

INSPECTION REPORT

**LEES BROOK COMMUNITY SPORTS
COLLEGE**

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112955

Headteacher: Mrs. C Dibbs

Reporting inspector: Bill Stoneham

27407

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th September 2002

Inspection number: 249170

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

College address: Morley Road
Chaddesden
Derby

Postcode: DE21 4QX

Telephone number: 01332 671723

Fax number: 01332 280794

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Hazel Till

Date of previous inspection: 8th May 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27407	B. Stoneham	Registered inspector		Information about the college The college's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the college is led and managed? What should the college do to improve further?
19727	E. Langford	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?
12658	M. Beardsley	Team inspector	English	
20119	A. Bell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
31171	O. Dutton	Team inspector	Music	
12470	B. Greasley	Team inspector	Geography History	
30699	A. Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics	
28101	A. Lagden	Team Inspector	Vocational education	
2473	A. Nicholl	Team inspector	Design and technology	
23569	D. Nicholl	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3930	R. Pitcher	Team inspector	Religious education Educational inclusion	
17799	A. Stoddart	Team inspector	Science	
23564	A. Thornton-Clarke	Team inspector	Art and design	
18755	R. Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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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?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
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 SCHOOL

Lees Brook Community Sports College is a growing college that is very popular with parents. It is larger than average with 1108 pupils on roll with similar numbers of boys and girls attending. On entry, the attainment of the pupils is broadly average but, as the college's popularity has increased, the attainment on entry of pupils is rising. Most are white British, with small numbers of pupils from other heritages. All are English speakers; no pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, though the number with statements of special education needs is high. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The college is part of an Education Action Zone and was granted Specialist Sports College status in September 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall the effectiveness of the college is good. It is an improving college with many good and some very good features, offering good value for money. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards in GCSE examination results are rising rapidly. A* to C grades in 2002 were close to the national average for 2001. Pupils are now reaching higher standards at GCSE than would be expected from their attainments on entry. Teaching and learning are both good and have considerably improved and the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The college is an orderly and civilised community. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is very good. The headteacher and her staff have very high expectations of pupil conduct and are tenacious in their approach to ensuring that standards are maintained. This results in a higher than average rate of exclusions, but parents, staff and governors all see this as an effective sanction that benefits the majority. Attendance in 2000/2001, the last year for which national comparative data is available, was below average, but is improving. Attendance in 2001/2002 was better. The effectiveness of the college has improved significantly since the last inspection.

What the college does well

- The leadership offered by the headteacher and senior staff that has resulted in higher standards.
- The excellent work-related learning programme in Years 10 and 11.
- The improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- The standards achieved in GCSE examinations in art and design.
- The moral and social development of pupils.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority of pupils.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.

What could be improved

- The provision for all aspects of design and technology in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Work experience arrangements in Years 10 and 11 to ensure less disruption to pupils' learning.
- The identification of gifted and talented pupils to ensure that they are offered an appropriate programme of work.
- Develop numeracy skills across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Very good improvement has been recorded since the last inspection, which took place in May 2000 when the college was deemed to be underachieving. Since then it has continued to increase in popularity; numbers have increased by some seven per cent. Standards of attainment by GCSE pupils have also improved. The key issues arising from the last

inspection have largely been resolved, though in the academic year 2000/2001, attendance was still unsatisfactory. There has subsequently been a marked improvement. Some accommodation issues have not been resolved and the library provision for some subjects remains unsatisfactory. Behaviour continues to be very good, relationships are, likewise, very good and pupils enjoy attending the college. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and parental support is strong. The governing body has improved its effectiveness and the work of the staff and pupils has been acknowledged by school's recent elevation to specialist Sports College status.

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 schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	E

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

Attainment at GCSE is well below average nationally and well below average when compared to similar schools. What these figures mask is the significant improvement that took place in 2001, especially the percentage of candidates gaining five, or more, passes at grade C or above. A further significant improvement took place in 2002, but no comparative national data is available. The percentage of pupils gaining five, or more, grades at C or above in 2002 is close to the national average for all schools for 2001. In both 2001 and 2002, GCSE results were in line with the college's targets. Standards of work by pupils in the college are improving and they are improving at a good rate. Girls still do better than boys and the difference in their performance is wider than the national gap. Standards recorded in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 are rising in line with national trends; though they remain well below average. In both English and mathematics girls are attaining more higher grades than boys do, though the difference in performance is very similar to that encountered nationally. Girls also outperform boys in science, but in this case the difference in attainment is closer than the national difference.

Though standards are below average, all pupils in the college, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. In short pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 gain results in examinations that are better than those predicted when they commence their courses. As attainment on entry is now rising, the college can plan for further improvements in its examination results.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Very good. The majority of pupils enjoy college and are positive about the opportunities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The majority behave well. The college is an orderly community characterised by much exemplary behaviour and no unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, with excellent relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, but various initiatives are being successfully used to secure improvements.

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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved since the last inspection, especially in Years 10 and 11. It is effective in meeting the needs of pupils. Over 150 lessons were seen and teaching was not satisfactory, or better, in only seven cases. Very effective teaching was encountered in art and design, geography and information technology. The weakest teaching was in some Year 10 science and in some modern foreign language lessons. Teaching in both English and mathematics in all years is good. Teaching is also good in science in Years 7 to 9 and it is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, mainly because of the problems encountered in Year 10.

The college has adopted good strategies for teaching literacy skills, but the strategies for teaching numeracy are unsatisfactory. The whole college provision for the teaching of numeracy needs to be reviewed to ensure that there is consistency across departments. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, but more planning is needed for the teaching of gifted and talented pupils. The Education Action Zone offers good opportunities but, at departmental level, there is insufficient planning for the needs of these pupils. There is a lack of consistency in the provisions made for these pupils. On the rare occasions where teaching fails to meet the required standard, learning suffers because the lessons are insufficiently planned; there is a lack of realistic challenge and the lessons lack rigour and pace. The quality of teaching and learning is now better than before, reflecting the efforts made by the college staff to improve standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Improvements are needed in design and technology in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Years 10 and 11 a range of vocational courses enhances the curriculum. The excellent provision for work-related learning offers youngsters greater opportunities and helps to boost attendance. Arrangements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 fail to meet statutory requirements. A thorough review of design and technology in Years 7 to 9 is also needed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Funding is appropriately allocated and the behaviour support unit is a good feature of the college. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision is very good. It is excellent for moral and social development. Cultural development is satisfactory. More should be done to inform pupils of their own culture and the culture of others.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Very good. Parents have confidence that the college offers an environment where their children can study with little disruption. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are good.
How well does the college work in partnership with parents	Good. Parents believe the college to be very good and this is reflected in its increased popularity. Opportunities for parents to be involved in the college's work are good and home/college links are also good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very Good. The headteacher is a very strong personality who leads by example and is very well supported by her key staff. This strong leadership is reflected in the standards of conduct, in the improving examination results and in improved teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors' effectiveness has improved since the last report and they are successfully fulfilling their role as 'critical friends'. Some statutory breaches remain. These include a daily act of collective worship and statutory requirements are not met in all subjects.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The college has made considerable progress in self-evaluation and this is amply reflected in the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 11.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staffing levels are good. Resources have improved since the last inspection, though further improvements are needed in music. Designated funds are used well and the governing body are developing their understanding of the principles of Best Value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress their children make. • The standards of behaviour and conduct. • The quality of teaching. • The approachability of the college. • The expectation that pupils will be challenged and will work hard. • The way the college is led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No well-supported strong criticisms were made either at the parents' meeting or in the questionnaires that were returned. A small minority of parents, amounting to nearly 16 per cent of the returned questionnaires, expressed disappointment about the amount of homework set.

Parents are unanimous in their views; the college is most caring of its pupils and is keen to nurture the skills and talents of all. Parents strongly support the college and welcome the caring ethos and the clear codes of behaviour. The college is gaining in popularity and parents feel that they are able to work in harmony with the college. The headteacher is widely respected and parents find the college staff are invariably approachable and helpful.

The inspection team agrees with parents about the strengths of the college. The team were impressed by the behaviour and conduct of the pupils and acknowledge improvements in the quality of teaching. They also agree about the strength of the leadership and management offered by the headteacher. Though some inconsistencies were noted in the setting of homework, there was no strong evidence to suggest that either too much, or too little homework is set. The view of the team is that on some occasions more thought needs to be given to the quality of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and pupils' achievements

1. This inspection was undertaken in the early part of the 2002/2003 academic year. Though at the time of the inspection the examination results for the academic year 2001/2002 were known, national comparative figures for this year were unavailable. Thus, where judgements are made comparing the college to national standards, the results for 2000/2001 are used. References to 2001/2002 are used solely to indicate the improvement recorded in the college's own results and not in the results against a national standard.

2. An assessment of standards presents a mixed picture because as the college increases in popularity, the standard of pupils on entry in Year 7 is rising and has been doing so for a number of years. Thus at the time of the last inspection, the standard of pupils entering in Year 7 was below average, as was the standard of those who entered in 1996, but who sat their GCSE examinations in 2001. The standards of prior attainment of those entering Year 7 in 2001 (the last year for which comparative data is available) were broadly average.

3. Results in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 have been constant for a number of years. For 2001, in English they are below average and in the other two subjects well below average, when compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. Some improvement in standards in English has occurred. A further analysis of results shows that girls are doing better than boys in both English and mathematics in the attainment of the higher grades. Though the gap between boys and girls appears wide, in both subjects it is in line with the national picture. Girls also attain more higher grades than boys in science but, in this instance, the gap between the sexes is far narrower. Despite these seemingly bleak statistics, pupils achieve well from their position on entry in Year 7 to the end of Year 9. This judgement means that on average, pupils are reaching a higher standard in their work by the end of Year 9 than was predicted when they entered the college.

