

INSPECTION REPORT

Wright Robinson Sports Community College

Gorton

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105564

Headteacher: Mr N Beischer

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Chamberlain
7661

Dates of inspection: 28th April – 1st May 2003

Inspection number: 249115

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of college:	Comprehensive
College category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
College address:	Abbey Hey Lane Gorton Manchester
Postcode:	M18 8RL
Telephone number:	0161 3705121
Fax number:	0161 3718287
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Brierley
Date of previous inspection:	27 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7661	Susan Chamberlain	Registered inspector		Information about the college The college's results and pupils achievements How well is the college led and managed? What should the college do to improve further? How well are pupils taught?
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the college care for its pupils? How well does the college work in partnership with parents
12844	Mike Saunders	Team inspector	English	
31100	Geoff Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12762	Roger Catchpole	Team inspector	Science	
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology	
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular opportunities.
21806	Pat Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and Technology	
12475	Stuart Johnson	Team inspector	Music	
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education	English as an additional language
3731	Bill Robson	Team inspector		Special educational needs
32147	Ann Wallis	Team inspector	Geography, citizenship	
4749	Martin Ash	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education	
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art	
31765	Ian Hume	Team inspector	GNVQ	Vocational

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the college	
How good the college is	
What the college does well	
What could be improved	
How the college has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the college	
How well the college is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the college	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The college's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

This college is oversubscribed and serves East Manchester which, although mixed and regenerating has areas of severe deprivation. It has 1629 pupils on roll, of whom 918 are boys and 711 are girls. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is 26 (0.4 per cent). Three pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. The number of full-time pupils eligible for free college meals is 740 (43.5 per cent) and is well above average. There are a total of 517 pupils (31.3 per cent) with special educational needs of which 29 (1.6 per cent) have statements. Wright Robinson is one of the leading Designated Specialist Sports Colleges in England and Wales and has achieved national recognition from many organisations for exemplar practice in physical education and sport. It also provides the new double award for General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). The college is part of the East Manchester Education Action Zone. When pupils enter the college, their attainment overall is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

This is a very good sports college with several outstanding features. Strong and very effective leadership supported by very good management and high standards of care produce improving GCSE and very good GNVQ results, good attitudes and behaviour, very good relationships and a very good and progressive curriculum. High levels of condoned absence hinder progress but overall the college provides good value for money.

What the college does well

- The excellent promotion of sport
- Improving GCSE and very good GNVQ results
- An innovative and very good curriculum, including a wide range of successful vocational subjects
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher
- Good teaching overall effecting good achievement by pupils
- Strong systems of care

What could be improved

- The raising still further of attainment in external examinations
- The reduction of levels of authorised (condoned) absence
- The introduction of an effective electronic data management system.
- The provision of a daily, collective act of worship

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

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in 1997. The college responded well to the issues raised. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and consequently GCSE results have risen. Some staffing problems have hindered progress in statutory tests. Although attendance has improved, it is still poor. The sports status has improved the direction and ethos of the college. The curriculum now includes a wide range of vocational subjects, which have proved to be very successful and prepares the way for individual curricular pathways for Year 9 pupils due to start in September 2003.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All colleges			similar colleges
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	D	E	D	A

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

Although the college takes pupils across the whole spectrum of ability, the overall attainment of pupils, when they enter the college, is well below average. Unlike many colleges, the emphasis on literacy in feeder schools has not resulted in raised levels of literacy at the beginning of Year 7.

In 2002, pupils' attainment in statutory tests, at age 14, was well below average in English, mathematics and science. This represents a particular dip in English results. When compared with similar colleges, point scores were at least average overall and were above average in science, below average in English and average in mathematics. However, when compared with the pupils' previous attainment, scores were well below average. This is almost certainly a consequence of a serious staffing recruitment problem in 2002, when Years 7 to 9 took the brunt of inadequate staffing.

For pupils aged sixteen, in 2002, amended results (by the college in conjunction with Ofsted) in GCSE/GNVQ were average for 5 or more A* to C grades and below average for 5 or more A* to G and 1 or more A* to G grades. The average point score per pupils was below average. When compared with similar colleges, results are impressive being well above average for 5 or more A* to C grades, above average for 5 or more A* to G grades and average for 1 or more A* to G grades. The average point score is well above average. However, when compared with pupils' prior attainment, results judged under these criteria were above average for 5 or more A* to C, below average for 5 or more A* to G and 1 or more A* to G grades with a point score that is average overall. Results have greatly improved at this level and predictions promise further improvement in 2003.

Standards in the work seen during inspection week were in line with expectations by the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils' achievements were good across the college. Pupils with learning difficulties, those whose first language is not English and those who are gifted and talented also make good progress although provision for the most able is not consistently good in all subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Good. Pupils' attitudes are good overall. Taking into account problems with attendance, they have satisfactory levels of enthusiasm for college and are very interested and involved in activities including lessons and extra activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good overall, both in lessons and around the college. The number of exclusions is satisfactory with the number of permanent exclusions low. Despite outstanding efforts by the college, a number of pupils continue to present very challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships at all levels are very good and pupils' personal development is good, overall. These factors make a strong contribution to pupils' progress in their learning and to the positive ethos of the college.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is poor and badly affects the learning of the pupils involved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good overall, having improved following a very stressful time when difficulty in staff recruitment was seriously affecting standards. Since the previous inspection both teaching and learning have improved and are good or better in a high proportion (approximately three quarters) of lessons except in Year 8 where this proportion drops to less than two thirds. In over a third of the lessons, teaching and learning are very good or excellent. Such high proportions of good or better teaching have a very positive effect on the overall experience that pupils receive. In a very small proportion of lessons, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In English, mathematics and science, they are good overall. The number of new teachers has given the college added vibrancy and an opportunity to move forward with renewed vigour and challenge. New teaching strategies and attention to pupils' individual learning preferences place the college at the forefront of education. Its insistence that self esteem and variety create a foundation for effective learning ensures that pupils have the very best start.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum provides flexible, varied and relevant programmes of study which match the interests, aptitudes and special needs of almost all pupils well. Extra-curricular opportunities are excellent. Links with the community and with partner institutions are very good. The careers and vocational educational opportunities are good. Statutory requirements are met but the college does not have a daily collective act of worship for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. However, pupils make good progress because of good, sensitive support in lessons from teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors. The number of support staff is currently insufficient to meet all of the needs of pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils are catered for effectively and make good progress in line with other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is very good moral and social provision, Pupils are given plenty of guidance in the principles that distinguish right from wrong and have many extra activities which help develop good relationships. Cultural provision is good but more could be done to extend the pupils' multicultural experience. Spiritual provision is better than at the time of the previous inspection but there is still room for improvement.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a very caring college. Arrangements for child protection and to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils are very good. All pupils are included with many opportunities to raise pupils' self esteem and confidence as learners. There are very strong arrangements to monitor and support pupils' development. Although attendance is still poor, procedures to monitor and promote better attendance are very good and those to monitor and promote good behaviour and eliminate oppressive behaviour are outstanding. Assessment procedures are good . The policy for target setting, monitoring and reviewing of progress gives good guidance to teachers. However, the college has not yet decided upon a suitable electronic system to use to track and monitor pupils in a whole college context. This is an area for development.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is an excellent leader who has a very clear understanding of where he wants the college take. He leads by example and communicates well with both staff and pupils. Supporting him is a committed, high performance senior management team that has recently been extended to include heads of faculties. All know very well the strengths and areas for improvement for the college. Middle managers are at least good overall and ensure that college policies are correctly implemented
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effective. The chair of governors is an asset and has a great deal of experience and knowledge of the locality and the needs of the pupils. The governing body is very effective and capable; it meets its statutory requirements well.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The college makes a great deal of effort to evaluate its performance. It has very good systems for checking teaching, learning and the curriculum. Development planning and staff guidance documents are very clear and detailed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial control is very good. The college is mindful of the need to consider its new build when spending; as well as seeking best value it also intends to take only what it wants when it moves into new premises.

There are now enough staff to teach the curriculum adequately, although in 2002 the situation was seriously worrying and 14 posts remained unfilled. The college has excellent induction procedures for new staff. Strategies for appraisal and performance management are good. Resources are satisfactory. The library has improved but is still too small. ICT resources are good as are those for special educational needs. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Problems with leaking ceilings are indicative of the poor conditions of the overall fabric of the buildings and affect morale and, indirectly, standards within the college.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The college expecting their children to work hard and achieve their best. The college providing an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Parents feeling comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of work their children do at home. Behaviour in the college.

The college has developed a strong and effective partnership with parents, underpinned by good information about their children's progress and the policies and provision of the college. Parents are involved well with the college and in their children's learning. Inspectors found behaviour to be mainly, but not exclusively, good. Homework is not always given consistently across the college but is satisfactory overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and pupils' achievements

1. The college has struggled with staff recruitment problems in recent years and this has meant that some pupils have missed out despite the best efforts of the management. In 2002, pupils' attainment in statutory tests at age 14 was well below average and certainly affected by staffing issues and absenteeism. When compared with similar colleges, point scores were at least average overall. By age sixteen, in 2002, amended results (by Ofsted) in GCSE/GNVQ were average for pupils gaining 5 or more A* to C grades and below average for 5 or more A* to G and 1 or more A* to G grades. The average point score per pupil was below average. At this level great improvement has been noted and college predictors indicate that 2003 results should show even greater improvement. Results in 2002 had to take into them a number of very poor attending pupils. If these were removed from the entries for GCSE/GNVQ then results for 5 A* to C grades would have been very close to 50 per cent and the national average. The college is on course to gain their target of 50 per cent in 2003 even with the inclusion of poor attenders. When compared with similar colleges, results are impressive being well above average for 5 or more A* to C grades, above average for 5 or more A* to G grades and average for 1 or more A* to G grades, the average point score being well above average. Standards in the work seen during inspection week were in line with expectations by the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils' achievements were good across the college. Girls results are below those nationally but reflect the intake which is influenced by the proximity of two girls schools that take potential pupils to the college. Generally the girls, who only represent 40 per cent of the college population, do quite well. Boys' results could be higher but are improving.

2. In English, attainment in work seen is below but close to national expectations but close to them. Achievement is satisfactory by both ages 14 and 16. In Media Studies attainment is in line with expectations. Standards in mathematics are better in Years 10 to 11 than in Years 7 to 9 but are below average overall in lessons and workbooks. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. In science, attainment by end of Year 9 is below average but improving. By the end of Year 11 it is above average and achievement overall is good. Physical education is also a core subject in this college. In this subject, pupils make good progress through their time at the college and their levels of attainment are higher than the national average overall.

3. Attainment in art and design is slightly above average at the end of Year 9 and represents very good achievement since pupils' entry to the college in Year 7. By the end of Year 11 attainment is well above average, and pupils continue to achieve very well. In design and technology, pupils enter Year 7 at standards that are well below average but by the end of Year 9, have improved to below average; this represents good achievement. Pupils build on the work they have done in Years 7 to 9 to make good progress so that by the end of Year 11, they achieve standards, close to average and good achievement is maintained. Standards in food technology are lower than in other technology areas. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils aged 14 make good progress from a very low starting point and reach improved standards, although still below national expectations. By age 16 pupils in accredited courses attain results that are above national averages but they are a minority in the year group. Attainment overall by age 16 is below, national averages, due in part to the specific ICT course in Years 10 and 11 which is too short.

4. In the work seen in geography, standards are below average but pupils' achievements are good. Pupils aged 14 can use specialist terminology correctly and have a basic

understanding of the more or less economically developed countries. Pupils aged 16 can analyse maps, graphs and tables to reach sound conclusions about the nature of the inner city. On entry to the college in Year 7, attainment in history is well below the national average. By the end of Year 9 pupils are performing below the national average. This signifies achievement over Years 7 to 9 to be good overall and improving. The standard of work attained by the end of Year 11 is also below the national average and mirrors recent GCSE results. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall. However, it is better in Year 10 than in Year 11. In religious education, attainment at the beginning of Year 7 is well below average. At the end of Year 9, attainment is below standard but progress is good. At the end of Year 11, attainment is close to the national average and pupils' progress is at least good.

5. Attainment is average in Spanish and better than in similar colleges. It is below average in French because of recent staffing difficulties, but it is now improving. Pupils achieve well in both languages and are making good progress.

6. On entry to the college, attainment in music is well below the national average and pupils have very limited musical experience. By the end of Year 9, pupils are achieving very well and reach national expectations. This achievement continues in Years 10 and 11 and although numbers opting for Music have been small, those who take the subject achieve well.

7. Over 90 per cent of pupils taking vocational subjects gained A*-C equivalent in 2002 assessments. This performance is paralleled by work seen in 2003. The 98 per cent pass rate in 2002 outperformed other GCSE courses. These are especially notable achievements.

