *The Winter's Tale* where paired dramatic readings gave students a deeper insight into Leontes' 'madness'. This culminated in a paired counselling session in which the counsellor was required to give judgements in terms of the imbalance of 'humours'. The marking and assessment of students' work is a strength. It is rooted in a secure understanding of English assessment. Marking is encouraging and uses developmental comment to indicate how to improve. Student progress generally is monitored effectively and individuals are supported well by their class teachers.
272. Students demonstrate excellence in terms of their focus on work, the high level of concentration and application. They display enjoyment and interest in the texts studied. Lessons are characterised by the good working relationships between students and teachers. Collaborative group working is a strength, with mature listening and discussion skills shown. Students are also most positive about the support role played by their teachers who often give extra time after school, both in individual informal support and in more organised events, such as the regular Monday 'film club'. Students are very positive about the AS/A2 level film studies course, and enjoy the acquisition of new skills and learning about film analysis. They enjoy the class work where films are shared and discussed at a mature level. This was shown well in the Year 12 lesson where the teacher, using skilled question and rigorous exposition, helped the class unpick the structure of the opening of Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. The working relationships between staff and students are an area of strength, as is the cultivation of independent learning.
273. The head of English and film studies provides good leadership to the team and the work of the department; a leadership rooted in an enthusiasm and a passion for the subjects. He is very well supported by the cohesive and committed English team, who work together effectively in developing courses and materials, including good provision of literature and language reference in the library. The film studies reference collection is just being developed and requires further resourcing to cater for the growing interest of the students. Interruptions, as people pass through teaching areas, has an adverse effect on learning, for example when students are trying to make an affective reading or view critically a film excerpt for analysis. A dedicated room for film studies, as proposed by the department, could resolve many of these problems.

French

Overall, the quality of provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Course planning, particularly the preparation for coursework.
- Teachers' knowledge of the course requirements and the language.
- The quality of relationships.

Areas for improvement:

- Speaking skills are too weak.
- The range of teaching and learning styles and resources is too narrow.

274. Results have varied over the last three years. They were well below the national average in 2001. There have been no A grades and only one B grade in the last two years. Coursework grades have been consistently good, while speaking results have been generally lower. Some of this may be due to staffing difficulties.
275. There are 14 students in the present Year 12 group. They all gained A or B grades at GCSE but their grounding in grammar is relatively weak, due partly to lack of specialist teaching in Year 11. A few high attainers have a secure grasp of basic structures but most have some difficulty in forming even the present tense of regular verbs. In prepared role plays, some are hesitant in pronunciation and in constructing sentences; several read their creations with reasonable confidence and accuracy; a few read with aplomb and good expression. Their ability to apply grammatical knowledge (in unprepared speaking and writing) is less well developed than normally seen. However, evidence from work seen in lessons and in their files indicates that their reading is good and their listening skills average. Their early coursework already shows considerable promise and other written work shows evidence of grammatical understanding, despite inaccuracies. They are intelligent learners and are making steady progress in improving their language skills.
276. There is a similar picture in Year 13. Again, there are no obvious differences between the attainment of girls and boys. Writing, particularly coursework, is good. The most able student produces high quality written work. Her coursework shows a high level of accuracy, a wide range of expression and use of tenses with appropriate idioms. Just a few adjective endings and lapses of style occasionally mar the quality. Steady progression is evident: her first piece of coursework on Jean de Florette already shows good accuracy and reasonable grasp of grammar and accuracy; it also displays a thorough understanding of the work and the relationships and themes developed in it; later pieces show an added range of expression and increased complexity of language. Other students' coursework shows that, when carefully prepared, most are able to produce reasonable language. While their reading and listening skills are adequate, speaking, particularly when unrehearsed, is much weaker than their other skills. Most need considerable support and prompting to articulate basic ideas. One or two are very hesitant; most make great efforts but lack the confidence to construct sentences with any fluency, while one girl has a very good command of structures and speaks well, although not always confidently. Coursework on literary topics shows good development of research skills and critical analysis.
277. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and has some good features. Teachers' planning and preparation for coursework is very thorough, building progressively to help students produce the best work they can. Teachers expertly highlight, clarify and illustrate points of grammar, occasionally asking students to produce further examples based on the model provided. This helps to anchor the learning but needs to be done more systematically. Teachers' thorough knowledge of the examination requirements, for example of the speaking test, helps them to give useful guidance about how to

prepare, but not enough time is spent practising speaking intensively. There is a limited range of resources, often dull photocopies, and there is a lack of variety and sparkle about the activities. There is clearly a strong rapport between students and teachers. They respect and work hard for each other. This helps the quality of learning. Students work intelligently and listen attentively but are hesitant about contributing to whole class question and answer sessions. Conflicting pressures from other subjects mean that not all have prepared homework. Yet, they appreciate the teachers' efforts and benefit from some extra sessions with the French assistant and with one of the teachers who is French.

278. The course is carefully co-ordinated between the teachers. They take great care to prepare the course, providing support, guidance and extra help. However, not enough has been done to deal with the students' weakness in speaking skills. Too few students have ever been to France, although the recently appointed head of department has just established links with a French college.