4. Significant improvements in GCSE results have been recorded since the last inspection. Though in 2001, the percentage of pupils gaining five A* to C grades was still well below the national average figure, and well below the average for similar schools, the results were over 50 per cent better than those recorded in 2000. Significant improvements were recorded on other measures such as five A* to G results, where the results were significantly above average when compared to similar schools; the percentage of pupils gaining at least one GCSE pass and average points scored. These results are indicative of very good achievement. On average, pupils started their GCSE courses from a well below average base in terms of prior attainment. Though their GCSE results overall were below average in 2001, the majority left college with results better than those predicted based on their National Curriculum test results of two years earlier. This is indicative of very good achievement.

5. Though no national comparative data is available for 2002, the college's GCSE results, especially the percentage gaining five A* to C grades, again increased at a most impressive rate. Virtually half of all Year 11 pupils in the 2002 examinations gained five A* to C grades. This figure takes the college close to the national average figure for 2001 and represents an impressive improvement on the improved figures recorded 12 months earlier. This too suggests at least good achievement as National Curriculum results for this cohort of pupils two years earlier had been below average. The majority of subjects recorded 100 per

cent pass rates at grades A* to G, with especially good results in art and design, dance and ICT for grades A* to C. The percentage of pupils gaining grades A* to C in humanities, physical education and some aspects of design and technology was less good.

6. Standards being recorded by current pupils in Years 9 and 11 are in line with national expectations. Their standards are rising because of the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, the emphasis that is being placed on developing literacy skills and the improvements in the monitoring of pupils' work. The use of target setting is also helping to raise standards. In Years 7, 8 and 9 standards in most subjects are in line with expectations, but this is not the case in science or design and technology. More thought needs to be given to the latter, especially in terms of the arrangements of the curriculum, including the use of ICT. Standards are average in most subjects including English, modern foreign languages and mathematics, but are below average in science and in religious education in Years 10 and 11. Standards are also below average in design and technology in Years 7, 8 and 9. This is because unsuitable curriculum arrangements limit the quality of learning opportunities offered to pupils. Standards are above average in art and design, especially in Years 10 and 11. Standards in numeracy, however, need improving. Standards in literacy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, but insufficient attention is presently paid to the teaching of numeracy in all subjects of the curriculum. Improvements to the arrangements for work experience in Years 10 and 11 will also help to improve standards by reducing the levels of disruption to teaching and learning. Nevertheless, most pupils in all years make good progress. The good teaching they receive, allied to their positive attitudes and very good behaviour, results in all pupils, including those with special educational needs, recording standards that are better than indicated by their prior attainment.

7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Achievement is particularly good in the learning support centre where pupils receive extra help in their reading and number work. Progress in lessons is good where there is effective teaching catering for individual need and where there is effective use of support staff. In some subjects, however, such as ICT and modern foreign languages, support and teaching are less effective and progress slows as a result. The attainment of some pupils with special educational needs is low on entry to the college. Some have reading ages two or more years below their real ages and need considerable support to learn. Their achievement is good because they are supported well by learning support assistants both in lessons and in the learning support and behaviour support centres.

8. Gifted and talented pupils make similar progress to their peers because of the innovative work undertaken by the local Education Action Zone, which is benefiting these pupils. At a whole college level, however, the progress made by these pupils, could be greater. The college relies too heavily on initiatives sponsored by the Education Action Zone and too little attention is paid to these pupils in the majority of subjects. Gifted and talented pupils are not adequately identified and there is a lack of consistency across departments in meeting the needs of this cohort of pupils. Each department needs to develop further its thinking about how these pupils can be set more appropriate challenges so that the standards they record in their work improve at a faster rate.

9. Since the last inspection the college has done much work to improve attendance rates and to improve the education offered to disaffected pupils, including those who attend irregularly. The college has successfully introduced a work related curriculum for a small cohort of pupils in Years 10 and 11. This has been an imaginative and successful innovation characterised by many different measures of success, including far better attendance and improved examination results. Though pupils involved in this scheme still tend to achieve very modest examination successes, their results are frequently better than the targets they were set based on the standards they had recorded by the end of Year 9.

10. The college sets challenging targets for improving GCSE results. A* to C results have improved considerably in both 2001 and 2002 and results are now significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. The improvement in results reflects the improvements that have taken place in teaching and learning. The GCSE results in both 2001 and 2002 are also in line with the targets set by the college. The college is also fully aware that the attainment of boys remains an issue but there are many strategies already in place designed to tackle this issue.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The attitudes, behaviour and social development displayed by pupils are very good and are a notable strength. Standards are higher than at the previous inspection. A warm and welcoming family atmosphere of care, consideration and tolerance towards others permeates the whole college and pupils feel safe. Most pupils are keen to come to college and the great majority settle quickly to their work. Attendance rates are improving. Most have mature and positive attitudes, choosing to ignore the rare, silly behaviour of a few pupils and not allowing this to disrupt their learning. The vast majority of pupils display high levels of commitment to their work and are motivated and enthusiastic learners.

12. Pupils of different age groups and backgrounds show respect to, and relate well with, each other in classes and around the college grounds. Most pupils display high levels of self-assurance and a willingness to share and discuss their learning with others. Many are able to sustain good levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with each other in both group and paired activities. Pupils enjoy being in college, as one Year 7 pupil reported: "I really like the pupil planners and I learn something new everyday."

13. Pupils' behaviour is very good and reflects the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils. This represents a significant improvement over the findings of the previous inspection. The occasional lapses in behaviour seen during the inspection were skilfully managed and learning was rarely disrupted. Parents are very pleased with the high standards of behaviour; which is the product of good teaching and has a positive impact on learning.

14. The college conduct and behaviour policy and well-structured system of behaviour rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils and applied consistently by all the staff. Pupils readily acknowledged, in conversations with inspectors, their acceptance of college rules and considered them to be fair and focussed on making the college a safe and happy place. The exclusion rate is falling, but remains above average. Exclusion is used to protect the quality learning of the majority, provide swift access to well-structured self-improvement programmes and ensure appropriate pastoral support for those excluded. Parents and pupils, including excluded pupils, consider the exclusion strategy to have a positive impact on improving the learning and progress of all pupils.

15. The college promotes a policy of zero tolerance towards bullying and racial harassment and has successfully worked to eliminate bullying on the college site. Pupils and parents agree that past incidents of inappropriate behaviour have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved. There was no evidence of any oppressive behaviour during the inspection.

16. With few exceptions, pupils show they fully understand the impact of their actions on others. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the college are excellent. This is a thinking and reflective college where pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors. They show they know right from wrong through their actions and conversations. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others and inspectors were impressed with the courteous and polite manner in which pupils responded to them during the inspection. Pupils collaborate well with each other in their learning and social activities and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care.

17. The caring nature of the college is demonstrated in the work it does with pupils with special educational needs and the responses it receives from such pupils. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy and appreciate the special help they receive, demonstrating good attitudes and behaviour in both small-group work and one-to-one sessions. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties usually behave well, though they are less consistent than others. Pupils want to learn and co-operate with the teacher or assistant, for example, when reading a passage aloud or working on a computer. They concentrate well on their work and are eager to succeed.

18. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils are encouraged to express their views in class debates and willingly volunteer to take up the many responsibilities offered to them. These include older pupils acting as sporting assistants and helping to coach younger pupils and Year 11 pupils providing peer mentoring support and guidance to Year 7 pupils as part of the college's induction process. Of worthy note is the use the college makes of the school council, both to canvas pupils' views and opinions on the working life of the college and to seek ideas and suggestions for improvements.

19. Pupil attendance of 89.6 per cent for the reporting year of 2000/2001 is unsatisfactory and below the national average of 90.9 per cent. However, the figures submitted for 2001/02 show a marked improvement in pupil attendance of over 92 per cent, which is close to the threshold for acceptable attendance. The attendance rate of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils, criticised in the last inspection report, shows a good and steady trend of improvement. Much of this is because of the success of the work related learning programme, aimed at helping disaffected pupils. Pupils on this scheme have recorded improvements in attendance of up to 36 per cent. Attendance data for the current year to the time of inspection suggests this improvement is being maintained. Improvements in attendance can clearly be linked to rising standards of attainment.

20. The levels of authorised absence are closely monitored and well managed by the college in liaison with the education welfare service. However, the college is right to be concerned at the high number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time and the negative impact this absence has on the learning and progress of the pupils involved. Levels of unauthorised pupil absence over the past two years remain broadly in line with the national average of 1.1 per cent.

21. Punctuality, both to college and lessons, is very good, with the vast majority of lessons starting on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. It was good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 and is having a positive impact on the learning of all pupils. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was deemed to be satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.

Approximately one in eight lessons were unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 last time; this time the proportion has fallen to one in twenty-five. This represents a dramatic improvement. Indeed in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 much good and very good teaching was seen; though only two lessons graded excellent. In Years 7 to 9, seven in every ten lessons were characterised by good, or better, teaching. A similar statistic was recorded for Years 10 and 11. Such consistently good, or better, teaching is having a most beneficial effect on the quality of learning and is making a significant contribution to the rising standards in the college. This improvement reflects the emphasis the college has placed in its own training programmes to develop teaching and learning styles. The resources allocated to securing this improvement have clearly been well used.

23. Teaching and learning are particularly good in art and design, geography and ICT. Most other subjects featured regular good teaching. In Year 10 science an element of unsatisfactory teaching was encountered. This was because in two lessons with lower attaining pupils, planning was inadequate for their needs and there was a lack of challenge. As a consequence, control became more difficult and the quality of learning suffered. Some unsatisfactory teaching was also encountered in modern foreign languages. In this case planning lacked sharpness and the teaching was not sufficiently upbeat to attract and hold the attention of all pupils for the entire lesson. Some restlessness and inattentiveness resulted and the quality of learning suffered. There was also an element of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 9 design and technology.

24. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good in most subjects. Flexibility in arrangements allows for several strategies to be used to aid learning. These include support both in and out of lessons, including the use of the learning support and behaviour support centres. Provision in the learning support centre is good. Literacy is well promoted by the teaching assistant responsible for the learning support centre through one-to-one tuition and the use of a commercial computer program. Progress is well monitored through detailed reading records. Strategies for promoting numeracy skills are developing through the use of a small suite of computers. Pupils receive additional support in lessons from teaching assistants attached to particular subject areas. In most lessons where they are deployed, the teacher assistants are well informed and effective and play a key role in enabling pupils to access the curriculum in lessons.

25. Many strong features of teaching are identifiable. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of what they teach and, in the majority of cases, their planning is very good. Pupils are very well managed in the vast majority of lessons and, in some lessons, especially with older pupils, a range of effective teaching strategies is used. The teaching of the basic skills is satisfactory overall, but lacks consistency. The teaching of literacy is good and this is helping pupils to record higher standards in their work. The teaching of information and communication and technology skills is satisfactory, though some subjects, such as geography and history need to use computers more to enable learning to be enhanced, while the teaching of numeracy skills is unsatisfactory. More thought needs to be given to the teaching of this skill. Planning for teaching numeracy skills is in its infancy and this is leading to inconsistent practices and is affecting standards. Some good learning opportunities are also lost because there are inconsistencies in the setting of homework. The overall provision for homework is satisfactory, but some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework being set; the implication being that there is too little in some years and in some subjects. Inspection evidence suggests that homework is not always sufficiently planned in order to enhance learning. Some homework tasks lack challenge.

26. The majority of subjects have not planned sufficiently for the teaching and learning of gifted and talented pupils. Too frequently they are set the same work as their peers. Though this enables such pupils to make progress, they are not set, as a norm, additional, challenging work that will serve to stretch and stimulate further their interest. This is a critical area of the college's provision that needs addressing.

27. The overall impact, however, of the good and better teaching is that the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefits. The majority of pupils are acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. As discipline is so good and staff reinforce standards in class, the pace of work is good and lessons are productive. It is also noticeable, especially with older pupils, that their very good behaviour and conduct offers staff the flexibility to employ different teaching strategies. Particular outcomes of this are that pupils concentrate well, show interest in their work and they are given opportunities to work independently, or in small groups. These various strategies provide for variation and contribute to improved learning.

28. On the rare occasions when teaching and learning fall below a satisfactory level, it is because staff do not plan adequately for the needs of the pupils, learning objectives are ill defined and the lessons lack challenge and pace. In such cases the pupils' concentration waivers and their learning suffers. In a Year 9 design and technology electronics lesson, for example, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory because the lesson lacked pace and realistic challenge. The teacher assumed too much of the pupils and attempted to impart too much technical information too quickly without checking the pupils' understanding, or giving them the opportunity to tackle some of the issues for themselves via practical work. In a poor Year 10 science lesson on the properties of blood, the pupils were slow to arrive and the teacher did not assert her authority and give the lesson a clear start. Again too much was assumed of the pupils, many of whom had difficulty in pronouncing and understanding the terms being used. Learning in this lesson also suffered because the quality of classroom support offered to pupils with special educational needs was inadequate.

29. Teaching and learning is good in English. Indeed, in some lessons teaching is very good, or even excellent and this is having a positive impact on the learning of all pupils. Recent changes in staffing have had an impact on the quality of teaching offered. In mathematics teaching is also good and is helping all pupils to learn well. Most lessons are planned well and pupils are given encouragement to participate. Teaching is satisfactory in science overall, but it is better in Years 7, 8 and 9. There was an element of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 10, because the needs of some lower attaining pupils were inadequately addressed. This led to a slow pace, some lack of attention from the pupils and a lack of challenge. As a result learning was unsatisfactory. In other science lessons, teaching was livelier and this enthused the pupils and better learning took place.

30. Two excellent lessons were seen; a German lesson in Year 9 and an English lesson in Year 11. Common themes in these lessons were pace and challenge. The enthusiastic delivery of the teachers grabbed the attention of the pupils and excited their interest. Pupils were given suitable opportunities to become involved in the lesson and their learning was rapid because of the nature of the exercises set. The German lesson involved all pupils, including one with special educational needs. The planning of the lesson was so thorough, it was possible for this pupil to access the knowledge being taught and participate in proceedings. The teacher also fostered inclusion by ensuring that all were praised when they made a valid contribution.

31. In many other lessons where teaching and learning were good, or better, classroom management was a strong feature. Though the pupils generally behave very well, staff have to reinforce the standards they expect. In the vast majority of lessons pupils are very well

managed and encouraged and this has a positive impact on learning. In a very good Year 8 personal and social education lesson on friendships, the teacher used a range of short tasks designed to encourage the pupils to reflect on their own feelings and the impact their actions might have on others. A particular success of the lesson was that some boys were prepared to express their feelings in a surprisingly mature and open way. The lesson was paced extremely well and each task moved the pupils on to a higher level of analysis and learning. There was also a very good contribution to literacy with pupils being encouraged to explain key words such as 'hypothetical'. Another reason why this lesson was successful is that the teacher inspired confidence through the challenges set. An instruction of 'I am sure you can list at least 10 qualities' at the start of a group exercise, challenged and motivated all pupils, thereby enhancing learning.

32. Since the last inspection, the college has given much emphasis to improving the quality of teaching and learning. A plethora of approaches have been used, including encouraging staff to be more critical of their own classroom practices. Though there is still too little excellent teaching, the overall quality of teaching has improved, especially in Years 7 to 9 where the gains in the quality of teaching and learning have been significant.

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

33. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and very good for those in Years 10 and 11.

34. The curriculum for pupils in Year 7 to 9 is broad and balanced. Most requirements of the National Curriculum are met, though there is an area of non-compliance in design and technology with regard to the use of computers. In addition the college provides one lesson of drama and, in keeping with the ethos of the Sports College, one lesson of dance per week. All pupils begin both French and German in Year 7 and this gives a sound basis for them to choose which language to continue with in Years 8 and 9, or whether to follow both. In Year 7 pupils also follow an enquiry foundation course, which, in addition to teaching personal and careers education and study skills, successfully introduces pupils to the ethos and expectations of the college. In addition, pupils studying one language in Years 8 and 9 follow a key skills programme, which improves their basic skills and leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

35. Pupils have a very wide range of opportunities in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' individual programmes are tailored closely to their interests and aptitudes. For example, lower attaining pupils study the core subjects, English, mathematics and science and a restricted number of other subjects. They are well supported in the extra time this creates for working on basic skills and coursework for their GCSE subjects. Pupils with an interest in performing arts have lessons leading to GCSE after college, provided by the local specialist Arts College. In recent years the college has begun to offer some vocational subjects, for example GNVQ in leisure and tourism and health and social care. This year it has added applied GCSE courses in science and ICT. Last year the college was part of a pilot project managed by the Education Action Zone. This offered pupils a work related learning programme, which provided a variety of work experience placements in industry and courses at the local college of further education. The thorough evaluation of this project shows good, and in some cases very good, gains in both pupils' attainment in other subjects and in their attendance. Almost all those who took part have benefited by either being offered a job with training, or a place on a full time college course. This year the scheme has been successfully extended to offer a wider range of courses including business studies, engineering, construction, health and social care and hair and beauty. Some of these courses are taught partly by teachers from the college. All courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications. A member of the college's

senior management team closely monitors the progress and attendance of pupils following this programme. This project has evolved rapidly and is now one of the key strengths of the college. The programme is successfully tackling many issues including disaffection and poor attendance. Pupils on the course are given the opportunity to learn skills that will better equip them for their adult lives. The scheme also offers very good opportunities for pupils to progress when they leave Year 11; either to college for further studies, or to the world of work.

36. The curriculum in Year 10 and 11 does not provide sufficient time for religious education for those pupils who do not study the subject to GCSE and thus does not meet the statutory requirements. The arrangements for the teaching of ICT, which were an issue at the time of the previous inspection, are now satisfactory.

37. The time allocated to subjects is appropriate. The decision to move from a humanities course to separate lessons of history, geography and religious education, taught by specialist teachers, has improved teaching and learning in these subjects. However, the timetable for teaching religious education in blocks of time causes a lack of continuity, which is having a negative effect on pupils' learning in the other subjects such as history and geography. There are also problems in design and technology in Years 7 to 9 where pupils study each of the strands of the subject for blocks of time. These blocks were judged to be too short for the development of pupils' skills at the time of the previous inspection. The college has attempted to solve this by providing much longer blocks of time, but this has created other problems.

38. The college has an appropriate policy for developing pupils' literacy and has provided training for all teachers. The effects of this vary in subjects but in general the college is making good arrangements for the teaching of literacy skills. There is, as yet, no policy for numeracy. The provision for numeracy is unsatisfactory.

39. Equal opportunities are at the heart of the College's philosophy although there is no formal structure to implement it. The headteacher succinctly stated that, "It is something we try to live." Extensive efforts are taken to set universal rules and equal rights even though it can require unequal financial costs, especially when excluded pupils are being "brought back into the fold". Incentives are given to all pupils equally, though, within subjects, there are inconsistencies in the provisions for gifted and talented pupils. The college has a suitable policy for promoting racial equality.

40. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered to pupils. They have many opportunities to be involved in a large number of sporting activities; some led by coaches qualified in the sport concerned. There are clubs to cater for many other interests such as chess, astronomy and the environment. There are some extra-curricular activities in music, but not as many as are often provided by schools. The arrangements for out of hours support for learning are very good. Subject departments hold regular 'clinics' after the end of the college day to help pupils who find difficulties with homework or coursework; they also offer extra, more challenging, work for high attaining pupils. The learning centre is open before and after the end of the college day and at lunchtime to provide more general support with homework and coursework. Summer schools are held to enhance pupils' learning and progress in English, ICT and physical education. The college also makes a key contribution to the out of hours learning project run by the local education authority. Its facilities are used for a community based educational initiative designed to raise the attainment of primary and secondary school pupils.

41. The college makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including sex education and drugs awareness. This is taught, along with careers education, by a very experienced team of teachers. The careers element of this programme begins in Year 7 and is very good. Very clear objectives are set for the personal and community education programme. Planning is detailed and pupils take part in a wide range of activities through which they can develop their personal and social skills. Preparation for the two weeks' work experience is particularly thorough, but the organisational arrangements are unsatisfactory and cause unnecessary disruption to teaching and the pupils' learning. No time is blocked on the college's calendar when all pupils can undertake work experience. Instead pupils make their own arrangements. This results in continual disruption to GCSE classes. Pupils on work experience miss two weeks of teaching and have to catch up on their return. Teachers face classes that are frequently under populated and this makes their planning difficult and necessitates work being repeated. These arrangements are unsatisfactory as they cause too much disturbance to the quality of teaching and learning and place additional burdens on teachers.

42. The college has very effective links with primary schools and with the schools and further education college to which pupils move on after Year 11. In addition, links have also been established with local universities to encourage pupils to consider higher education. Higher attaining pupils, working through initiatives pioneered by the Education Action Zone are also offered opportunities to sample university life.

43. The community co-ordinator for Year 7 regularly visits the college's feeder primary schools. There are good systems for the transfer from the primary schools of data on pupils' attainment. The mathematics department has established a bridging project, which pupils begin in their primary school and continue when they arrive at college. Year 5 pupils in partner primary schools come to the college for a 'Sportathon', and Year 6 pupils spend two days in the college for induction into their secondary education. There is an extensive programme of support for teachers of physical education in the primary schools as part of the sports college initiative and groups of primary school pupils use the college's ICT facilities. These activities ensure that Year 6 pupils have met and worked with a number of teachers from the college and have visited it on several occasions before beginning Year 7.

44. The careers education programme in Years 10 and 11 contains units of work focussed on the different providers of post 16 education and training. Lees Brook has particularly close links with the local college of further education through the work related learning project. This has resulted in a number of pupils who would not otherwise have considered it, going on to follow full or part-time courses there.

45. Partnerships with the community are good overall. Many local employers are involved both in the college's work experience programme and in work placements as part of the excellent work related learning project. The physical education department has forged many useful partnerships with, for example, local sports teams and clubs, which benefit pupils. As part of lessons in religious education, pupils learn much from visits to local places of worship covering a range of religious faiths. The 'Vroom' challenge involves pupils, working with staff and apprentices from Rolls Royce, in making a simple vehicle. They appreciate the help they receive in their project and the experience of working with adults. There are a good number of links with the community but many subjects are not involved and do not make as much use of these in their teaching as are often found in other schools.

46. Since the previous inspection the provision for spiritual, social, moral and cultural education has risen to a very good standard overall. This has had a marked positive effect upon the ethos of the college and on pupil behaviour and learning.

47. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good overall. Pupils are given opportunities to explore beliefs and values and the way in which these impact on people's lives. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the impact of poor behaviour or poverty during assemblies. Though there is no daily act of collective worship, assemblies do offer opportunities for reflection and are making a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. There is also a "Thought for the Day"; this offers daily opportunities for reflection. The visit by a severely disabled Asian man illustrated how a positive attitude and a high level of self-belief can remove mental barriers. Provision in subject areas is not uniform in quality and needs development; good practice was seen in drama, religious education and personal and social education lessons.

48. There is excellent provision for moral development. The college has a clear code of expectations regarding behaviour and attitudes and promotes racial and religious equality; a clear moral code for behaviour is consistently promoted. Year 11 discussions reflect opportunities for pupils to develop and explore moral concepts and values relating to responsibility, equality, right and wrong. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes at the school council meeting illustrated the impact of excellent provision. In a Year 8 assembly on harvest, comparisons between Derby and the third world captured pupils' imaginations. Current and historical child labour issues and asylum seekers are discussed in geography and history lessons.

49. The provision for social development is excellent. The college provides a safe and caring environment, promoting equality and a sense of community amongst pupils and staff. There is a strong expectation for tolerance and anti-social behaviour, such as bullying, is dealt with efficiently. Roles of responsibility are encouraged such as sports assistants, 'Sportathon' organisers, Buddies on induction days and membership of the highly effective school council. There are positive career links with the world of work and local industry. The broad programme of provision includes the Year 9 vehicle-building project with Rolls Royce and the popular study-support link with Derby County Football Club on Saturday mornings. As part of its sports college remit, the physical education department provides outstanding social and extra curricular opportunities via numerous sports teams and off-site visits.

50. Cultural development, though satisfactory, remains the weakest area of provision. There are positive developments, particularly in religious education, but planned opportunities for pupils to explore their own cultural identity need increasing. Displays around the college do not always reinforce the college's cultural values. The extended Diwali celebration, which was open to members of the community, provides a good example of a positive impact on pupils' cultural development. Design and technology, geography and history make specific references to the culture and food of other countries. There are emerging links with Toronto schools and local community leaders as part of religious education, but in other areas of the curriculum, too little attention is paid to cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The provision for the care and welfare of all pupils and the quality of pastoral support they receive, is very good and a strength of the college. This provision has significantly improved since the last inspection.

52. Good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and used by staff in the best interests of the pupils. All staff are aware of the need for vigilance in the regular monitoring of the well-being and welfare of the pupils in their care. Good and effective procedures are in place to support "looked after children" and those pupils identified with having special educational needs. Detailed and appropriate safety procedures for use of the

Internet are in place. Pupils feel safe and happy in college and have the confidence and independence to raise queries and concerns with staff.

53. Health and safety procedures are very good and risk assessment is a well-established part of the college's routines. The bursar is the designated health and safety co-ordinator and the governors are involved in the college's health and safety process, however, there is no formal practice for reporting health and safety at their termly meetings.

54. The college's caring ethos is amply demonstrated in its work with pupils with special educational needs. Provision for such pupils, including those with a statement of special need, is good. They receive particularly good support when they are withdrawn from lessons. Support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is good. The teacher responsible for the behaviour support unit works closely with teaching and pastoral staff to monitor and support these pupils. Central to the philosophy of this unit is the reintegration of pupils back into classrooms. However, though staff are sure that this has a significant impact on behaviour, the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies is not recorded formally and individual behaviour is not reviewed in a regular and structured way. Nevertheless, behaviour modification strategies are successful since the behaviour and attitudes of these pupils is very good in the centre, in lessons and around college.

55. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and improving attendance. Full and effective use is made of an electronic system to record attendance at all lessons. Daily absence analysis reports enable effective monitoring of absence by college managers and timely, first day absence, telephone calls to parents have led to improved attendance. An important feature of the improved attendance has been the effective use of Education Action Zone attendance improvement programmes, such as work related learning and the close working liaison the college has with the education welfare services. Both initiatives have had a significant impact on reducing the absence of disaffected older pupils. Pupil registration complies with statutory requirements.

56. The college has excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying. This is an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. There is no evidence of any oppressive behaviour or racial harassment of pupils in the college and past incidents of inappropriate behaviour are judged by pupils and most parents to have been swiftly and effectively resolved. The comprehensive behaviour policy is well embedded into college routines and procedures are supported by a system of rewards and sanctions, which are liked by pupils. The structured use of exclusion for misbehaving pupils is fully supported by parents and pupils alike and is effective in enabling excluded pupils to receive an appropriate level of pastoral and academic support to enable their reintegration to the classroom.

57. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The head of Year 7 works closely with class teachers to identify and support the personal development needs of the pupils in their care. The mixed form structure, where each tutor group is populated with pupils from Years 8 to 11, offers a valuable pupil and form tutor continuity and provides stability in promoting the best personal development needs of pupils as they progress through the college. The termly meetings between form tutors, parents and their children ensure timely discussions about the progress the pupils are making and enables regular opportunities for parents to work in partnership with the same form tutor in furthering their child's long term personal development.

58. The recording of pupils' academic performance and personal behaviour is good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory with some good examples of departments using assessment information to guide curricular planning and

map progress across the year groups for example, in English, science, art and design, and humanities. The college successfully examines progress and achievement at whole college, class and individual pupil level. Data from national tests, teacher assessments and public examination results are all analysed to provide information for teachers to guide planning and teaching. Though, at present, this information is not used consistently across all subjects to improve teaching and learning.

59. Targets are given to most subject co-ordinators by the senior management team apart from modern foreign languages; they have their own system. Target setting has proven to be effective in raising standards. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 know their target GCSE grades and their work is regularly monitored to ensure that they are heading for the grades predicted. Parents are involved in this process. Subject clinics and meetings with tutors are offered to parents to discuss their child's performance. Parents' attendance at the subject clinics is variable, but the process is welcomed and praised.

60. The arrangements for supporting, assessing and monitoring the work of pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils with statements of special educational need generally have full access to the curriculum. Where pupils are removed from lessons the procedures followed are appropriate. Teachers and learning support assistants have a good knowledge of pupils' targets and work towards helping them achieve their goals. Annual review processes are thorough, and can include information provided by parents. Arrangements for the annual review of pupils with statements of special educational need are fully in place and provision is appropriately specified in the statements. Support teachers and staff show a very caring attitude to pupils. As a result, pupils feel free to talk to staff and to seek help when necessary. Their self-esteem is boosted and this has a positive effect on learning.

61. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and shared appropriately with the pupils themselves and their parents. As a result, pupils know what they have to do to improve and parental help with learning is fostered. The careful and regular assessment of pupils, together with the staff's keen interest in pupils' well being, is a key factor in the achievement of many pupils. The college has cultivated good relationships with outside agencies and these make a valuable contribution to pupils' assessments.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. Parents believe that this is a very good college. There is a good partnership between parents and the college and the impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the college is very good. Parents are very supportive of the college, hold the staff in high regard, especially the headteacher, and believe their children receive a good quality education. All consider it to be an open college with staff willing to listen and talk to parents. The college is over subscribed, reflecting the confidence of the local community. Parental support for the college has improved since the last inspection.

63. The contribution of parents to children's learning is good. Parents are welcomed in college and encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. Parent and pupil attendance at the termly form tutor/parent consultation meetings is very good and many parents commented favourably on these, and the separately organised termly subject clinics, as valuable ways of keeping them informed of their child's progress. The college is seen as being approachable. Virtually all parents, who expressed a view, praised the ease with which they could share any concerns with staff and of their willingness to listen and help find solutions.

64. The quality and range of information provided to parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. Parents are kept well informed. The half-termly college newsletters and regular "Dear parent" correspondence ensure parents are kept well informed about all aspects of college life. The college prospectus is attractive, colourful and helpful.

65. The governors did not issue an annual report to parents for the reporting year of 1999/2000. However, the newspaper format of the governors' report to parents for the following year is excellent, makes for very easy reading and fully conforms to statutory requirements.

66. Written reports to parents contain satisfactory information. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, progress is reported using a three-tier system and National Curriculum levels. However, no report on physical education was included in July 2002. Parents of pupils in Year 10 and 11 receive reports containing estimated GCSE grades and a grade for the level that the pupil is currently recording. Reports would be improved if they included more information on what the child can do and what needs to be done to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The college is very well led and managed by the headteacher and other key staff. The vast majority of parents concur with this judgement and, since the last inspection, a number of key changes have been made. These have resulted in rising standards and the college becoming even more popular. The principal changes have been that more emphasis is now placed on evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning. At the time of the previous inspection, much emphasis was placed on offering good quality pastoral care, in the belief that happy and orderly classrooms would create a stable environment in which children would learn. Following the last inspection, the college's senior managers thoroughly reviewed this policy. Various new appointments were made and some internal reorganisation took place. There was also a change in the underlying philosophy of the college. The desire to set and maintain high standards of conduct remains, but there is a realisation that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning do not occur naturally; they have to be managed. Over the last two years far more attention has been given to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and staff training time has been allocated to examining how improvements can be secured. Though there is still a lack of excellent teaching, the overall quality of teaching, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9, is now significantly better than at the time of the last inspection and this improvement is reflected in the rapidly improving examination results.

68. A strong feature of the college is the management of the headteacher. She is a forceful, omnipresent character who is known to all pupils and parents and is relentless in her desire to see the college improve. She leads very much by example and it is rare for recalcitrant behaviour to escape her notice. The other members of the senior management team offer steadfast support and they too have been integral in improving standards. Other successes can be highlighted. These include a successful bid for specialist schools status and the development of a work-related curriculum in Years 10 and 11. This course is an excellent feature of the college's work and is having a significant impact on the education of a group of disaffected and disillusioned pupils.

69. Some key changes have been made to the college's management. In some subjects, such as mathematics and religious education, management staff are newly appointed and detailed evaluation of their work is not possible, though the initial signs are encouraging. Staff reorganisation has taken place in other subjects, such as English and science, where internal candidates have been promoted to positions of greater responsibility. These changes are reaping success as the quality of work is improving.

70. The management of special needs education is good. Documentation is thorough and appropriate. It has recently been rewritten to take into account changes in legislation and gives clear guidelines to staff on the implications of these changes.

71. Some inconsistencies in management remain unresolved, however. There are still issues relating to the leadership and management of the design and technology department, especially in relation to the organisation of the subject in Years 7, 8 and 9. While much of the responsibility for improvement in this curriculum lies with the head of department and the staff who teach the various aspects of the subject, senior managers must ensure that the right climate for change is established. They must also ensure that the curriculum for design and technology in Years 7 to 9 fully complies with statutory requirements. There are some other issues of statutory non-compliance. These relate to the provision of a daily act of collective worship and the provision of religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are not studying this subject at GCSE. Both issues were mentioned in the last report.

72. The most significant change has been in the college's development of self-evaluation, especially of its teaching and learning. These improvements reflect well on the quality of the college's development planning. In service training has concentrated on how all staff can contribute to higher standards and there has also been some creative timetabling. Many heads of departments are offered reduced teaching loads so that they can spend part of the college week evaluating the work of their department, with particular emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning. This strategy is leading to higher standards of work and is reflected in the improvement in the quality of teaching identified in this inspection. Self evaluation has identified that the standards recorded by boys need to be raised and resources have already been made available to tackle this issue.

73. Another area where improvement has taken place is with the governing body, who were chided for their performance in the last inspection report. The present governing body is a good one. They are effective in fulfilling their various responsibilities, making a satisfactory contribution to shaping the direction of the college. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has grown in experience and confidence. They ensure that the financial and other resources made available to the college are well managed and they offer the headteacher and her staff unstinting support in the day-to-day management of the college. Specific grants are used appropriately and there are good systems of financial management. Development planning is good and the governors have been committed to the college's drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. An appropriate policy for promoting racial equality has been introduced. Though the effectiveness of the governing body has improved, they have still to address the issue of religious education in Years 10 and 11; a criticism that was made in the last report.

74. The governors see their prime role as fulfilling the function of a 'critical friend' and they are meeting this challenge with increasing success. The governors are aware of the four principles of Best Value. They do compare the college's performance and the recent change in status to specialist Sports College reflects well on their abilities to both consult and compete. The main area where they need to sharpen their practice is in terms of challenge. They still do not challenge the headteacher and key staff sufficiently to explain outcomes arising from policy decisions; nor do they sufficiently consider whether other, more successful, outcomes might have arisen if policies had been implemented in a different way. If they are to refine their role as 'critical friends', they need to develop their own skills at being constructively critical.

75. There has been a significant change to the teaching staff during the last two years with a number of newly qualified and young staff joining the college during this time. There is sufficient staff in all curriculum areas and the vast majority are suitably qualified and matched

according to their subject expertise. The overall quality of technical support is satisfactory, although there is insufficient support in design and technology and the quality of help offered to some pupils with special educational needs is variable, resulting in slower progress than expected. The college's successful professional development is linked to Performance Management objectives and college and department development plans. The college now has a monitoring and evaluation programme for teaching. This has helped in raising standards.

76. The college allocates appropriate funding for the purchase of learning resources. The majority of subjects in Years 7 to 11 have adequate resources to deliver the curriculum. There are some exceptions. In science textbooks are shared and there are insufficient for pupils to take them home, thus restricting research work. In music there is a poor range of percussion instruments and restricted access to computers and other electronic equipment. This adversely affects standards of composition and limits the experimental work in sound that pupils are able to undertake. The library provides inadequate provision. It is based in two rooms, both of which are difficult for pupils to access. Lending rates are consequently low. The library is not well used as a learning resource and the inadequate facilities limit opportunities for learning, though some departments maintain their own bank of resources in their teaching areas.

77. The college's accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is sufficient and appropriate to meet the needs of its curriculum. The accommodation for physical education is good. That for music is unsatisfactory because only one room is provided and this is unsuitable for practical work. It is situated close to the dining room and the intrusion of noise has an impact on standards. The rooms used for the teaching of ICT lack appropriate ventilation. They become very hot and stuffy making it difficult for pupils to concentrate effectively. Some science laboratories are poorly lit and this depresses standards when accuracy is needed in measuring. Since the last inspection the college has begun a programme of refurbishment. Much of the building has been repainted internally and externally. The concerns about security raised in the last inspection report have been tackled. A fence has been erected to control access to the site and surveillance cameras installed.

78. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Governors and senior staff have identified where changes were needed and funding and other resources have been made available to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning, in particular, have improved. Expenditure per pupils is well above average but, results are improving, some creative timetabling arrangements have been implemented to give key heads of department more time to evaluate their work and the finances show a small surplus. The overall effectiveness of the college has improved since the last inspection and the college now offers good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. To raise the attainment of pupils further and to improve the quality and range of their learning the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Improve the provision for all aspects of design and technology in Years 7, 8 and 9 by ensuring that:
 - the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum
 - key skills are progressively developed
 - there are extended design opportunities that allow pupils to reach higher levels
 - assessment criteria for each level are used rigorously
 - examples of pupils work are kept
 - there is consistency of practice between teachers
 - lessons focus consistently on what pupils learn
 - there is better use of ICT.(Paragraphs: 6, 23, 28, 34, 37, 71, 75, 115-123)

- (2) Improve work experience arrangements in Years 10 and 11 to ensure less disruption to pupils' learning by ensuring that:
 - all pupils have an opportunity for a quality work experience placement
 - placements are all undertaken at the same time in order to minimise disruption to teaching and learning.(Paragraphs: 6, 41)

- (3) Identify gifted and talented pupils to ensure that they are offered appropriate programmes of work. The college should consider:
 - how all departments contribute to the programme
 - how the good work being undertaken by the Education Action Zone can be developed by each department.(Paragraphs: 8, 26, 39, 88, 100, 110, 123, 126, 134, 136, 143, 150, 151, 154, 159, 164)

- (4) Develop numeracy skills across the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - there is a clearly understood policy for the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum
 - all departments develop their own strategies in line with the college's policy
 - the work of each department in promoting numeracy is monitored on a regular basis.(Paragraphs: 6, 25, 38, 101, 107, 113, 121, 169, 170)