8. Numerical skills are below national expectations but not enough to sufficiently affect pupils' learning. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory use of number skills to enable them to progress. In design and technology, pupils can measure and weigh effectively. In geography, Year 11 pupils use rank correlation coefficients well and in science, they show sound skills in drawing block, line and best-fit graphs with the most able managing to manipulate formulae and balance equations.

9. Standards of literacy are well supported by attention to the national strategy. Overall, pupils indicate good improvement which is particularly evident in English, history and physical education. Generally, good use and understanding of technical language is evident.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall because teachers are aware of their needs and take these into account when planning their lessons. Teaching assistants provide them with very effective support. However, those with more severe literacy difficulties make slower progress. They do not receive sufficient regular tuition in basic literacy to improve these skills significantly. Many pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress because of the sensitive support they receive from learning mentors. However, a substantial number do not attend regularly enough to achieve as well as they should.

11. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well overall. Performance is well monitored and communication with parents is good. In 2002, around three quarters of gifted and talented pupils achieved above their predicted GCSE scores while only a very small number failed to meet their targets.

12. Pupils who have English as an additional language progress as well as the majority of the other pupils. That is, their progress is good. The number of pupils who are at the earliest stages of English language acquisition is four. These pupils who are well supported by the college as the teachers are aware of their needs and provide accordingly. These pupils are

also supported by Ethnic Minority Achievement Service whose assistants come into the college both to supplement their learning and to check on their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have remained good since the previous inspection and this contributes strongly both to the ethos of the college and pupils' achievements. The college has made a few significant improvements to pupils' personal development. However, attendance remains a major issue for the college as it did at the last inspection.

14. Attitudes to the college are good with the exception of those whose attendance is poor. Pupils who come regularly show very high levels of interest and involvement in lessons and other college activities. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, although it was the last period of the day, pupils were very keen to plan for an essay following a character study. During a Year 7 assembly, pupils listened intently to several staff as they were informed about arrangements for 'graduation' and further details about the rewards systems for effort, hard work and achievement. Pupils show great interest and enthusiasm in after-college activities and college trips. For example, they look forward to enjoy activities such as netball, football, dance, swimming, basketball and rugby. Pupils also value highly the breakfast, homework and library clubs.

15. Behaviour is generally good. The great majority behaves well in lessons, assemblies and at break-times. Pupils move around the college in an orderly fashion and in view of the many narrow corridors and staircases this is a credit to them. Pupils say that there is a little bad behaviour at times but they are confident that staff will always resolve it. Personal and social education is very successful in giving pupils a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Although there were a considerable number of temporary period exclusions in the last academic year for unacceptable behaviour (often the same pupils on more than one occasion) permanent exclusion was very low.

16. Relationships between adults and pupils, and also between pupils, are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in tasks with their peers. For example, during Year 8 athletics, pupils organised themselves into small groups for races and competitions quickly and without fuss. Teachers introduce humour to many lessons and encourage pupils to enjoy their learning. The peer support scheme contributes well to the caring ethos and also demonstrates pupils' very strong social development. Pupils at this college show high levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example, they say that people of a different faith to their own should not be singled out in any way. Such views also demonstrate their very good moral development. However, although pupils' cultural development is good overall, they sometimes confuse the concepts of nationality, race and religion.

17. Personal development is good overall. Pupils have strong positive feelings about issues such as honesty, justice and fairness. They show awe in their learning, for example, a group of Year 7 pupils described how remarkable it was that some natural elements have to be kept under laboratory conditions because they are so unstable and will react violently with air. Pupils care for the community and are often involved in fundraising showing good spiritual development. Pupils respond well to responsibility such as a system of prefects and use their initiative in learning. Members of the college council meet frequently and liaise well with their peers in channelling suggestions to the college. Many suggestions have been adopted, for example, regarding sports provision and premises issues.

18. Attendance is poor, compared to the national average. Authorised absence is well above the national average and absence during term time for holidays is also an issue.

These factors are badly affecting pupils' learning in many cases. However, attendance levels have improved appreciably in the current college year. Punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory in a few cases as time is wasted moving between lessons.

19. Pupils with special educational needs respond very well to the support they receive from teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors. Relationships between support staff and pupils are very good, as shown by pupils' willingness to concentrate and work hard when they are taught in small groups by teaching assistants.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In approximately three quarters of lessons both are good or better. However, in Year 8 this proportion drops to less than two thirds. Teaching is very good or excellent in over a third of the lessons. In a very small proportion of lessons teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection teaching and learning have improved even though the college has suffered from a severe staffing crisis in recent years. At present there are a large number of new teachers, many of whom are newly qualified. These teachers have brought vigour and vibrancy to the college and have generally settled well. They bring with them new teaching strategies and are keen to promote new methods of learning among pupils.

21. In Years 7 to 11 excellent lessons were seen on thirteen occasions. These were characterised by very enthusiastic teaching, vigorous beginnings and highly motivated and co-operative responses from pupils. Planning in these lessons was excellent and included suitable outcomes which built on previous work. Teachers were persistent in their use of technical language in, for example, physical education, gradually building pupils' vocabulary. Successful attention was paid to three part lessons and pace was always brisk and demanding. There was strong reinforcement of skills, knowledge and, where appropriate, safety procedures associated with activities was strong. Teachers clearly had a good knowledge of what they were teaching. Thought provoking techniques captured pupils' interest, for example in citizenship, when an able-bodied teacher sat in a wheel chair. Views on disability followed and pupils were encouraged to express their reactions, both positive and negative. In mathematics, challenging work was successfully attempted when pupils were guided to find the mean, median, mode and range of five different numbers as a starter. The teacher showed an excellent understanding of the subject. In Year 11, a teacher promoted an excellent question/answer session which established and developed pupils' knowledge and understanding of animation. All pupils were involved by the use of skilful targeting of questions. The PowerPoint computer program was excellently used to present definitions and consolidate understanding. Pupils were very productive during the lessons and their work was enhanced by very capable use of ICT to produce newspapers. In a very well prepared photography lesson in Year 10, pupils buzzed with excitement and activity. They exhibited excellent cooperation and team work. They were proud of their achievements, which were praised and supported by the teacher who encouraged them to reflect upon the qualities of the images they were making. A sense of genuine professionalism prevailed in a GNVQ practical session. Pupils understood well the relevant health and safety procedures. Their level of application was high as they followed a demonstration on serviette folding.

22. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the purpose of lessons could have been more clearly defined. Inconsequential chat characterised such lessons, the teacher failing to have full control of the class. Pupils were not properly stretched by the material or the tasks. Tasks which were not matched to pupils' abilities were factors in less than successful lessons. Where concentration was lacking a pupil was noted texting on a phone and another powdering her face. Slow access to the internet was a factor which slowed the pace of a lesson down. Good use of mind mapping to reinforce key points was not exploited when the

teacher could not assert himself and some pupils did not sustain interest. Low productivity through lack of motivation and an absence of structure and pace contributed to unsatisfactory levels of learning.

23. Teaching across all lessons was enhanced by use of praise and encouragement which gave pupils confidence in their abilities. Learning was further enhanced where teachers' good knowledge of their subject enabled pupils to properly understand a topic, looking at it from many angles.

24. A strength of teaching and learning in the college is the openness to new ideas and the understanding that in order to successfully engage a pupil it is necessary to find their particular learning strategy. In several lessons, it was apparent that teachers offered many different approaches in order to ensure that all pupils could benefit. Using strategies that involve visual stimulus were most effective and ICT played a big part in this. Pupils were greatly helped by understanding what the lesson objectives were and what outcomes were required. The lack of an effective electronic data management system inhibits both teachers and pupils clear understanding of an individual's progress overall.

25. Pupils' creativity was promoted well in several subjects. In music, for example, a PowerPoint presentation containing film clips was used to illustrate the use of background music. These were well chosen and interested the pupils, focussing their minds effectively on the task. In dance, girls produced some very original ideas including lining up on a slant, using contrasting directions and changes of form. In art, pupils produced good, well planned designs for fabric ties, however, the uniformity of the required format produced a narrow range of responses. History pupils gave their own interpretation and analysis in a lesson on Nazi Germany. Not only did this engage their creative imagination but also involved them in a development of their thinking skills, an area the college is very keen to promote. Intellectual and creative abilities are drawn on in design and technology where the highest attainers are building a hovercraft in their own time.

26. Generally, teachers have high expectations and manage their classes well. The rise in higher grades at GCSE/GNVQ confirms this. Pupils make good progress to achieve the results they do when taking into account their standards at the beginning of Year 7. The college is keen to see even higher results and believes this can be achieved by a concentration on raising pupils' self esteem and their aspirations, promoting their specific curricular choices and preferred learning style.

27. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own achievements and learning; this should be enhanced when a suitable electronic database is installed and an immediate overview of each pupil's grades can be accessed at the touch of a button. Homework is generally satisfactory but, as in many colleges, there are inconsistencies in quantity and quality.

28. Teaching in other subjects contributes positively to pupils' literacy. There is very good college-wide planning in the literacy policy, overseen by an active steering group. Very good practice was noted in history, physical education and GNVQ classes. In every department there was awareness and emphasis on key words and the need to support pupils' understanding of technical vocabulary. Attention to matters of literacy was never less than satisfactory.

29. The good teaching of numeracy in mathematics is supported in most other subjects across the curriculum. In geography, the analysis of field work data is well taught leading to effective graphs and diagrams. In design technology, the teachers contribute well to

extending the pupils' geometrical vocabulary and understanding. The contribution made by Science is not unsatisfactory but is less extensive than is often the case.

30. At subject level provision for gifted and talented pupils is occasionally good but uneven. It is excellent in physical education, with many pupils participating at regional and national levels in their chosen sport. In others, where it is not a current priority, gifted and talented pupils are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.

31. Good teaching enables pupils with special educational needs to learn well overall. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs and usually adapt their teaching methods appropriately. For example, music teachers use computer software effectively to allow all pupils to succeed and provide a lot of individual support where necessary. In English, teachers often help pupils to succeed with writing tasks by providing a clear plan and structure for pupils to follow. By comparison, design and technology teachers do not give these pupils enough support with their designing, although they help them to make products confidently. Teaching assistants and learning mentors work very effectively in lessons. They work closely with teachers and provide very good, sensitive support for pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties. Teaching assistants withdraw small groups of pupils with literacy difficulties from a few mainstream lessons for help with reading and writing. Teaching of these groups is satisfactory but the pace of learning is slow because assistants do not use a wide enough range of teaching methods or resources.

32. Pupils whose home language is not English are taught well and make good progress.

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

33. The curriculum is very good overall. It is very well organised and managed and is regularly reviewed. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects but the college does not have a daily collective act of worship. The increase in teaching time to 25 hours weekly and the change to a fortnightly timetable has led to an overall improvement in the curriculum provision offered. Curriculum issues raised in the previous report have been appropriately dealt with.

34. The curriculum has generally very good breadth and balance throughout. In Years 7 to 9 the provision for literacy and numeracy development across the curriculum as part of the National Strategy is very good. The effectiveness of the literacy strategy is generally good but that of the numeracy strategy is more variable in its application across subjects. In Years 7 to 9 ICT and religious education are now taught as discrete subjects to all pupils and standards are consequently rising. The time provided for the teaching of physical education, in line with the college's specialist status in this subject, is well above that nationally. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum generally provides very flexible, varied and relevant programmes of study for pupils across the attainment range and, increasingly, for disaffected pupils and low attainers.

35. There is a very extensive range of GCSE subjects and GNVQ courses offered some of which are taken as double award subjects. Pupils are given more opportunity to study vocational courses than is the case nationally. The range and nature of the vocational courses offered are a strength of the curriculum. However, the GNVQ manufacturing and engineering courses are largely inappropriate for pupils' abilities. The college offers part-time off-site provision for pupils with behavioural and other special needs in partnership with local providers such as MANCAT. The core examination curriculum in Years 10 and 11, as appropriate to a specialist sports college, includes physical education. There is a very significant strength in the physical education provision within the college which influences pupils' attitudes and behaviour positively in what they do in class and around the college.

There is an extensive optional choices in Years 10 and 11. The quality of provision is very good overall but some pupils in Years 10 and 11 have inadequate opportunities for learning more about control technology. PSE, ICT and careers are taught in a rotational arrangement which involves a lack of continuity for the individual components. The colleges' innovative curriculum has been recognised in its selection as a Pathfinder pilot college for the new Government National Curriculum initiative.

36. Curriculum provision for teaching numeracy is good overall. There has been staff in-service training to improve the teaching of numeracy across the college. Members of the mathematics department have been designated to each subject area and have regular meetings each fortnight working with the teachers to identify areas where numeracy is used and to improve and standardise teaching approaches. Most departments have, therefore, made a good start on policies to guide and direct teachers towards a more unified approach to numeracy.

37. Literacy is a priority of the College's Development Plan. There is a very good literacy policy with procedures for implementation and evaluation. This is managed by a newly appointed coordinator and overseen by the deputy head. The coordinator meets the faculty representatives individually. A steering group receives reports from each faculty and holds half-termly meetings. Cross curricular objectives are well controlled centrally and are regularly reviewed in faculty meetings. Portfolios of successful approaches from each faculty are presented at the steering group. There is an effective intervention in Year 7 when pupils with specific difficulties are well supported. Literacy is supported by breakfast clubs for reading, writing and library skills. The college is involved with effective reading projects with primary feeder schools.

38. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good. Pupils are identified and nominated by subject co-ordinators producing a broader and more inclusive register than usual. The list is further extended by including pupils involved in the Excellence Challenge programme, leading towards higher education courses, and those demonstrating talents in activities outside college. The funding is effectively deployed to support the initiative at whole-college and subject level. Staff training days on gifted and talented pupils are arranged including co-operative meetings with other schools in the Manchester East Cluster. Innovative strategies are trialled and evaluated including a smaller 'fast track' set for higher attainers in Year 7, vertical grouping of selected pupils from Years 8 to 11 in physical education and flexible timetabling to meet the training needs of specific athletes and sports people. Seminars with businesses and higher education institutions, mentoring for pupils considering a career in medicine, and celebration assemblies are effective in raising pupils' aspirations.

39. There is excellent extra-curricular provision. It is outstandingly good in physical education and sport where there is an impressive range of team sports available. These are exceptionally well supported by pupils with over three quarters of all girls and boys attending at least one activity. Pupils perform strongly in inter-form, local, regional and national competitions. The college was recently awarded the Sports Mark Gold Award with Distinction. There are very good additional study facilities available for pupils including study support sessions, extension classes and revision classes in a number of subject areas. There are enrichment opportunities including visits to theatres, museums, fieldwork trips and residential trips abroad. There are opportunities in music to join the brass band, steel, choir and orchestra. Pupils can attend activities at breakfast clubs before college, at lunchtimes and after college.

40. The college has developed very good links with partner institutions. Links with the eight main feeder primary schools are particularly well developed through. Staff at all levels,

in each of the schools, work closely together to ensure that all pupils experience a smooth and trouble-free transition to the college. The teaching projects and games support for primary schools are particularly beneficial in this. The college is working closely with two neighbouring secondary schools in the East Manchester cluster group on issues such as the progression post-16. The college has been the lead school in the Increased Flexibility Programme with these schools and MANCAT to deliver a vocational and work-related 14 to 16 programme. Initial Teacher Training links with local universities are very productive.

41. The provision for careers education is good and vocational education overall is very good. Pupils in Year 10 undertake a two weeks' work experience with this year almost all pupils finding their own placements. The careers advisory service offered by Connexion staff is of sound quality and provides valuable professional guidance and advice on careers through individual interviews. However, the careers education, careers advice and work placement programme need more detailed monitoring and evaluation of pupils' experience.

42. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. The college has many strong and effective partnerships with the local community. The strong links with community primary schools and the range of work experience placements in local business and industries significantly enrich the curriculum. The college is well represented on community groups and there is good support for charities within the local community, often through sponsored events. The excellent sports activities and facilities made available locally, contribute noticeably to the college's community links.

43. Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good though some aspects are stronger than others. The provision for spiritual development is good. The many sporting activities of the college give the pupils many opportunities to raise their self-esteem and have a feeling of achievement and worth. Other activities too, such as the large range of clubs and extra-curricular events also have the same result. In this respect the college works hard to help its pupils have pride in themselves and to achieve of their best. Some opportunities for quiet reflection and contemplation occur during assembly times and there is a quiet place in the college set aside for the older pupils. Various outside church groups make contributions at various times in the life of the college. Some individual subject departments allow the pupils to experience and appreciate things other than the material. These include religious education where there is a specific lesson which draws out the difference between the material and the spiritual dimension and in English where pupils can experience moments of transcendence through the study of poetry. Although there have been improvements on this since the last inspection, there is still room for further developments in this both in subject departments and the wider life of the college.

44. Provision for moral development is very good. The college expects the pupils to behave well and to have a clear sense of right and wrong. It has many procedures which give guidance to its pupils on this. These include codes on behaviour in the classroom and around the college. Other codes include guidance on the use of the internet. A rewards system is included in its policy documents. The pupils also receive guidance through behaviour support and mentors as well as the through the college pastoral system. The personal and social education programme makes a significant contribution with work on drugs education, sex education and bullying. Individual subject departments also make important contributions in the general sense of the high expectations which they have in terms of behaviour, and also in specific units of work which they present during lesson time. In history for example, pupils cover topics such as slavery, and in design and technology, pupils examine the need for responsible use of the environment. The many sporting activities emphasise the need for fair play and the necessity to abide by the rules.

45. The provision for social development is very good. An extended range of activities outside of lessons means that pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop positive relationships. These activities include the extensive sporting programme as well as other things such as residential weekend trips. Clubs at lunchtime and after college also help to develop relationships. These include the breakfast club, homework club, psychology club and the chess club. Pupils can take responsibility through the volunteering and leadership package, leadership in sport, prefects, college council and by supervision on the college buses. The pupils can participate in the community through sporting and musical events and in work with other local schools. Many individual subject departments also help in social development. In particular, the personal and social education programme includes units of work on marriage and the family, social harmony, abortion, euthanasia, and care for humanity. Social skills are also developed through collaborative and group work in subjects.

46. Provision for cultural development is good. Activities and learning both in and out of lessons enables the pupils to appreciate many aspects of their own cultural traditions. Visits out include trips to Cambridge, the Lake District and Doveston Reservoir. There are also trips to museums such as the armouries at Leeds and the Science and Technology museum. Music is an important aspect of college life and includes productions such as Grease as well as general musical contributions to college assemblies and during the Christmas period. Other musical contributions are made at the Remembrance Day service. The college also gives opportunity for its pupils to appreciate the cultural traditions of others involvement in the Commonwealth Games is a notable example. In religious education pupils study many aspects of world religions and in art pupils look at aboriginal and Egyptian art. Other multi-cultural learning occurs in music where pupils look at the Chinese and Indian traditions. In history pupils study the black peoples of North America and there are visits to Spain. Opportunities for the pupils to appreciate the multi-cultural nature of the UK itself however are limited, both across the college and in individual departments.

47. The college makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. It meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements. In Years 10 and 11, a good range of alternative courses, including placements in local colleges, provides well for many of these pupils, especially those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The college is developing these opportunities further but the present GNVQ course in manufacturing and engineering is not appropriate for the needs of lower attaining pupils. In all years, pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties benefit from sensitive counselling and support from learning mentors and teaching assistants. However, several support staff who have recently left the college have not been replaced and there are now insufficient to meet the needs of the pupils identified by the special needs coordinator. A visiting teacher from the local authority's inclusive learning service provides valuable support and advice for pupils with specific learning difficulties, but overall provision for pupils with more severe literacy difficulties is inadequate and inconsistent.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. This is a very caring college. Staff ensure that all pupils including boys, girls, ethnic minorities and those with special educational needs are given equal attention in their learning. The educational and personal support and advice given to pupils is very strong. The college has made several improvements in this area of its work since the last inspection.

49. Arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Two staff are fully trained in child protection and deal with any issues effectively. All staff are issued with very good quality written guidance about the college's policy and procedures. Accident and emergency procedures, including arrangements for first aid, are very well developed. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis, as are fire drills. The

college works very closely with several agencies in raising awareness regarding health and safety matters. For example, the police service gives talks to pupils regularly on drugs education and issues such as railway safety. The college nurse is very closely involved in sex education. The college has implemented an appropriate policy for the use of computers, including safeguards for the internet. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

50. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are very good and greatly improved since the last inspection. Staff know pupils very well and provide much informal advice and guidance. Various useful records are maintained about pupils' attendance, behaviour, personal and social development and any individual issues. Where necessary, referrals are made to the learning mentors who make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. Their work in raising pupils' self esteem through one to one and group work is very effective. This is a good example of the college's attempts to remove barriers to learning in individual cases and very well demonstrates its inclusive approach very well.

51. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are very good and greatly improved since the last inspection. Pastoral administrators for each year group make home telephone calls on the first day of any unexplained absence. Two educational welfare officers work very closely with staff and families. A computer-based system of information is very well used to produce reports and is also effective in identifying problems in year groups or individuals. Newsletters to parents stress the importance of good attendance and punctuality in pupils' learning. These activities, along with the reward system which values good attendance and punctuality are slowly but surely raising attendance levels. Although attendance is still a serious problem, it is hard to see what the college could reasonably do to further improve it.

52. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are outstanding. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Very detailed records are kept of incidents of bad behaviour, and where necessary, pupils are closely monitored over short periods. The behavioural support team is very effective in changing pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The rewards system, (which consists of 'points' for attendance, effort and achievement,) values and celebrates good behaviour. The system is very effective and popular with pupils who work hard to earn certificates and special treats.

53. The special needs coordinator provides all teachers with useful, detailed information about pupils' individual needs when they enter the college in Year 7. Pupils' individual education plans are very useful working documents which set clear targets and achievement criteria for pupils. Most teachers use this information well, to help plan appropriate work and review pupils' progress. However, pupils with learning difficulties are not always reminded of their targets and are often unsure about what they are trying to achieve. The targets in group education plans for pupil with literacy difficulties are not specific enough to allow special needs staff to evaluate pupils' progress with literacy skills.

54. At present, the use of different systems to set targets for pupils with behaviour difficulties and learning difficulties, results in some duplication of work. It also leads to a lack of communication between support staff.

ASSESSMENT

55. The system for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress is developing well. The emphasis is on creating an ethos where every pupil is striving to improve. There is a sensible, whole college policy for assessment, which is in the handbook for all teachers. There is also a useful policy for target setting, monitoring and reviewing

progress. General advice is given to help departments organise their own systems. Assessment information is used well to guide curricular planning by most departments, but not all. There is a whole college marking policy, which gives clear guidance to teachers. Work should be given National Curriculum grades where possible, and these grades are held centrally in departments and by the college. Pupils are tracked twice each year for effort and attainment; they have their current National Curriculum or GCSE grades in their exercise books or folders, with their next targets; this enables teachers and parents to monitor progress throughout the year. Informatively, pupils are also given National Curriculum or GCSE grades once per year on their annual report. The data is entered on the college system, and is available to all staff. Some departments have examples of pupils' work at different levels. Some departments have better systems than others, but most are good. The systems in English and physical education are very good. There is an academic mentor, supported by mentors from inside and outside the college.

56. The headteacher has a strategy which includes appointing a manager to review the assessment, recording and reporting procedures. Overall, assessment, recording and reporting are good, but need a more suitable electronic data management system to make the very best use of data.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. The college has made a few good improvements since the last inspection. Links are now highly effective and parental involvement has a good impact on the work of the college. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at college and at home, is also good.

58. Parents mostly have positive views about the college. Replies to the questionnaire along with responses at the parents' meeting, show that parents have much confidence in the college and the quality of education provided. Parents are especially pleased about the caring nature of the college. The majority replying to the questionnaire said the college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, there are high expectations for their children to work hard and achieve their best, they feel comfortable about approaching the college regarding any problems and they are also pleased about their children's progress. Most parents are pleased about how the college helps their children to become mature and responsible, information they receive about their children's progress, leadership and management of the college and teaching. Inspection findings support parents' positive views.

59. A significant number of parents have concerns about homework but the inspection team judge that provision is satisfactory overall and supports learning. There is a similar level of disappointment about pupils' behaviour in college. However, the inspection team judges that behaviour is good, overall, although some pupils present very challenging behaviour. A significant proportion of parents say that their children do not like college. Although attendance is improving, it was well below the national average in the last college year. A small number of parents feel that the college could work more closely with them. However, inspection findings do not indicate that this is a significant issue.

60. The quality of information to parents, especially about pupils' progress, is good overall. Parents have three opportunities to attend 'tutorial days' where they can discuss any issues. In addition, they are sent helpful 'half-termly indicators' that provide details about the amount of effort their children put into each of their taught subjects. Pupils' annual reports are of sound quality. They give considerable information about what pupils know, understand and can do. However, many reports are too brief and future learning targets are not always clearly stated. Very good information is provided for parents about study options in Years 10 and 11. Newsletters are very well presented with much information about pupils' achievements and college developments.

61. The college has successfully built good relationships with parents through very frequent informal contacts. For example, pastoral administrators and learning mentors are in telephone contact if there is the slightest concern. Parents are appropriately involved in all learning, attendance and behaviour matters. The 'Friends of Wright Robinson' works hard in organizing social and fundraising events and money raised is used for particular projects to improve the college environment. A few parent helpers are well involved in supporting activities outside of lessons such as cycling at the National Cycling Centre.

62. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their children's progress and are invited to contribute to the assessment of their progress through, for example, the availability of weekly "drop-in" meetings with the special needs team. However, the high level of condoned absence indicates that not all parents are as supportive as they should be.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

63. Overall, leadership and management are very good. The headteacher is an excellent leader who is leading the college in a very clearly defined direction. He is very confident and firm in his approach to pupils. His style is non-confrontational and is based on an expectation of trust, care and humanitarian values. He leads by example and communicates well with both staff and pupils alike. Supporting him is a high performance and committed senior management team which has recently been extended to include heads of faculties. All know very well the strengths and areas for improvement in the college. The key managers tackle problems arising from any source with calmness and pragmatism. Middle managers are at least good overall and ensure that college policies are correctly implemented. All are concerned to see the college's sports status well promoted but at the same time do not take their eye off the ball with regards to other major projects within the college for example inclusion and the Pathfinder curriculum. Although identified by inspectors as areas for further improvement, priorities to improve attainment and attendance are clearly identified in the college's action plan (WRRAP). The senior management team is proud of being one of the leading Sports Colleges and has received national recognition from a wide range of organisations for exemplary practice in physical education and sport. It is a lead college in the East Manchester Education Action Zone and is actively involved in the Network Learning Community. It is also a member of Excellence in Cities Partnership (gifted and talented strategy provision). The wide range and innovative approach to the curriculum, including GNVQ extensions is another outstanding feature of the college.

64. The governing body is well led and is very effective in its role as a critical friend. Generally, they, as with all senior staff, share a commitment to improvement with all senior staff. Most come from the locality and have much to offer the college. They know the main strengths and challenges that the college faces and should be very helpful during the college rebuild by offering support and advice, some already involved in regeneration projects for the area. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

65. The governors and senior staff of the college make good strategic use of resources including specific grants and other funding. The last full report from the auditors was in 1999. It contained only minor items for improvement all of which were promptly addressed. Very good financial systems are in place with appropriate procedures for assuring probity but it is advisable that arrangements are made for regular audits to take place. Recent very well managed improvements include better car parking facilities and increased security with boundary fencing and closed circuit television.

66. Careful budget planning and monitoring has ensured that a safe level of contingency has been retained year on year. The level of contingency carried forward for this financial year appears high but in fact contains monies retained to pay for monies outstanding as a result of the efficient management of the change in computer management systems towards the end of the last financial year.

67. Governors and the college's senior managers pay very close attention to achieving best value. They make sure that planning for expenditure is explicit and evaluate whether spending has achieved what was predicted.

68. The resources for learning are satisfactory. In several subject areas resources are good or very good. The system for allocation is fair and transparent. The ratio of computers to pupils is good and effective use is being made of the facilities available. The library is too small though, and this limits the amount of resources it can hold and the level of its use. The book to pupil ratio is very low and cannot be helping literacy initiatives.

69. The adequacy and match of staffing to the requirements of the National Curriculum is satisfactory. This is a significant improvement on the situation in 2002 when there were fourteen unfilled teaching posts. These have reduced to five as a result of very good strategies put in place. Problems persist in religious education where a high percentage of lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers and in geography where there are two unfilled posts covered by supply staff. The number of learning-support assistants to assist pupils with special educational needs has reduced by three and represents a shortfall. The college has a higher than average number of newly qualified teachers and this is generally having a positive effect. All staff have job descriptions and responsibilities are clearly defined.

70. The college has developed excellent procedures for the induction of staff new to the college. Newly qualified teachers receive a comprehensive package that is much better than is seen in most colleges. Good links exist with Manchester University including the graduate teacher programme, which enable teachers to achieve advanced qualifications. Supply staff are carefully appointed. Their work is closely monitored and supported to ensure that the best possible cover is provided for absent teachers. Technician support for departments is now good and contributes well to the smooth running of the college. The strategies for appraisal and performance management are good. The college has developed its own system for the latter that has been well received by staff. In service training for teachers particularly for subjects is good. Newly appointed science teachers are disadvantaged by not having had ICT training.

71. Very effective use is made of information technology in the college's administration. The latest financial management software has been installed and is in use. The teachers' administrative burden is reduced by the use of computerised registration and recording systems. Substantial administrative support also maintains good contact with parents over day to day issues such as attendance and unexpected sickness. Pupils' learning is improved by a good ratio of computers and by the use of interactive computer whiteboards. Four out of five teachers have laptop computers on loan from the college, which are well used for lesson preparation and for record keeping.

72. During the last few years the improvements that have been made to the college's accommodation have done much to redress the shortcomings noted at the time of the last inspection. Staff make considerable efforts to ensure that the accommodation is of an acceptable standard for the education of the pupils. While almost all departments are in satisfactory accommodation, the facilities for art and design and technology are judged to be unsatisfactory as some of the rooms are too small for the size of the groups and affect learning adversely. Given the wide range of activities that are undertaken by the physical

education department, the on-site accommodation is barely adequate, however this is in part alleviated by the use of some of the superb facilities at Sport City and the Manchester Velodrome. Corridors and stairways in the college are narrow and the college is continuously examining strategies to improve the movement of pupils around the buildings. Wheelchair access to the building is still unsatisfactory.

73. Pupils take good care of their college. There is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism although litter, especially after lunchtime, is a problem. High quality displays of pupils' work and photographs of pupils' activities enhance the appearance of the buildings. The attractive entrance to the college and the welcoming office staff make a very favourable first impression on parents and visitors to the college.

74. While the college continues to make enormous efforts to ensure that pupils' education is not inhibited by the standard of the accommodation the college's buildings are looking tired and worn and are in urgent need of replacement.

75. The special needs coordinator has a clear vision for the future development of provision for pupils with learning difficulties which is, at present, satisfactory overall. Teaching assistants are very well managed and work very well as a team. However, roles for the joint management of support for pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties are not yet clear enough. The lack of certainty over the resources and staff available to support these pupils makes planning difficult. At present, the special needs policy does not identify the available resources available and several learning mentors and teaching assistants have not been replaced. Criteria for evaluating the success of the policy are not clear enough to enable the governing body to report in enough detail to parents.

76. Considering the pupils' good level of achievement and attitudes, the college's good teaching, very good leadership and management and good improvement since the last inspection the overall level of the college's effectiveness is good. Weighing this against high costs and the extremely difficult contextual factors, such as low attainment on entry and severely disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances, within which the college operates this constitutes good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to improve standards further, governors, the principal and staff should seek to:

Improve attendance levels by

- Extending strategies to reduce the number of holidays taken during term time
- Encouraging parents to be more insistent about their children attending college regularly
- Reducing the level of unauthorised absence
- Considering the starting and finishing times of the college day as to whether these affect pupils' attitudes and or ability to come to college
- Continuing to evaluate the very good procedures to promote better attendance and punctuality. Paras: 13, 18, 51

Raise attainment further by

- Raising the profile of information and communication technology as a tool for learning and as a motivating incentive to all, especially disaffected pupils.
- Promoting further the good practice of using appropriate and challenging activities for gifted and talented pupils in subjects of the curriculum where insufficient provision is currently made.
- Targeting middle achievers more explicitly to increase their overall performance.
Paras: 70, 149, 30, 71

Build upon the present good assessment procedures by introducing an effective electronic data management system.

Para: 56

Provide a daily, collective act of worship

Para 33

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	168
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	80+

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	13	44	75	30	5	0	0
Percentage	8	26	45	18	3	0	0

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

Information about the college's pupils

Pupils on the college's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the college's roll	1629
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free college meals	740

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	29
Number of pupils on the college's special educational needs register	517

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	26

Pupil mobility in the last college year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	66

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	13.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	1.6

National comparative data	7.8
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	1.2
---------------------------	-----

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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	172	148	320

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	81	79
	Girls	77	55	47
	Total	127	136	126
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	40 (53)	43 (48)	40 (47)
	National	66 (64)	67 (67)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	9 (18)	20 (22)	14 (13)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	62	85	84
	Girls	81	71	53
	Total	143	156	137
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	45 (45)	49 (53)	43 (40)
	National	67 (66)	70 (69)	67 (65)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	14 (15)	16 (20)	16 (11)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	165	107	272

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	66	138	157
	Girls	50	93	100
	Total	116	231	257
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	College	43 (29)	85 (80)	94 (91)
	National	50 (48.4)	88 (90.4)	94 (94)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	College	34.2 (28.7)
	National	39.8 (39)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	College	130 90
	National	n/a

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last college year**

Categories used in the Annual College Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1451	134	
White – Irish	12		
White – any other White background	7		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	40	7	
Mixed – White and Black African	12		
Mixed – White and Asian	4		
Mixed – any other mixed background	6		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	9		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	15		
Black or Black British – African	8	2	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	15		
Chinese	4		
Any other ethnic group	9		
No ethnic group recorded	34		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	103.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.54

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	770

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	91.3
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.54
Key Stage 4	21.98

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	6,062,894
Total expenditure	6,328,661
Expenditure per pupil	3,885
Balance brought forward from previous year	468,069
Balance carried forward to next year	202,303

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	52
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	61

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	1629
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	30	52	13	5	0
My child is making good progress in college.	36	52	7	1	4
Behaviour in the college is good.	33	39	17	7	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	52	14	10	1
The teaching is good.	30	54	8	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	44	7	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	46	43	4	4	3
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	29	4	0	1
The college works closely with parents.	34	48	11	4	3
The college is well led and managed.	34	48	7	5	6
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	54	5	4	4
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	39	1	1	7

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The impact of the literacy strategy on the planning and focus of teaching
- The tracking of pupils' achievement and setting targets to for further progress
- The development of Media Studies within the English curriculum
- The very good leadership of the faculty
- Some outstanding lessons within a picture of good teaching overall

Areas for improvement

- Attainment
- Insufficient curriculum time and too few specialist staff for adequate experience of drama in Years 7-9
- Too many pupils in some lower sets for effective learning to take place
- Pupils too dependent on teachers for motivation and progress

79. Attainment in the 2002 tests for pupils of at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average for both boys and girls obtaining level 5 or level 6 and above. Compared to similar colleges, results were below expectations. Boys did worse in English than in maths and science but girls did better. Pupils' achievement in 2002 was well below expectations considering their attainment on entry to the college. The majority of pupils did not make satisfactory progress. Problems of staffing made 2002 an unusually difficult year. In the two years before results had shown a clear trend of improvement.

80. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C and A*-G grades in the 2002 English Language and Literature examinations was well below the national average for both boys and girls. Boys did better in the average of their other subjects than they did in English. For girls the opposite was the case. They were below the national average for their gender to the same degree as the boys however. Though results indicate little progress compared to earlier standards, the proportion of pupils (100 per cent) entered for the examinations was above the national figure, particularly so for literature. The frequent absence of substantial numbers of pupils (particularly in Years 10 and 11) must also affect overall results.

81. Standards of attainment observed during the inspection were below, but approaching, national expectations, and therefore well above what the 2002 picture would suggest. There is a mixture of withdrawal and in-class support for pupils with special educational needs. This good provision results in satisfactory progress. Explicit provision is also made in English to extend gifted and talented pupils who also make satisfactory progress. The faculty is now fully staffed and is improving pupils' achievement. For example, it shows in pupils' writing. Low attaining pupils by the age of 14 are able to organise their writing and to achieve simple effects (as in story openings to create suspense). Mid attaining pupils (both boys and girls) manage extended writing in a range of forms. The strongest work appears in autobiography and narrative. Critical and argumentative writing is less successful. High attaining pupils by contrast have a secure grasp of critical terms and concepts, seen for example in reflections on the themes and stagecraft of *Twelfth Night*. By the age of 16 boys

and girls make further and equal progress. Increasingly complex writing frames give pupils help in organising and extending their work. Low attaining pupils still have obvious difficulties with expression, particularly in analytical writing. Mid attaining pupils do increasingly well in various forms. Salem diaries for instance show pupils' good understanding of motive and character in *The Crucible*. High attaining pupils, as in an assured imaginary conversation between characters from the novel *Stone Cold*, display sophisticated understanding of style and intention.

82. Achievement in reading connects with what has been said about writing. Plays, poems, films and stories are carefully chosen so that pupils of all abilities meet with texts of increasing challenge and complexity. They respond to them with at least satisfactory levels of understanding. A substantial number of pupils do not read aloud confidently however, and would benefit from regular practice in lessons.

83. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory overall. Low and mid attaining pupils need help (which they get through carefully organised paired and group work) to develop and refine their talk and discussion. High attaining pupils (as in intelligent comments on the symbolism of *Lord of the Flies* in a Year 11 lesson) can be impressively articulate.

84. Overall, teaching and learning is good. Standards of teaching across all years are good overall and lead to satisfactory standards of learning. The distinction is made because of the heavy dependence of many pupils on their teachers for motivation and progress. A few lower sets are too large for good teaching to have the impact it deserves. Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection in media studies and English lessons. (For example, a Year 10 class were introduced to the history and practice of animation through a brilliant combination of PowerPoint presentation and active learning.) A very small proportion of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory because of pupils' poor behaviour. Across all years lessons are planned carefully. Pupils are made clearly aware of what they are going to learn, and there is pace and purpose to the work. Much is expected of pupils and they respond well to the challenge, and to the high level of support where it is given. For example a low attaining Year 9 class listened, read and wrote productively and enjoyably on the theme of 'a meal to remember'. This was due to planning which focused on individual needs, and the close and expert attention of the teacher and learning support assistant. This lesson illustrated what was generally true of the English lessons observed during the inspection: excellent focus on developing literacy skills resulting in clear progress.