In addition to the key issues above, the governors may wish to consider addressing the following less significant issues in the action plan:

- Improve the quality of the college library.
- Improve the quality of lighting in the science laboratories.
- The opportunities for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 to study religious education.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Improve the ventilation in the ICT classrooms.
- Improve the resources made available to the music department.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	41	64	40	6	1	0
Percentage	1.3	26.6	41.6	26	3.9	0.6	0

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

Information about the college's pupils

Pupils on the college's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the college's roll	1100
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	149

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	44
Number of pupils on the college's special educational needs register	146

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

Pupil mobility in the last college year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	41

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	9.4
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	1.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	114	98	212

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	51	56
	Girls	66	56	50
	Total	116	107	106
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	55 (39)	51 (56)	50 (40)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	18 (7)	24 (26)	10 (10)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	52	58
	Girls	68	51	50
	Total	116	103	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	57 (38)	50 (59)	53 (47)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	15 (10)	20 (26)	8 (16)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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
	2001	120	96	216

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	27	111	116
	Girls	38	92	94
	Total	65	203	210
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	College	30 (20)	94 (93)	97 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per pupil	College	30.4 (30.4)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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	1068	43	9
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	3	2
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	8	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	9	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It 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)	70.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.7

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	754

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	65.3
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	20.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	3 129 916
Total expenditure	3 058 068
Expenditure per pupil	2 847
Balance brought forward from previous year	111 014
Balance carried forward to next year	182 862

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	16.4
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	24.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1078
Number of questionnaires returned	211

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	41	46	8	3	2
My child is making good progress in college.	48	44	4	2	2
Behaviour in the college is good.	40	52	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	15	1	3
The teaching is good.	40	50	4	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	39	10	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	59	34	4	2	1
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	28	3	0	2
The college works closely with parents.	43	45	7	3	2
The college is well led and managed.	52	39	4	3	2
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	41	4	2	5
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	45	5	1	6

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in many lessons.
- The leadership offered by the head of department.
- Recent improvements in standards.

Areas for development

- Standards in GCSE English literature.
- The performance of boys in all years.
- Formal speaking skills.

80. Until this year, the standards in English of pupils entering the college have been well below average. Pupils have responded well to the improvements in the provision for English and are now attaining standards that are close to average by the end of Years 9 and 11.

81. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 14 year-olds, standards were below average. Standards were also below average in comparison with schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. There was a significant difference between the boys' results and the girls'; the results for girls were much better. Over the previous two years, there had been an improvement in standards, but in 2001 the improvement was major. This upward trend has continued since the unconfirmed results of the 2002 tests show that standards overall are now similar to the national average for 2001, mainly because the girls have raised their standard to above average. The attainment of boys in 2002 is still below the national average for 2001. Girls still do better than boys, but the difference in their respective performances is far closer than the difference encountered nationally. The college is alert to this issue of boys' attainment and has initiated a plan of action to address this issue.

82. Attainment at GCSE, based on average points scored, was well below average in English language and in English literature in 2001. There was a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, with twice as many girls gaining grade A* - C than boys. The most recent examination results, yet to be confirmed, show a marked improvement in English language, to the effect that standards have risen to just below the national average for 2001, and the gap between the boys and girls has narrowed considerably. However, in English literature, despite a small improvement, standards are still well below the national average.

83. During the inspection, the standard of work seen from both boys and girls was in line with the national average. This constitutes good achievement since pupils entered the college. Higher attaining pupils and pupils who have special educational needs also achieve as well as their peers in relation to their prior attainment. This rise in standards can be attributed to the strategies the new head of department has put into place and the good teaching in the department.

84. Standards of speaking and listening are average. Pupils of all levels of attainment have good listening skills. They listen well to their teachers, as, for instance, when the teacher is reading to them, and they easily recall details from the text. Oral skills are less

good. Pupils engage easily in conversation, without self-consciousness. In informal situations they express their views and their feelings clearly. They ask and answer questions in class with confidence. Their grasp of formal language, however, is less secure. Even some higher attaining pupils in Year 11 pay little attention to using good English and their speech is too often marred by slang expressions, or careless pronunciation.

85. Standards of reading are average. Pupils read a range of texts with understanding and insight. They are able to recognise inferences and to draw conclusions. For instance, pupils in Year 7 are able to summarise paragraphs in an extract from 'The Demon Headmaster', by picking out the main points. Some lower attaining pupils in Year 8 reading 'The Ballad of the Nancy Bell' recognised alliteration and could explain its effect in simple terms; they understood the significant ideas in the poem. By Year 11, most pupils have satisfactory analytical skills, with the more able showing a clear insight into the themes and characters in the novels and plays they read. They recognise the underlying imagery in poems such as 'Work and Play'. Their knowledge of literary terms is good and the more able pupils understand the effects of literary devices. There was little opportunity during the inspection to observe reading aloud, but what little there was, was not strong.

86. There is a good range of writing in all years and standards are about average. Literary essays are well developed. For instance a pupil in Year 8 wrote a good study of Mister Tom, showing a real understanding of his character, using evidence from the text to support her comments. By the end of Year 9, most pupils have a reasonable grasp of how to write an analytical essay. Higher attaining pupils have a very good grasp of the conventions, using appropriate quotations concisely; however, their work often has a surprising number of spelling errors. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils reach a high level of fluency, with well-constructed, analytical essays as, for instance, when comparing films that use the Film Noir conventions. Middle attaining pupils demonstrate well their ability to compare poems in a well-structured essay, but poor spelling and punctuation sometimes mar lively and interesting writing. Work is generally neat and writing is legible. Pupils throughout the college make very good use of computers to present and illustrate their work, often to a high standard.

87. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the college. Their teachers are well informed of their needs and plan accordingly. Pupils are well supported in the classroom, both with support assistants and with suitably adapted tasks where appropriate.

88. The quality of both teaching and learning is good. In three out of every four lessons it is good or very good, with one excellent lesson. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson, and that was because the objectives of the lesson were unclear, leading to a lack of focus and pace. Pupils respond well to the effective teaching, resulting in good learning. A strength in the teaching is the very good subject knowledge that the teachers have. This means that their lessons are very well planned and they give thorough coverage of the topics, so that pupils acquire new skills and understanding step by step. Teachers have high expectations and all pupils, including those who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, learn well. Teachers enable this by modifying work or by giving tasks that are sufficiently open ended to allow pupils to work at their own level. A good example of this was in a Year 10 class when groups of pupils studying a poem were given different and increasingly difficult aspects to look at and report on. However, there are some occasions when the higher attainers in the mixed ability classes could be challenged more. An important contribution to the pupils' learning is that they show a good level of interest and pride in their work and their attitudes and behaviour are usually good, and often very good. This not only reflects credit on the pupils, but also on the way teachers enthuse and motivate them. The department has had discussions on how marking and target setting could be improved. At present, this is not always as helpful as it could be, especially in linking it to the targets that

are set for the pupils. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are generally very good. The result is an ethos in lessons where pupils expect to work hard and teachers are able to easily encourage them to their best efforts.

89. The improvement since the last inspection has been very good, which is due in no small measure to the recently appointed head of department. She gives a clear direction for the subject with her very good leadership. The impact of her innovations is already having an impact on standards. The curriculum is very well planned, with units of work designed to take into account the literacy strategy and the well-structured lessons take into account the different learning styles of pupils, particularly the boys. The subject provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, although this is not explicit in the planning. There is a satisfactory level of resources in the department, but the library accommodation is totally inadequate: the situation of having books split into two different areas means that pupils do not have the opportunity to learn how to use a library properly. This makes independent learning difficult and is unsatisfactory.

Literacy across the curriculum

90. There has been good progress in developing a whole college strategy, linked to the national framework for literacy. The staff have had training and most classrooms have displays of key words and definitions and pupils have spelling diaries. There is a whole school policy and development plan for literacy, but some subjects have not incorporated this into their own documentation. In some subjects, teachers have literacy targets in their planning, or have general literacy aims. For instance, in geography and history, teachers aim to ensure that all pupils know and understand the meaning of key words. Consequently, in many subjects, pupils use technical language well. In art and design, pupils have an excellent booklet with words, meanings and visual representation of the words so that even poorer readers can clearly understand. There are good examples of developing extended writing, such as in a topic on 'cloning' in science. In history and geography, pupils use a range of writing styles to present their work, such as reports, letters, diaries and accounts. Most of the work in ICT is usually for a specific audience, so pupils develop different styles of writing and presentation. However, the marking of spelling or grammatical errors is inconsistent.

91. The development of speaking and listening is promoted well in several subjects such as ICT, where pupils are expected to describe to the rest of the class what they have done. They regularly appraise their own work and that of others and comment critically, both positively and negatively, on specific pieces of work. The science department is very good at using paired discussions and group work in corporate decision making. In modern foreign languages, teachers are taking part in a project, which promotes the development of speaking skills.

92. Several subjects, such as art and design, history, geography and ICT, encourage the development of research skills. Pupils use the library, the Internet and other sources to find information. Generally, their comprehension is satisfactory and does not impede progress. In modern foreign languages there are good techniques taught on how to approach difficult texts. The skill of reading aloud, however, is promoted in few subjects. More emphasis should be placed on developing this skill in all subjects.

Drama

93. The GCSE results in 2001 were well below average. In the work seen during the inspection standards in Year 9 and in Year 11 are below average. Pupils show a high degree of self-consciousness and do not engage easily in the tasks. However, in the lessons seen in Year 7 and in Year 10, standards are climbing rapidly and already are at least in line with national expectation and, in some cases, are above average. The very good quality teaching offered is having a clear impact on learning and standards. The new head of department has

injected enthusiasm and energy into the department. This is already having an effect on standards. In the better lessons, pupils are totally absorbed in their activities, whether it is learning a new technique such as 'freeze frame' or 'step out', or establishing 'trust' and 'trustworthiness'. Pupils are developing an ability to evaluate their own and others' performance with sensitivity. They work very well together in groups, concentrating well on their work.