85. The drama teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. However, provision for the subject in Years 7 to 9 is inadequate. It appears in a rotational arrangement with other subjects in Years 8 and 9. This is not enough for pupils to properly develop drama skills, or to allow them to make informed choices for their GCSE options. There is one specialist drama teacher: insufficient for the subject in a college this size.

86. Work in English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum well. ICT is an identified feature of schemes of work. Pupils have good access to ICT facilities. Media studies in Years 10 and 11 is an increasingly popular choice for pupils, and one in which they achieve high standards. Written work is marked and assessed regularly and advice given on how to improve and develop it. Pupils' progress is tracked against previous achievement and they are given challenging but manageable targets. The faculty's use of assessment to inform curriculum planning and to encourage progress is a very good feature of its work. There are extensive extracurricular opportunities (reading and revision clubs, booster days, theatre and other visits) to improve pupils' experience and achievement.

87. These strong elements in English provision show the very good leadership and management of the faculty. Schemes of work are detailed and progressive and are the result

of well-managed collaborative planning. Responsibilities are delegated clearly and effectively. Standards of teaching and marking are monitored rigorously and regularly. There is clear interest in pupils' and colleagues' development. The English rooms (though insufficient in number for each member of staff to have a teaching base) are attractive and motivating spaces. The English faculty, like the college, is trying to raise standards.

88. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The major points raised in the report have all been clearly addressed. Drama, however, remains a matter of concern.

89. Pupils benefit greatly from the English teaching they receive. It is carefully planned and energetically delivered. New and established staff make up an effective team. The faculty is, therefore, in a good position therefore, after a difficult period, to raise standards further.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Good teaching
- Teachers work well together and are well led.
- The department has identified the correct areas for development and is planning effectively for them.
- Good improvement since the last inspection.

Areas for development

- Standards are well below national expectations.
- The use of ICT to enhance learning needs more detailed planning to ensure that it is handled appropriately in lessons.
- Too many pupils are absent which affects their progress.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve their own performance.

91. Results in recent years have suffered because of some difficulties which are now resolved. In 2002 one of the teaching staff suffered a series of bouts of illness which led to substantial periods of absence. This also affected results. The major factor holding back standards is poor pupil attendance.

92. Pupils scored well below the national average in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of year nine in 2002. Their results were in line with those of pupils in similar colleges. Over time results in mathematics have risen more slowly than those nationally. Boys usually score better than girls but not always.

93. The work of pupils aged between eleven and fourteen seen during the inspection was below the national average but overall standards are similar to those demonstrated in the tests if one takes account of absentees. The most able mathematicians produce good work on geometrical proof and can solve problems such as whether or not a fleet of lorries is capable of moving a mountain to a nearby destination. All are reasonably competent at mental arithmetic. Those who find mathematics difficult are weakest at algebra. Some, for example, cannot solve any but the simplest of equations.

94. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations in mathematics were well below national levels for all schools and broadly in line with those for pupils in similar colleges. These

results show a satisfactory improvement over what might have been expected from these pupils' performance in the national examinations for fourteen year olds in 2000.

95. As for pupils in earlier years the work of those currently in years ten and eleven reflects these results. For those pupils whose work was seen standards are approaching but still below national norms. A substantial number of pupils were absent during the inspection so that much of their work was not seen. If this is accounted for standards are well below national. The most able include pupils who have gained the highest grade in GCSE a year early and are studying advanced level work. These are few in number. The lowest attaining show adequate mental arithmetic and can use a number line to compare simple fractions decimals and percentages but are inaccurate when using the four rules with fractions.

96. As in earlier years there is no marked year on year difference in the performance of boys and girls. The college has very few pupils for whom English is not the first language at home. Just two of these were seen in mathematics lessons observed of whom one was at an early stage of learning English and the other was fluent. The former receives some extra support and is making sound progress. The latter was fluent and a capable mathematician who was progressing rather better than her peers.

97. Pupils' progress in lessons, and their achievement in relation to their prior learning, is satisfactory overall. Learning mentors and support assistants who provide extra help for pupils, especially those with learning difficulties know the pupils well and are well aware of what is required of them when, as is usually the case, teachers discuss what is needed before lessons. They clearly enjoy their work and make a substantial contribution to the sound progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Many pupils who attend regularly achieve well, but there is also a substantial number who do not attend as often as they ought. Poor attendance, particularly in lower attaining sets, is a major factor depressing standards and progress.

98. A range of teaching quality was seen during the inspection. Taken as a whole, teaching and learning are good throughout the college. In over a quarter of the lessons seen teaching was very good or excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning were rare and occurred where inappropriate use was made of computers. Some work could have been achieved more effectively with a pen and paper.

99. By contrast, in an excellent lesson on how to interpret statistical charts year 9 pupils were challenged to think and express their ideas both orally and on paper. The teacher's preparation was excellent. She made first class use of the overhead projector and prepared work sheets and handouts to maintain an exhilarating pace which captured and held the pupils' interest throughout.

100. Most lessons begin with short sharp practice sessions of mental arithmetic and problem solving at the start and end with plenary sessions reviewing and reconsidering what has been learned during the lessons. A great deal of work has already been done improving and updating schemes of work and implementing better ways of recording and analysing the pupils' marks and test scores. Making pupils more aware of what they already know and how to improve is rightly recognised by the teachers as an important area for development associated with their efforts to improve assessment and are making progress in this respect. Pupils know their level of performance in relation to the national curriculum and record it in their exercise books updating each half term. This is a step in the right direction. They are still however not shown precisely enough what it is they need to do to secure improvement topic by topic.

101. The mathematics department is well managed and very well resourced. Monitoring of teachers' work is effective. Departmental leadership is good. The head of department and his deputy are both good teachers and have been chosen by the City of Manchester to act as a lead teachers and exemplars to others in the authority. Together they provide positive and reflective leadership to a hardworking and coherent team which comprises both well qualified staff who are largely new to the college and including three newly qualified teachers. The department has made good progress since the appointment of a new head of department two years ago. All issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Teaching has improved and is set to improve further. Information and communication technology are now effectively used in the majority of cases. Pupils are encouraged to use computers as a tool for learning; teachers use overhead projectors and the interactive white boards very effectively. In short the department knows what needs to be done and has the plans and capacity to improve.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths:

- The leadership and commitment of the faculty team
- A sound strategy for further improving provision.

Areas for improvement:

- The completion and extension of written work
- The use of homework to reinforce and extend knowledge

103. In 2002 the national test results at the end of Year 11 were above the national average and were an improvement on the previous year. The proportion of pupils gaining higher grades in both single and double GCSE science examinations was below the national average. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection indicates that standards are continuing to improve and that higher attaining pupils are making better progress. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average. Improvements gained over the past few years have not been sustained. This was partly due to the faculty's staffing problems which affected pupils' progress in Year 9. These problems have been addressed and work seen in Years 7 to 9 indicates that satisfactory progress is now being made. A high level of absenteeism from the exams was also a contributory factor. The faculty is working hard to counter this negative affect on results.

104. In all years pupils do well when they take responsibility for carrying out investigations and when they contribute to discussion in class. Lower sets including a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs are particularly impressive in these aspects of work. Many pupils could do better in completing their written work both in class and homework. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 on the grade C/D boundaries, in particular, need to extend their work to include interpreting results, drawing conclusions and reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of a topic. Homework is unsatisfactory and for all years needs to be used more effectively to extend pupils of all abilities and to foster an interest in science. Pupils will be more likely to develop an independent working habit if homework is regularly set which is interesting and challenging, and the pupils record what is set in their homework planners.

105. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good and some is very good. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and their lessons are well planned. They reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and look to improve it. This process is encouraged by a system of peer observation within the faculty. They have a strong commitment to the achievement of their pupils and a good rapport with them and overall

behaviour is good. The best teaching observed involved the pupils, drawing on their knowledge and ideas, and engaged them in learning through the use of a range of interesting and challenging activities. In a Year 7 investigation into the energy in fuels, for example, the teacher led a class brainstorm whilst building a map of their knowledge and ideas. Information and communication technology was then used to project a graph of temperature change, following an engaging demonstration, and the pupils were challenged to interpret the shape. Free writing in notebooks allowed them to develop ideas on how they would solve the problem set and to apply their knowledge of a fair test in science. More work of this nature is needed to improve literacy skills. In a bottom set Year 9 investigation into the reactivity of metals a role play was used to help the pupils understand the relative 'pushiness' of metals. A Learning Support Assistant worked very effectively with a pupil with special educational needs enabling his full involvement. On the rare occasion when the teaching was unsatisfactory a lesson built on insecure knowledge and the activities did not match the abilities of the pupils, who became distracted and learning was poor.

106. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. At its best teachers' comments in notebooks give encouragement and indicate what pupils need to do to improve their work, in some cases pointing out that better attendance was needed to improve examination prospects. Such good practice needs to be used more consistently. Very good use is made of assessment data to improve pupils' achievement. Each pupil needs to be made more aware, though, of their level of attainment and what their targets are.

107. Information and communication technology has been unsatisfactory until this year but rapid progress is now being made to catch up. The faculty has 20 laptop computers which enable pupils, for example, to carry out research on the internet and to learn from revision packages. Nine new data loggers are improving the processing of investigation results, including work in the outside environment.

108. The leadership of the faculty is very good. The new faculty management team has a sound strategy for further improvement and is well supported by the college's senior management and consultants from the Education Action Zone and the Local Authority. A new programme of work, Eureka, has been introduced and planning is underway to introduce Applied Science as a double award for Years 10 and 11 pupils next year. The new coordinator for Years 7 to 9 is spearheading a well planned and rigorous action plan aimed at improving attainment in Year 9. Responsibility is delegated appropriately and good progress is already being made through the commitment and hard work of both the teaching and the technical support staff.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Excellent leadership and management of the department.
- Very good teaching leading to very good achievement across the age range.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for gifted and talented pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Use of ICT across the art and design curriculum.

attained are slightly above the national average representing very good achievement from below average on entry in Year 7. Strengths at this age are the very good work in developing pattern and decorative design in a wide variety of media including a good range of textile processes. Lower attaining pupils and those with special needs achieve very well as a result

of the closely structured activities. Higher attainers also achieve very well in developing skills. By Year 11 standards in work seen are well above average. Painting and textile skills are refined to a very high standard and very good work is developing in graphics, photography and three-dimensional construction. GCSE results in 2002 were above the national average maintaining the high standards of recent years. Boys attained well above their national average and matched the performance of girls. On average pupils' attainment in art and design was almost a grade higher than in their other subjects. Standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory overall. Year 10 make excellent creative use of digital cameras but the newly installed computer suite is not yet making an impact on the manipulation and presentation of the images.

111. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Very good planning and preparation of lessons, linked to well-structured projects, has helped to maintain high standards through a year of unsettled staffing. Several groups of pupils in all years have experienced disrupted learning due to successive changes of teachers with the greatest impact on Years 7 to 9. A good core of essential art experiences has been maintained through the hard work of the team, supporting pupils and new staff alike but the scale and range of outcomes has been significantly limited. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards the subject are very good overall. A small amount of challenging behaviour by individuals occurs, particularly in disrupted classes, but this is well managed by teachers. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified in Years 7 to 9 and so have insufficient planned activities to extend and challenge their learning. In Years 10 and 11 the very good guidance and encouragement for individual pupils ensures that all are able to learn at their own level. Excellent creativity was seen in lessons where teachers provided equipment, stimulus and encouragement for groups of pupils to explore digital photography. Pupils took increasing charge of their own learning and demonstrated excellent co-operation and teamwork. The curriculum in the earlier years is enhanced by an art-textiles course running alongside the usual design provision. At GCSE pupils have a very good choice of art, textiles, graphics and photography with many opting to take more than one.

112. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They encounter a good range of artists and cultures over the five years. GCSE work in the style of the German expressionists encouraged pupils to reflect on issues of conflict, war and family violence.

113. Leadership and management of art and design are excellent enabling the department to maintain high standards through a difficult, and still unresolved, period of inconsistent staffing. The team has a very strong core with an excellent commitment to raise standards in the subject. For example they often offer extra time for workshops after college hours and during the college holidays. The caring ethos of the department supports and encourages its pupils and very good relationships are established. Resources for art and design are very good. Accommodation, however, is unsatisfactory with inadequate storage and old furniture; the layout of some rooms is unsuitable for large groups. Overall the department has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Citizenship

114. Overall, the provision for citizenship is **good**.

Strengths

- The personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to citizenship
- A thorough audit of the curriculum has highlighted subject areas where citizenship is being taught
- Pupils are given good opportunities to undertake responsibilities at college

Areas for development.