Media studies

94. This is a popular GCSE option. In lessons, pupils respond well to the good teaching and they enjoy their studies. This is also evident by the care with which they carry out their examination coursework. Standards seen in lessons and in the pupils' work are in line with national expectations for the subject.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons.
- The strategies being used to raise standards.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT in the teaching of mathematics.
- The level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils, especially at GCSE.
- The development of the National Numeracy Strategy across the curriculum.

95. The attainment of pupils on entry to the college is now broadly in line with national standards. The overall results of National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds in 2001 were well below the national average and well below when compared to similar schools. Attainment has been consistently below national averages during the last three years. Attainment in mathematics is broadly equal to English and science. However, the 2002 overall results (national figures are as yet unavailable for comparison) show much improvement and are close to the national average recorded in 2001. Girls have significantly performed better than boys in all tests since the previous inspection. Higher grade A*-C GCSE results were about half the national average in 2001. A*-G grades were above national averages. Attainment has been consistently well below national expectations overall. The 2002 results, for which national comparative data is unavailable, show a dramatic improvement and are broadly in line with national expectations of recent years; though grades A*/A remain below expectations. Results for girls and boys were similar

96. The achievement of pupils over time is satisfactory but, in many lessons seen during the inspection, achievement was better. This reflects the impact of changes in staff. Standards in lessons and work seen are in line with national expectations, confirming the 2002 results of national tests for 14-year-olds and GCSE pupils. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 are able to recognise descending sequences of numbers together with the use of negative numbers. Middle ability Year 10 pupils were successful, with good teaching, in understanding movement of polygons on a grid. They employed appropriate, mathematical methods and were able to recognise that the reverse process required inverse notation. Generally the pupils' oral contributions were stronger in Years 7, 8 and 9 than in Years 10 and 11, suggesting that standards of mathematics on entry to the college are rising. GCSE pupils are prepared well. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils work well in lessons and are confident with manipulation of algebraic terms and understand and apply all aspects of basic trigonometry. Coursework for GCSE is generally well completed although greater levels of explanations are required in the introduction and process of their work if further improvements are to be made.

97. Teaching and learning is good overall. The very best lessons are well planned, display effective teacher/pupil rapport with productive question and answer methods, This leads to participative learning where pupils are encouraged to think independently, creating interest and enjoyment in the subject. In one particular Year 11 lesson, the introduction was designed to stimulate thought when sequences of numbers were displayed from an overhead projector and the pupils began to complete the gaps in the series. The pupils had particular learning needs and the work was appropriately pitched and tailored to reflect individual differences. Practical use was made of mathematical materials, which enabled pupils to form patterns, recognise links between consecutive numbers and to express in concrete terms complex concepts. This resulted in the lesson being both enjoyable and productive and raised the self-esteem of all pupils. In the few instances where teaching was less effective, lessons were characterised by teaching methods that failed to link the different aspects of the lesson plan. Timed activities did not naturally flow. Learning suffered as the teachers did not command interest and the lessons became too teacher focussed. Such teaching restricted pupils' initiative and less progress was made.

98. Behaviour in lessons is very good and fosters enjoyable learning. Learning by pupils with special education needs is satisfactory. Appropriate numeracy targets are set for these pupils. All pupils are prepared for the GCSE examination and the intention of the new head of department is to develop the use of a wider range of suitable teaching materials. This is needed because the higher attaining pupils, especially at GCSE, are not challenged in their learning with sufficient consistency.

99. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy makes a positive contribution to many lessons and is helping to raise standards. Most feature a short activity at the beginning, which sets the tone for the lesson. The college ran a numeracy summer school in 2002 using teaching materials designed to ensure a smooth transition to secondary education. The development of numeracy across the curriculum has yet to be implemented and, coupled to the numeracy initiative within the department, remains an issue for development. Little work using ICT was seen either in displays, or in the classroom. There is ready access to computers and their planned use and integration into schemes of work would enhance learning for all pupils. The college library contains a complete set of the current mathematics scheme together with other suitable books. Pupils use these resources.

100. No valid judgement about the quality of leadership and management can be made as the head of department is newly appointed. However, it is clear that factors contributing towards the most recent improvements have already been identified. Assessment follows the college policy whereby all pupils have targets set from the time they start in the college and these targets are reviewed regularly. More emphasis, however, needs to be placed on what pupils need to do to improve and how pupils can achieve their individual targets. This includes giving more emphasis to gifted and talented pupils to ensure that their potential is fully realised. In 2002 a Summer school for Year 11 pupils was organised providing additional focus and support for their studies during their final year. The need to improve grades A*/A is an important issue linked with the current increased levels of attainment on entry. Recent department and whole college initiatives are clearly boosting pupils' achievements. Consequently, good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Numeracy across the curriculum

101. The provision for developing numeracy skills is unsatisfactory. Numeracy is not deeply embedded in the curriculum and most departments are not seizing sufficient opportunities to foster numeracy in their daily teaching. There is a lack of a co-ordinated approach to numeracy across the curriculum. There are, however, some exceptions. Numeracy is a strong feature in ICT lessons, especially in the use of spreadsheets where a variety of formulae to undertake calculations are employed. Department documentation includes planned opportunities for further applications of numeracy. Some other departments are making a contribution. Numeracy in French and German is evidenced in the use of timetables, calculating changes in time and other simple calculations. Geography pupils display satisfactory numeracy skills, especially in their analysis of climate graphs and representation of data using charts and graphs. Design technology pupils use numeracy when conducting surveys and plotting the results on bar charts. Their project work in Years 10 and 11 contains surveys, while some higher attaining pupils use computer presentations for their work that incorporate graphs and pie charts; but these are rather isolated examples. In other departments, examples of using numeracy are scarce.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The improving trend in test and examination results.
- Pupil management and the effect this has on learning in the better lessons.
- The leadership offered by the head of department, especially in the development of new courses.

Areas for improvement

- The standards of presentation of pupils' work, especially graphs and diagrams.
- The marking of homework to ensure pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve.
- The standard of accommodation.
- The availability of textbooks.

102. Overall the standards in science are below average. In 2001, results in National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were well below the national average and well below average for pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 or higher in their tests has increased steadily from 1999 to 2001 although the average points per pupil has changed little. In 2002 there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and the proportion gaining Level 6, or better, more than doubled. As yet there are no national statistics available for comparison. Girls' results have been better than boys' for several years.

103. The results for GCSE dual award science examinations in 2001 showed a small improvement over those for the previous year but were still well below the national average. In 2001, approximately one quarter of pupils gained the higher grades A* to C, compared to a national average of about one half. However, in 2002 there was a marked improvement with almost one half of pupils gaining higher grades. Though no national comparisons can be made, this outcome represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9. In 2002 all pupils who took the examination gained at least a minimum grade.

104. Standards of work seen for pupils aged 14 are below average. Higher attaining pupils plan practical work to test a hypothesis and understand that the average of several

measurements is more accurate than a single reading. They know how to write chemical compounds in symbols and how the human body digests food. Lower attaining pupils do not appreciate the need for a logical approach to an investigation and evaluations are uncritical. Chemical reactions are written in words and common scientific terms are sometimes misspelt. All pupils can explain the need for a, "fair test" and understand the need to alter only one variable at a time in a practical investigation.

105. Work seen for pupils aged 16 is below average. Higher attaining pupils understand the structure of the Periodic Table of the elements and how electrons are configured around different nuclei. They write balanced equations of chemical reactions and can carry out calculations, for instance on problems using Ohm's Law, successfully. They understand the part played by chromosomes in the inheritance of characteristics and how selective breeding and genetic modification work. Lower attaining pupils still write chemical reactions in words and understand some sources and dangers of pollution but some cannot recall terms such as, "exothermic" and there is a greater reliance on work sheets to structure learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through the college. In the most recent years, the pupils' poor literacy skills, especially in Years 7 to 9, have constrained progress. They enter with standards below average, achieve steadily but leave with standards below average though, in 2002, GCSE results suggest better progress. The pupils had higher average attainment in Year 9 than previous years and the department had devised a rigorous revision programme, which served to boost achievement. Good standards of teaching in Years 7 to 9 are also having an impact on the progress being made by current pupils.

106. Overall teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9. Slightly more than half of all the lessons seen were good or better, one quarter were very good and a little more than one tenth were unsatisfactory or poor. All the very good lessons were with pupils in Years 7 to 9; the unsatisfactory teaching was confined to Year 10, though other lessons in Year 10 and all lessons in Year 11 were at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The best lessons were brisk and informative and included practical work or demonstrations, which maintained pupil interest. As a result pupils enjoyed their lessons and learned well building on previous work to develop new skills and knowledge. Unsatisfactory lessons lacked pace and structure. Instructions to pupils' were unclear and work set did not match pupils' capabilities so they became bored and made little progress. In a poor Year 10 lesson, planning for a lower attaining group was inadequate and poor support was offered to pupils with special educational needs. Poor learning resulted as a consequence. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but comments from teachers, though encouraging and supportive, gave pupils little guidance on what they could do to improve standards; learning which occurs in the classroom is not being effectively reinforced. Where work had been unsatisfactory no further checks are made, so deficiencies in knowledge persist. An insistence that inadequate or missed work should be rectified will particularly improve the standard of boys' work in the earlier years when they lag behind the girls.