- More detailed planning to combine all areas of delivery into a structured programme for each year group
- Develop the way in which citizenship is reported to parents and the way in which pupils record their work

115. In lessons and PSHE sessions where citizenship is taught, pupils' attainment is good at the end of Years 9 and 11. Citizenship is studied through a variety of approaches and most pupils are now aware that it is a compulsory subject. Year 7 pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand some of the implications of good and bad citizenship and the importance of thoughtfulness and helping others. In an excellent Year 9 lesson, pupils clearly appreciated the barriers that are faced by people with disabilities when their teacher introduced and taught part of the lesson from a wheelchair. Pupils make brief records of their citizenship work but detailed recording and assessment of this work is not yet fully developed. Pupils in Year 11 discuss issues sensibly and reach balanced conclusions.

116. In PHSE lessons, where citizenship is the focus, overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall and sometimes excellent. Lessons are well planned and objectives are shared with pupils so they know what to concentrate on. In the introduction to lessons teachers make pupils aware of the citizenship aspect of their learning. Pupils are given ample opportunities to express their views in whole class discussions and in paired and group work which improves their speaking and listening skills. Pupils have trust and confidence in their teachers and are able to speak openly about sensitive issues. They can analyse different sources of information and reach sound conclusions. Most pupils are enthusiastic and interested in the topics but some boys are reluctant to express their opinions. Pupils' skills of enquiry and communication are good and their knowledge and understanding about citizenship is developing well.

117. Pupils take part in a range of citizenship activities through PSHE and subject lessons, visiting speakers, assemblies and college visits to a variety of venues. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities at college, for example, as prefects, members of a Young Enterprise company, junior sports leaders and members of the college council. As part of the Education Business Partnership, pupils are working towards awards which require them to spend fifteen hours helping others in the community.

118. The leadership and management of the subject are good. A detailed audit of the curriculum has shown where elements of citizenship are being taught. As citizenship is taught through a variety of lessons and activities there is scope for more detailed planning to combine aspects into a programme for each year group. In reports to parents citizenship is included with the PSHE and tutor report and at present there are few specific references to citizenship.

119. In the light of present progress there is potential for further improvement in the provision for citizenship.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Leadership and management.
- Teaching.
- Improving standards.
- Pupils' attitudes.
- Extra-curricular provision.

Areas for improvement:

- Attendance.
- The use of ICT.
- The teaching of food technology.

121. In the 2002 teacher assessments undertaken by pupils at the end of Year 9, National Curriculum Levels were below national average. Pupils enter the college with standards that are well below national average so this represents good achievement.

122. In the work seen, Year 9 pupils attain standards that are slightly below average. Making skills are good in all the material areas but design work is less well developed. Standards in food technology, whilst possessing some good elements, overall are lower than in other material areas. Pupils work well with a range of tools and materials. They pay good attention to health and safety. Pupils display good initial research skills. Quality products are produced which show good attention to detail and finish. Pupils are less proficient in design work. Folders are maintained to a satisfactory standard but many contain a significant amount of unfinished work and display weak literacy skills particularly spelling. Pupils on the whole generate only a limited number of design ideas. These are not generally well sketched and annotated. Pupils have a good understanding of the design process by the end of Year 9 and can write good product specifications. They work well in pairs and groups and are competent to explain their work and views orally.

123. In the 2002 examinations, pupils in Year 11 achieved grades in the A*-C range which are significantly below national average. Grades in the A*-G range are in line with national average. Girls performed significantly less well than girls nationally whilst the performance of boys is in line with national average. Examination results display a steady improvement over a number of years and show pupils of all abilities achieve well.

124. Year 11 pupils are attaining standards in the work seen during the inspection that are below national average but which are higher than in previous years. Absence both prolonged and sporadic has a significant negative impact on standards in all years but particularly in Years 10 and 11. This results in unfinished coursework folios but the majority of pupils complete practical work to a satisfactory and often good standard. The products made display an individual identity and many incorporate more than one material. Folios are of a variable standard in line with pupils' ability. In general, the design work is of a better quality at the start of the folio and tails off as pupils become more involved with making their products. Pupils solve design problems by applying their good knowledge of the design process. They write good specifications and refer back to them in final evaluations. The majority of pupils

are not good at explaining design development such as modifications or changes that have been made to the original idea through ongoing evaluation or in order to solve problems. The work suffers from the limited access to ICT equipment particularly for Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM) Although pupils carry out good initial research in their projects further research is limited as is pupils' knowledge of and reference to industrial processes.

125. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are better in Years 10 and 11 where half the lessons, taught by experienced teachers were very good. In other years unqualified, supply or inexperienced teachers teach a high percentage of lessons. Good strategies are in place such as team-teaching and support for new teachers to minimise the effect of this. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Teaching and learning are not as good in food technology as in other areas because there is an over-emphasis on teaching practical skills rather than a technological problem-solving approach. This is a popular option for girls and accounts for the poorer achievement of girls. Pupils who attend regularly make good progress in all material areas.

126. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they communicate well, so that pupils make good progress in gaining the appropriate knowledge understanding and skills. Lessons are well planned, interesting and move at a good pace. Pupils respond by having a good attitude to their work and enjoying the subject. Classroom relationships are good and teachers manage pupils very well. This results in good behaviour and pupils learn to work in different situations: for example pairs to design a circuit for a novelty toy in Year 9 or in groups to consider different types of electrical equipment in the kitchen in Year 11. Setting arrangements ensure that work is targeted at the correct level, but there is a need for more modified materials to better meet the requirements of pupils who have special educational needs.

127. A very well attended extra- curricular club enables pupils of all abilities including the gifted and talented to undertake different projects from those in lessons. A group of Year 9 boys are currently building a hovercraft. Basic skills are well taught and literacy is promoted in various ways. Year 10 pupils in graphic products for example, enjoy playing word dominoes as a warm-up activity to develop their subject knowledge and technical vocabulary. Pupils develop numeracy satisfactorily, because it is included in planning.

128. Good procedures exist to assess pupils' work. Very good use is made of assessment to guide curriculum planning. Pupils know their current level of achievement and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are encouraged to make a good creative effort by teachers, but they need to see more examples of what constitutes good work. Teachers set meaningful homework. This is not always completed however and does affect learning for a few pupils. Support staff and the technicians in particular make a valuable contribution to the work of the department.

129. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of faculty monitors the work of the department and takes effective action. He is very effective in ensuring the department runs smoothly and in providing support when needed. He has been the driving force that has brought about the good improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

130. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources for ICT and particularly for CAM are insufficient to meet course requirements and this has an effect on standards. This element of the work appears in planning but cannot be taught to all pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching and use of an increasingly wide range of methods motivates pupils and encourages them to think for themselves
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils gives pupils confidence in their abilities and allows them to make good progress
- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are improving steadily.

Areas for development

- The use of information and communications technology to support learning is not yet fully developed
- Pupils are not always aware of how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve their work

132. Overall standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average. In 2002 teachers' assessments indicated that boys and girls in Year 9 attained standards below national averages. However this represents good achievement when compared to pupils' previous attainment. Standards at the end of Year 9 have risen steadily for the last three years. In the GCSE examinations in 2002 the percentage of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grades was below the national figure although almost all pupils gained a pass grade. GCSE results have improved markedly since the previous inspection. Pupils' performance in GCSE geography was in line with that of other subjects they took. Most pupils achieved well compared to their previous attainment at the end of Year 9.

133. In work seen standards are below average but pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in Year 7, including those with special educational needs, know the difference between physical and human geography and can use maps and atlases confidently. Higher attaining pupils can begin to recognise and describe geographical patterns. Pupils in Year 9 can use specialist terminology correctly. They have a basic understanding of more and less economically developed countries and understand some of the challenges facing citizens of other countries. Pupils can locate countries on world maps and begin to appreciate the importance of global industries, for example, the fashion industry. In Year 11 pupils can analyse maps, graphs and tables to reach sound conclusions about the nature of the inner city. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good literacy skills in their analysis of fieldwork data.

134. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and a wide range of teaching methods to interest their pupils. They set tasks which require pupils to think for themselves and allow them to develop their skills effectively. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and pupils move briskly from one activity to the next which improves their learning. The use of information and communications technology is not yet fully developed in geography, however. Teachers praise their pupils frequently and give them confidence in their own abilities. The marking of pupils' work is not always consistent across the department and some pupils are unclear about how to improve their grades. Pupils have trust and confidence in their teachers and relationships are good. Most pupils are well behaved and keen to learn. Some pupils lose concentration towards the end of lessons and the pace of their learning slows down.

135. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear vision of how the department can improve further and appropriate priorities for development have been identified. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored effectively and teachers share good practice. Very good support is given to the non-specialist teachers in the

department. Schemes of work have been updated and now include a range of topics designed to interest both girls and boys. New teaching resources have been introduced successfully.

136. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Teachers are very willing to embrace new teaching and learning methods and standards are improving steadily. The department has the capacity for further improvement.

HISTORY

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

Strengths.

- Standards of work are improving.
- Good teaching and learning results in good achievement overall.
- The subject is well led and effectively managed and pupils' learning well organized.
- Pupils work hard, behave very well and relate exceptionally well to teachers in lessons.

Areas for improvement.

- Provide more local and regional visits to historical sites and centres and develop ICT to broaden the programme of study.
- Place greater focus in curriculum planning on knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Develop more pupil self-assessment linked to jointly agreed targets for action.

138. Standards of work are below the national average by Year 9 but improving. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below the average indicating that achievement over Years 7 to 9 is good. This is due to good teaching by subject specialists and conscientious pupils working well at good pace and taking a real pride in their work. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a sound grounding in historical skills. Most have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of events and the main characters of the periods studied. Documentary, pictorial and other sources are generally well analysed but knowledge of chronology is often insecure. There is a good variety of study but far more needs to be made of local and regional history with pupils given opportunities to visit and investigate sites. Pupils with special educational needs do well when provided with specialist support. Gifted and talented pupils need more challenge in tasks set for them.

139. Standards of work produced are below the national average at the end of Year 11 and in line with recent examination results. Achievement over Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Many pupils in Year 10 are making good progress. By the end of Year 11 pupils have further developed their skills in using historical evidence and can analyse the reasons for and the results of events studied satisfactorily. Best work assignments for the GCSE examinations are of good quality. However, low motivation and absenteeism prevents some pupils producing the work of which they are capable. More rigorous checking of prior learning, more use of examination test materials in Years 10 and 11 lessons and more structured revision notes would improve the current good provision.

140. Recent GCSE results grades A*-C have shown an improvement trend but were still below the national average in 2002. The proportion of pupils attaining the A*-G grades varies but was below the average in 2002 mainly due to the frequent absence of some pupils. When

compared with other GCSE subjects within the college history results have been below the average. Most years girls perform better than boys but in line with the national difference.

141. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There was some very good teaching and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers are committed and caring. Learning is effective as lessons are well planned and underpinned by teachers' detailed knowledge of the subject matter. Lessons are taught in a structured and focused way so that pupils understand what they are doing. In most lessons the question and answer technique is skilfully used to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues and events. In particular, these lessons develop well historical enquiry using a range of sources of information: for example in assessing the hygiene conditions in medieval towns and when comparing the working conditions at Styal Mill with that of documentary sources on mill conditions during the Industrial Revolution. Relationships between teacher and pupils are very good and the rapport contributes positively to pupils' good progress. Classroom management is a strength. The very good teaching is purposeful, lively and enthusiastic and has good pace and challenge. The unsatisfactory teaching was due to inadequate planning which caused poor progress by pupils. Pupils' retention and recall of prior learning is weak. Learning would be further improved if more time were taken to thoroughly place the lesson in the context of previous learning so that pupils of all attainment levels can make appropriate historical links at the start of the lesson. More regular reinforcement and consolidation of learning, visually on the board would help ensure that the lesson's focus points are understood by the whole class. The National Literacy Strategy is extremely well embedded in teaching in Years 7 to 9 and contributes noticeably, especially the extended writing, to the improved standards of work seen. However, numeracy and ICT skills are not satisfactorily developed. A coherent programme of ICT skills linked to curriculum themes is needed.

142. The department is well led and competently managed. Documentation is well prepared. Curriculum planning is sound but needs adjustment to focus more on pupils' learning needs. The work of the department, including classroom observation, is effectively monitored. Assessment overall is good with day-to-day marking often very good. Pupils now need to consider their own work and jointly with staff decide on targets to improve it. All staff are subject specialists and offer a good blend of experience and youth resulting in a strong team. The suited accommodation is good and enables regular professional dialogue. Most specialist history rooms have a vibrant, attractive ambience with excellent displays providing a high quality-learning environment. Resources are satisfactory but the lack of an overhead projector and a video monitor in each specialist teaching room is a severe limitation as it significantly reduces learning opportunities and affects standards negatively. There is also need of a suite of computers to meet curriculum requirements. Sound progress has been made since the previous inspection. There is good capacity to meet the points raised in this report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Very good leadership and management of ICT
- Good teaching and learning
- Good attitudes of pupils to ICT
- The department's support for newly qualified and supply teachers

Areas for improvement:

- Standards of attainment
- The introduction of the Key Stage 3 ICT Strategy
- Development of teachers' expertise to improve the delivery of ICT across the curriculum

144. In the 2002 assessments of pupils aged 14 teachers gave grades that were overall below national averages. This situation reflects standards of work seen in the classroom, which are below national expectations. Pupils enter the college with ICT skills that are generally well below national expectations. All pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress.

145. Though standards are below average by age 14, pupils gain some competence using a suitable range of commercial applications. They learn to apply the skills they acquire in a range of contexts which resemble real life situations particularly when they produce newsletters, posters and a range of business documentation. Higher attaining pupils achieve average standards producing multimedia presentations which feature images sourced from the Internet. All pupils are being introduced to the concept of testing and to annotate their work to show how to improve it. This is good practice which prepares them for examination work in Years 10 and 11. Pupils learn about the functions of a spreadsheet package and can manipulate simple profit and loss accounts. They present this data in a variety of graphical forms such as pie and bar charts. Some are developing Internet websites that are designed specifically for an audience. Most pupils at this age have below average capability in control technology or in ways in which sensors are used in, for example, scientific experiments.

146. In the 2002 examinations, pupils in Year 11 following the GNVQ ICT course gained results that were above national averages. The number of candidates entered amounted to a small minority of Year 11 pupils. The remaining pupils get only twelve weeks of IT per year. Though the course is well-planned and taught, ten hours per year is insufficient. As a consequence standards for these pupils are below average and their progress is unsatisfactory. In this course pupils consolidate the work of the three previous years in the college by developing skills. They mostly use desktop publishing, presentational and spreadsheet software. There is no accreditation for this course. Not enough subjects use ICT to help pupils learn. A few do but there is no whole-college scheme to assess pupils' performance.

147. In Years 10 and 11 GNVQ pupils attain high standards demonstrating a good understanding of relational databases. They make good use of a range of techniques including paper and pencil to design their software solutions to problems. They show good capability using spreadsheets and desktop publishing software. They make good use of the Internet to research models for their designs. They gain a good knowledge of commercial practice in software design the use of, for example, data storage techniques and security

problems. They use annotation well to demonstrate how they evaluate and make improvements to their work.

148. Overall, teaching and learning is good. Teaching in the dedicated ICT courses is good. Teachers have a good level of knowledge of the subject. Courses are well written and are accompanied by good quality support sheets which guide pupils well while helping them to become more independent in their learning. Teachers give good feedback for example, through the comments when they mark work. Lesson planning is good and for all pupils reflects recent national guidance on good practice in teaching including the three part lesson structure. Introductions are clear and concise leaving plenty of time for work on computers. Closing sessions are sometimes too short leaving too little time to recap progress and to share examples of pupils' achievement within the lesson. Classroom management is good. Teachers take a firm approach which keeps the pupils concentrating in lessons. The best teaching features energy and enthusiasm giving pupils the message that ICT is important and that study will be worthwhile. Homework is regular, challenging and helps pupils learn. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are mostly good. They show good levels of interest in the subject and enjoy the practical side of their work.

149. Leadership of ICT is very good. The Director of ICT has very good vision and this is evident in the ICT development planning. For example there has been a lot of upheaval due to staffing changes in the past few years but good progress has been made in recruiting and inducting new staff. Similar good progress has been made in introducing the GNVQ course and in developing ICT resources. The college has made a good start to meet the challenge of introducing the National Curriculum ICT Strategy. A number of teachers of subjects other than ICT are developing good skills using interactive whiteboards help pupils learn, for example in English, media studies, mathematics, science, music, art and GNVQ subjects. However there is a need to continue staff training in a number of subjects. The ICT department has developed good procedures to guide and support staff who are newly qualified or new to the department such as supply teachers. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 ICT National Strategy has been slowed down by a lack of external support that is planned in the national scheme. More could be done to improve the ten week course in Years 10 and 11 by, for example, using it to teach IT skills not introduced in the other subjects. Nevertheless the good overall provision of IT shows good improvement on the situation outlined in the last inspection report.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Overall quality of teaching is **good**.
- Leadership by the head of modern languages is very **good**.
- Teachers work well as a team, producing good materials for learning.
- Teachers take pupils on visits to Spain, so that pupils can use the language.

Areas for improvement

- Raise attainment in French.
- Some teachers need to use more pair work and the foreign language in the classroom.
- Pupils need to check their written work more carefully to avoid basic errors.

151. Currently when pupils enter the college they study French or Spanish, and can continue with it to the end of Year 11. No pupils are dis-applied from studying a language in Years 7 to 9. Languages are optional in Years 10 and 11.

152. The French department suffered from staff absence and supply teachers in the period 2000-2002: this affected GCSE standards in 2002 and will again in 2003.

153. Teacher assessments in French at the end of Year 9 were slightly below national standards in 2002. In comparison with national standards, French GCSE results were well below in 2002, and GCSE results in French were lower than standards in similar colleges in 2002. They were also below most other subjects in 2002 in the college. Overall performance in the lessons seen showed most pupils working below national standards by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. Pupils are stronger in speaking, reading and writing, and weaker in listening. When listening to a French tape, Year 7 pupils could recognise different places in a town. When speaking French, Year 10 were able to say what they would do in the future. In Year 8, pupils could read a paragraph in French about a boy's family and a holiday, and match information to 10 pictures or symbols. In Year 8, pupils were able to write in French about food, expressing their likes and dislikes.

154. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with national standards in Spanish in 2002. Spanish GCSE results were in line with national standards in 2002. Results in Spanish were above standards in similar colleges in 2002. They were also well above most other subjects in the college. Performance in the Spanish lessons seen in Years 7 to 11 showed pupils working at national standards. Pupils are stronger in speaking, reading and writing, and weaker in listening. Year 7 pupils were able to listen to the teacher holding a clock and saying times in Spanish, and say whether they were correct or incorrect. Year 8 pupils could say in Spanish which part of their body was hurting. Year 9 pupils were able to read Spanish sentences which were cut up and jumbled, and put them back in the correct order. Year 7 pupils could write sentences in Spanish stating which college subjects they liked and disliked and why.

155. Overall, there is a satisfactory amount of written exercises and sustained writing in French and Spanish: however, pupils make unnecessary errors in grammar and spelling. Pupils do not check their written work carefully enough: the errors pupils make in written work are preventing them from achieving higher standards. There are no significant variations between pupils of different ethnicity, background, or ability. Pupils do not have regular reading sessions. Pupils spend most of their time using the foreign languages in listening, speaking, reading and writing: this contributes to literacy, but this is at a lower levels than they would be in English. Numeracy activities have been incorporated successfully into schemes of work. At present pupils' limited access to computers does not help raise standards. It is expected that they will have more opportunities shortly.

156. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in French and Spanish is good. The overall quality of teaching in French is good. The overall quality of teaching in Spanish is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In both languages the quality of teaching is improving standards: pupils are achieving well and making good progress.

157. In French and Spanish teachers are proficient in the foreign language, have good accents, and project their voices clearly. They use the foreign languages for parts of the lesson to develop pupils' listening skills. Most use a little English to check understanding or explain grammatical points but on occasions they use English too much, adversely affecting the ambience. They plan a well organised sequence of activities, which involve the pupils in their own learning. Lesson objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons, so that they understand what they are expected to achieve, and checked in plenary sessions

at the end so they can assess how successful they have been. Teachers exploit overhead projectors and other resources effectively to increase learning. Standards of discipline are good, but a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate sufficiently. Time is used well, and some teachers are good at encouraging oral work in pairs: this improves listening and speaking skills, and develops confidence in the pupils. However, some teachers should use pair work more. Staff display pupils' work, maps, posters, and other authentic material, which increase the pupils' knowledge of the languages and countries concerned. However, more maps and display are needed in some classrooms. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, and results inform subsequent teaching. Useful homework, which consolidates learning, is set regularly. The teaching of those with learning difficulties is good. Teachers manage classes well, and give pupils a variety of experiences in the classroom, including songs, role plays, and class surveys, which extend and consolidate their learning. Teachers ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress. They provide challenging tasks for the higher attainers, and give support to those with learning difficulties. Most pupils, including the higher attainers and those with learning difficulties, make good progress in lessons throughout the college.

158. The vast majority of pupils behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration, and develop good study skills. Many pupils show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well in pairs, and sometimes have opportunities to use their initiative in creating role plays and working independently. Their positive attitudes enable them to improve their performance. However, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate and achieve their potential.

159. The organisation of the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The head of modern languages checks on the progress of pupils in French and Spanish. The department is very well led and organised, has prioritised development plans, and works well as a team to produce resources for effective learning. Teachers take pupils on visits to Spain: this encourages social interaction and personal responsibility, and improves language competence. The text books and other materials used, together with visits abroad, help develop awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures. The quality of teaching, the attitudes of most pupils, the visits abroad, and the leadership of the head of modern languages have a positive effect on standards. However, insufficient use of pair work and the foreign languages by some teachers, lack of resources, and the errors pupils make in written work are preventing pupils from achieving higher standards.

160. The faculty has made good progress on the issues raised in the previous report. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. However, more use of the foreign languages in the classroom and continuous writing in Years 7 to 9 are still needed.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Use of resources and ICT
- Take-up for instrumental teaching and support for extra-curricular activities
- Composition work in Years 7 to 9
- Management and control of pupils
- High level of individual attention given to pupils

Areas for improvement

- Use of non-specialist teachers
- Matching the level of challenge to pupils' prior attainment
- Performance skills in Years 7 to 9
- Pace at the beginning of lessons

162. Standards of work in Year 9 are average and the pupils achieve well in relation to their experience and attainments in Year 7. Similarly in Year 11, pupils do well in achieving average standards. These standards are achieved because the leadership and management in the department are good and there is good teaching and learning, well supported by the extensive instrumental teaching programme. The number of pupils entered for GCSE music in recent years is too small for valid comparisons with national statistics or for the identification of significant trends.

163. In Years 7 to 9 the pupils' compositions, and response to music listened to, show a good understanding of the elements of music. They also understand and use technical vocabulary well when talking and writing about music. When composing they explore tone colours well and use repeated melodic and rhythmic phrases very effectively to create tension and interesting textures. Performing standards are weaker. When playing keyboards there is insufficient use of fingering systems and although the pupils have a good knowledge of notation they have difficulty in applying this to the keyboard, leading to an over-dependency on letter names. In Years 10 and 11 performance standards are higher with a good proportion of pupils achieving at GCSE grade C level or above. They play and sing with feeling for musical style and show a good sense of performance. The ensembles reflect this and have good cohesion and rhythmic precision. Their compositions are often dramatic with good exploitation of effects and compositional devices. In all years there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, or pupils from differing ethnic backgrounds; pupils with special needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

164. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Two thirds of lessons are good or better and the remainder are satisfactory. The permanent teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well in illustration and demonstration. Lessons are generally well planned resulting in well-structured learning. The work is challenging and there is a good emphasis on matching the work to the prior attainment of the pupils; for example gifted and talented pupils are often given special projects to tackle. However sometimes the work is initially too challenging for some pupils and the teachers have to modify the tasks during the lesson. There is very good use of ICT not only by the pupils to assist their learning, but also by the teachers in their presentations. For example in Year 9 lessons the teacher uses an interactive white-board to project film clips for the pupils to study the use of background music. There is a good level of individual attention given and this helps pupils with special needs to make good progress. In Years 7 to 9, the teaching of keyboard skills is insufficiently systematic and this has a negative effect on performance standards. When the lessons get going they are generally productive as a result of good pace and well-allocated time; however sometimes too much time is lost at the beginning in the introductory work. The management of pupils is good, it is very firm without being repressive, and the teachers have good relationships with the pupils. This results in good standards of behaviour with the pupils showing a good attitude to music. The pupils' learning is enhanced by their good relationships, which lead to effective collaboration and harmonious working in groups and pairs. There is also good support for the wide range of extra-curricular activities and the take-up for instrumental teaching is well above average with almost 200 pupils taking lessons.

165. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fulfils statutory requirements. There is a good emphasis on music from other cultures and the department contributes well to the pupils' personal development. A great strength of the curriculum is the provision of specialist teaching, free of charge, to those pupils wishing to learn an instrument. Assessment procedures are good, well documented, and effectively linked to National Curriculum and GCSE levels at the end of each project, to ensure that pupils are well informed of their progress.

166. The subject enjoys good leadership and management, which are taking the department through a difficult period where a significant number of lessons are being taught by supply teachers lacking appropriate specialist skills. There is clear direction and the department's development plan has good priorities, well linked to raising standards. Since the last inspection the level of attainment has improved; the quality of teaching and learning has improved, including the use of homework, and the accommodation has been significantly improved. Overall this represents a good level of improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Excellent range of extra-curricular activities involving a large number of the pupils.
- Excellent curriculum on offer.
- Excellent leadership of the department.

Areas for Improvement

- Encourage boys to opt for the GCSE dance course.
- Inadequate facilities to accommodate the very wide range of activities
- Improve the drainage of the playing fields.

168. In September 1999 the college gained Sport's College status. This has very significantly raised the profile of the department within the college. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 now take either the GCSE in physical education or the GCSE in dance. During the last few years pupils have consistently gained GCSE results that have been above or in line with the national average, and in the most recent examination this high standard has been maintained. A small group of pupils have also successfully gained the Junior Sports Leaders Award. This is a national award that is for young people who wish to improve their sports organisational skills.

169. The formal assessments by teachers at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards in physical education are above the national expectations for both boys and girls. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. By the time pupils are 14 years old the vast majority are able to apply the techniques, skills and competition rules to many aspects of physical education. The majority of pupils are well co-ordinated, have good technical skills and use space effectively. Basic skills are well developed and provide a sound platform for future development. The standard of swimming is very good. Only a minimal number of pupils cannot swim by the end of Year 7, and by the end of Year 9 most pupils can demonstrate to a high level of competence in a range of swimming strokes. Pupils also attain high levels of performance in life saving and personal survival techniques. Pupils demonstrate confidence in all aspects of physical education, and are learning to plan their work and to observe and evaluate what they and others achieve.

170. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils take either a GCSE examination in either physical education or dance. In the physical education course pupils are developing understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. In work seen during the inspection standards are above the national average. Pupils understand the effects of exercise on the body and are able to prepare themselves properly for physical activities. Many pupils are able to lead their classes in very effective warm-up sessions. The quality of

the course work folders is varied ranging from high quality very comprehensive folders with pupils using ICT skills to enhance the presentation of their work, to a few folders that are untidy and unfinished. The progress of some of the pupils is hindered by poor attendance. Enthusiastic and able groups of girls have opted to take the GCSE course in dance. Pupils' attainment in these groups is higher than national expectations. They compose and perform accurately and expressively, and successfully communicate their intentions through dance. Their ability to plan and choreograph is well developed, alongside their ability to critically appraise their own and others' performances. The department now needs to try and attract boys into these option groups.

171. Pupils with special education needs are well integrated and given much support by both teachers and other pupils and reach satisfactory levels of attainment. Teaching is sensitive and there is no evidence of pupils with special education needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. Talented pupils are identified and are encouraged to extend their skills both in college lessons and with outside clubs and organisations. Talented pupils are also very effectively supported by special grouping arrangements that enable the college to implement the national junior athletic programme.

172. The college has a justifiably high reputation for the performances of its many teams and individual pupils. Many pupils have represented Manchester and Greater Manchester in a very wide range of activities, and a large number of pupils have gained national honours and have competed in international events.

173. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous report. All lessons were judged to be at least good with the majority of lessons observed assessed as very good or excellent. All the teachers are well prepared, knowledgeable and very enthusiastic about their subject. Good discipline which stresses respect and co-operation and effective class management is a feature of all lessons. Teachers inject fun, enjoyment and real pleasure into all activities, ensuring that all pupils are given tasks that are sufficiently challenging, and that all are totally involved in all lessons. There is an expectation that all pupils work hard, behave well and attain high standards. In the majority of lessons these expectations are met. Pupils respond very positively to this high quality teaching. Their level of participation is outstanding. They are enthusiastic, their behaviour is excellent, and the vast majority are prepared to work very hard. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.

174. The curriculum offer is excellent and allows pupils to take part in a wide range of activities. The time allocation for the subject allows all pupils to take either a GCSE in dance or physical education. High quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work, and helps in the teaching of the subject. A new and comprehensive system of assessment and recording pupils' attainment is now in place and is helping to raise attainment. A wealth of information is now being held in electronic form, is readily accessible and is used to set attainment targets for all pupils. The on-site accommodation for the very wide range of activities is not adequate. The drainage of the playing fields is poor. To compensate for these poor facilities the department is using some of the superb facilities of Sports City and the Manchester Velodrome

175. Many staff give very freely of their time to provide an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, which are supported by an exceptionally large percentage of the pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to visit national sports events, to take part in skiing holidays to France, and to join sports tours to Malta, Spain and Holland.

176. This is a highly successful and excellently managed department that promotes high levels of attainment and enables pupil to gain high levels of personal satisfaction and

enjoyment. A large number of specialist- trained talented teachers work very well together, support each other, and show a strong commitment to their pupils. In July 2002 the college gained the Gold Sportsmark award with distinction, which is national recognition of excellence in physical education provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

177. Overall the quality of provision for religious education is **satisfactory**

Strengths

- Good progress since the last inspection on the amount of time provided for religious education in Years 10 and 11
- A significant amount of the teaching is good
- The attitude of the pupils is good

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards of attainment
- More learning about the central beliefs and teaching of world religions in Years 7 to 9
- Scheme of work to fully reflect the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus
- Supplement the Short Course GCSE in Years 10 and 11 according to the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus

178. At the end of Year 11, the standard of attainment in the GCSE Short course examination is well below national averages. In Year 2002 around 230 pupils were entered for the examination and about 22 per cent gained the higher grades of A* to C. This is an improvement on previous years however as in 2001, 11 per cent gained the same grades and it was 14 per cent in Year 2000. The standard of work seen during the inspection, in the lessons and in their books is broadly in line with standards expected at this stage. The pupils have a sound general knowledge and understanding of the two religions they are studying and they can relate this to the central issues in the areas under investigation. These include issues of life and death and believing in God. The pupils are good at expressing their opinions about such issues as abortion and divorce, and more philosophical ones such as the problem of evil and suffering. Their ability to relate these issues to the central beliefs and teachings of world religions could be stronger. The pupils' written skills are adequate.

179. The standard of attainment at the end of Year 9 is below the standard indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of some aspects of world religions. They can understand and use some religious language in a meaningful way and they can recognise and use some religious concepts in an intelligent fashion. They can also describe how religions underpin activities such as rites of passage and in festivals. The ability of the pupils to link this to the central beliefs and teachings of the religions and to understand religions as coherent wholes is not strong. Their writing could be much stronger. Their verbal skills are good and they can readily express opinions about the topics under investigation.

180. Overall, in the work seen during the inspection the achievement of the pupils is good. The teachers work hard to raise their levels of attainment. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress. Some differentiated work enables the pupils with different abilities progress appropriately but this work is not consistently available or used to its best advantage. As a result the more able pupils are sometimes slowed down

by the less able. The gifted and talented pupils have the option of taking a full course GCSE in place of the Short course.

181. Overall the teaching and learning is mostly good. All lessons are well prepared and the teachers use a good range of methods and activities to put the subject across. The objectives of the lessons are clear to the teachers but sometimes not always clear to the pupils themselves. When this happens they find it difficult to sustain their concentration, they lose interest and their learning is limited. Some interest is also lost if the pupils are not able to get on with their work due to lack of opportunity for structured tasks such as extended writing, or where they have to wait for the less able to catch up. Otherwise the pupils are well behaved and show an interest in their work. There is a pleasant positive working relationship between staff and pupils. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching and learning about world religions is stronger than in some lessons in Years 7 to 9. The best teaching links their learning to their own lives and experiences. The level of difficulty is generally appropriate for most classes. Sometimes the amount of learning done in the time available could be more significant with a faster teaching pace. The teaching makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development in their learning about world religions. Homework is appropriately set and there are active assessment procedures. Information technology is used successfully for some work. The teaching and learning makes a good contribution to the standards of literacy with reading out loud and the introduction and explanation of new words and phrases.

182. The department is well led. The staffing is unsatisfactory in that a high percentage of teaching is done by non-specialist teachers and this is having some effect on pupils' learning. There is now sufficient time to meet statutory requirements. There has been good progress on this since the last inspection. An audit to ensure that the full requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus are being met in all years has yet to be made. There has been good progress on the use and availability of resources since the last inspection. The accommodation is good.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

183. Overall the quality of provision for vocational education is **very good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' performance is better than in other subjects
- Very good development of industry related practical skills and general skills of communication and working together
- Very good teaching encourages pupils to work hard

Areas for improvement

- Further enhance the structural linkages and communication between vocational programmes
- Consider increased access to ICT for pupils
- Consider development of a uniform style and layout for all documentation and presentation in the vocational area

184. There is an extensive and varied provision of pathways for pupils in this area. Part One GNVQ programmes are now being phased out, with Year 11 pupils completing courses in Business; Engineering; Health and Social Care; Hospitality and Catering; Information and Communication Technology; Leisure and Tourism; and Manufacturing. There are also programmes at foundation and intermediate level in a variety of areas. For the current Year 10, this provision is largely replaced by the GNVQ and GCSE Double Award programmes in

the same areas, with further GNVQ provision planned in Applied Science and Media Studies. Detailed reports on the information and communication technology course and on the vocational studies programme are contained elsewhere in this document.

185. Standards are very good. In aggregate, GNVQ results for 2002 were above national averages. Departmental statistics show that when converted, there was a 90 per cent A*-C pass rate, with each gifted and talented pupil achieving distinctions. This analysis also shows that for 65 per cent of the cohort, pupils' results were most improved in their GNVQ course. Thus the vast majority of them performed at or beyond predicted levels. An exception to the overall pattern was the Foundation programme in Business, where only 11 out of 20 achieved a pass. The College has acted speedily and effectively to address this issue.

186. For current pupils the overall very good standards are being maintained. This is particularly commendable as the vocational courses attract a large number of pupils from a wide ability range. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the terminology, methods and models appropriate to the relevant industry areas. They also have a clear understanding of the related social and economic structures at local, national and international level.

187. In Year 10 pupils achieve a good understanding of modern industry structures and of the surrounding environments. They use data gathered during their work experience programme and other visits in their assessed work and other portfolio work. In a Leisure and Tourism class they discriminatingly used concepts of place, price and promotion and related them to recent class visits to cinema complexes. In a health and social care class they showed a very good understanding of social needs and choice, and in a further presentation by a visiting speaker, their thoughtful questions developed further data on resolving social problems. They make good progress over time and in Year 11 hospitality and catering class the pupils showed excellent development of practical skills and of teamwork in food preparation and presentation. In a Year 11 leisure and tourism class the pupils they also worked well with each other to develop information sources in relation to a marketing assignment. Most pupils are working progressively toward predicted A*-C grades. However, despite good teaching, a minority taking the manufacturing or engineering programmes have problems with literacy or motivation. However, pupils overall are well motivated. They take pride in their work, especially their assignments and portfolios and are happy to accept further challenge. They are able to check their progress against data provided and displayed in the appropriate classrooms.

188. Pupils use word processing, spreadsheets and graphic illustration to produce reports and assignments. For many, especially those taking the information and communications technology programme, the standards are close to, or at, those expected from new entrants to the industry. However easier access to hardware and software resources would further improve standards.

189. Overall, teaching and learning is very good. The consistency of approach among teachers is an outstanding feature. All teachers prepare well and take care to ensure that the relevant industry contexts are highlighted in all work. Each has taken initiative in arranging work related visits to businesses such as major hotels, Manchester United football club, local clinics, engineering and manufacturing premises. The consistent use of these extensive links enriches the work produced by pupils. Teachers carefully develop literacy skills, particularly through the precise use of the industry language and through the frequent use of exercises that ask for brief reports in clear short sentences. The detailed marking contains clear suggestions as to how to improve grade level and performance overall. There is mutual respect between pupils and teachers; because teachers know their pupils very well they can

use assessment and related data to assist pupils develop high but achievable targets for improvement. In all classes, teachers arrange activity so that they have time to offer support to individuals in specific aspects of their learning. Excellent teaching was a feature in hospitality and catering, where the teacher used the presence of industry professionals to develop skills of presentation and teamwork. In leisure and tourism, excellent teaching encouraged pupils to participate in lively discussions that developed and extended their skills and vocabulary.

190. Leadership and management overall is very good, with some excellent features. Whilst there is no formal departmental or faculty structure to link teachers, the head of the vocational areas regularly arranges for the briefing and training of her colleagues. She creates frequent opportunities for colleagues to share their experience of under-achieving individuals and cohorts to revise and improve strategies. A wide range of work related links is well managed by programme leaders, to whom considerable responsibility is justifiably devolved. Structured visits arranged range from the business activities of cinema complexes to the rehabilitation centres of Social Services departments and to engineering company links sponsored by the MANCAT Learning and Skills Council. Courses are clearly documented, and pupils' programmes of study are well organised.