107. Relations in the classroom are relaxed. Pupils often work in pairs or small groups and because behaviour is very good they learn well from one another. In one pair-work session pupils studied either a plant cell or an animal cell. Learning was particularly effective when they then shared their new knowledge with one another. Behaviour is very good. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs invariably progress at the same rate as the rest of the class because teachers do not waste time maintaining discipline and can spend extra time with those who need help. At all ages the standard of work presentation of many pupils is high. Their work is neat and legible and diagrams are drawn with care. However, a significant proportion of pupils produce careless work. Straight lines are drawn freehand and diagrams of apparatus are sketches, sometimes in ink. Graph drawing skills are poorly developed and few pupils draw an accurate, "line of best fit". In curved graphs

many join one plotted point to the next with a series of straight lines and straight-line graphs have thick or sketched lines.

108. The department makes an important contribution to pupils' moral and social education. Frequent opportunities for co-operative work during lessons and practical sessions are offered. Pupils learn to share ideas and apportion tasks amicably and the constant repetition by teachers of the rules for safe working is a moral lesson about caring for other people. Little work of a spiritual or cultural nature was seen.

109. Resources for using computers as tools in the laboratories are limited. Pupils have few opportunities to graph practical results, simulate experiments or use computers to find information, though there is some use of data logging. There are occasions when whole classes use computers. Some pupils use word processors to present work and examples of extended writing on scientific topics were seen. The library, however, does not have sufficient books to cope with class work on a topic such as the solar system. This shortage of resources limits the work teachers can do with classes and is adversely affecting standards.

110. The leadership and management of the department are good. The recently appointed curriculum co-ordinator gives a very clear lead in the drive for higher standards. Though only in post for a short time, the head of department's leadership has already had an impact on standards. The provision for science is improving and is currently good. Newly introduced courses in Years 7 to 9 more closely match the pupils' capabilities and teachers have co-operated to compile new units of work. The work of all staff, including technicians is efficiently organised and responsibilities clearly delegated. Revision classes are held before test and examination sessions and results closely analysed. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and action taken if it is not satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Test and examination results and the quality of teaching have all improved. However, the quality of accommodation is still unsatisfactory. Laboratories are gloomy and the situation is not helped when most rooms have a proportion of defective overhead lights. Reading, writing and measuring become more difficult in poor light and pupils' work suffers. Most mains electric sockets are not protected by circuit breakers, a potentially hazardous situation and the cupboard used to store corrosive materials is not adequate. The department is still short of books. In particular, there is a shortage of textbooks and there are not sufficient for pupils to take home for further study, or to complete homework. Opportunities to reinforce learning are being missed and restricted research opportunities constrains the work of gifted and talented pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The high standards recorded in GCSE examinations.
- The quality of teaching in many lessons.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- The leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for exploring a wider range of media.
- The use and application of number in lessons.
- The use of ICT as an aid to teaching and learning.

111. Standards are very good in art and design when compared to national averages. Attainment in Year 7 to 9 is at least in line with the national expectations and in Years 10 and 11 it is well above. As pupils move through the college, their achievement is very good. The 2001 GCSE results for grades A*-C for 2001 were significantly above the national average. There were no significant differences in the standards recorded by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress, often recording grades higher than those forecast. Teacher assessments in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 9 indicate that 91 per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 and above. Though no national comparisons can be made, these figures are significantly above all other subjects. GCSE results in 2002 were also very good with 95 per cent of candidates gaining at least a C grade though, at this stage, national comparisons cannot be made. Pupils achieve high standards of drawing, painting, printing, and ceramics, a good knowledge and understanding of critical and contextual studies and a range of skills and techniques. However, drawing is often derived from copying and enlarging work from artists. This limits the pupils' ability to be evaluative and creative.

112. Overall, teaching is very good. In lessons seen it was good in all year groups and, occasionally, very good. Other inspection evidence such as work sampling and the very high standards being recorded in GCSE examinations is indicative of very good teaching. This has a positive impact on learning leading to levels of attainment that are often above those predicted. Standards of work are in line with national expectations in Years 7 to 9, but are well above average in GCSE classes. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of all pupils. Lesson planning caters for all pupils and the pupils' subject knowledge and understanding is enhanced by the effective question and answer techniques used by their teachers. Staff use a range of teaching strategies and continually intervene to give individual feedback and set suitable targets. Pupils respond to this by concentrating well in class, producing high quality work, developing projects stimulated by the work of professional artists such as O'Keefe, Magritte and Monet. They are competent in the use of colour. Pupils are managed very well and their very good attitudes and sensible behaviour in class also contribute to the quality of learning.

113. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and provide informative feedback and targets for improvement. Learning outcomes are good. The majority of pupils are able to draw competently, paint, print and experience some 3 dimensional works, but would benefit from more opportunities for personal, expressive or imaginative opportunities. The development of literacy skills is good; with teachers making reference to subject terminology and placing emphasis on spelling key words. The application of number is an area for development. Homework tasks are set and marked regularly and relate directly to coursework. Pupils are well managed and teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. In Years 10 and 11, in particular, pupils work independently, drawing, writing and clearing away materials efficiently. These factors all contribute to the good achievement made by pupils, including those with special educational needs.

114. The leadership and management of art and design are very good. Strategic and curriculum planning is effective. However, there are insufficient opportunities for large-scale work, painting on canvas or board and links with textiles to develop mixed media. This limits opportunities pupils have for experimentation. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, with standards being maintained. Art and design is a strength of the college. Risk assessments are now in place, however, the development of technology within art and design is still unsatisfactory and the department lacks the necessary computers, hardware and subject specific training to implement this.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The recent significant improvement in GCSE results.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum offered to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The assessment arrangements for pupils in Year 9.
- The teaching scheme for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Better use of ICT in all years.

115. Pupils' attainment by end of Year 11 is average. Standards are highest in food, graphics and textiles and weaker in electronics and resistant materials. Pupils begin Year 10 with below average attainment. They make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 and their achievement is satisfactory. They all have an understanding of the designing and making process. They can specify a design brief and develop and express their ideas in a way that results in a finished product in their chosen subject. Pupils of all levels of attainment are able to manufacture items. The highest attaining pupils produce very high quality products and portfolios that underpin their designs and evaluate their work. Almost all pupils are able to produce appropriate supporting materials to indicate how they have achieved their final design. The lowest attaining pupils are not able to provide detailed evidence to indicate how they have planned and evaluated their design. In food and textiles, pupils are challenged to focus more clearly on the requirements of the GCSE examination. As a result, pupils understand what they need to do and are helped to reach higher grades. In resistant materials and electronics pupils are challenged to improve their work but not with clear, written short-term targets that provide the same degree of support. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and make similar progress to other pupils

116. The results of the GCSE examination for 2001 were below the national average but pupils performed as well as they did in their other subjects. GCSE results have continued to improve over the last three years. The results for 2002 were considerably better than those for 2001. The performance of boys over the last three years was significantly worse than that of girls. This is partly because more girls choose to study food and textiles and the results in these subjects are much higher than those in the other subjects. Overall, however, girls pay more attention to the detail and presentation of their work and teachers do not sufficiently challenge boys to reach the same high standards.

117. In the work seen during the inspection pupils' attainment by age 14 is below average. Pupils join the college in Year 7 with average levels of attainment. They do not make sufficient progress and achieve at levels below those predicted by their attainment on entry to the college. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 they are able to cut, shape and join so that they can make a range of articles in different materials including cloth, wood, plastic and metal. They also have knowledge of the essential nutritional value of foods and can cook simple dishes. They have a simple understanding of aspects of electronics and have been introduced to the techniques of drawing so they can communicate their design ideas. Pupils have good making skills. They understand the process of design but teachers do not provide sufficient planned opportunities for them to reach the higher levels expected by the National Curriculum. The highest attaining pupils produce articles of good quality and express their ideas well. Lower attaining pupils can all make items of an acceptable quality but they find it difficult to communicate their ideas clearly. Pupils with special educational needs are well - integrated into lessons and make similar progress as their peers.

118. Pupils' attainment in 2001, as judged by teachers' assessments at the age of 14, was average. In 2002 these results were considerably higher and well above the national average for 2001. Very few of the examples of work seen during the inspection reached the level expected of 14-year-old pupils for designing. Teachers' assessments are inaccurate and too high. They are not applying the criteria in the National Curriculum rigorously enough. As at age 16, results for boys are significantly lower than those for girls. This is because the girls pay greater attention to the detail and quality of presentation of their design work and thus more of them are able to reach higher levels.

119. Attitudes to the subject are good and pupils behave well in almost all lessons. This leads to effective learning in individual lessons. They show appropriate respect and a sense of responsibility for the workshops and the equipment they use. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good.

120. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are at times good, occasionally very good but occasionally unsatisfactory. This generally leads to satisfactory and, at times, good learning. However, learning in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory overall because of problems caused by planning of the curriculum. Pupils are given insufficient time to tackle various tasks in sufficient depth and this adversely affects the learning of all. Learning in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to use this effectively to support pupils when they make things in class. Lessons are often well planned and materials and the room prepared in advance of pupils' arrival. Planning is better in food and textiles lessons. For example, in a Year 9 food lesson the teacher had planned for pupils to analyse different manufactured convenience meals. Pupils' learning was good because a range of meals had been purchased and the room set out so that the activity could take place effectively. In contrast, in an electronics lesson the teacher spent much of the lesson drawing a diagram on to the board that the pupils were expected to copy. As a result, pupils lost interest and their learning was unsatisfactory. The teaching methods used are mostly well chosen. As a result, pupils are interested in what they are asked to do, concentrate well and develop increasing levels of independence as they move through the college. Pupils' activities are monitored well; teachers provide help and support but do not systematically challenge boys to match the speed, or quality, of the girls' work. Homework is used in a satisfactory way, sometimes as a basis to prepare for the next lessons and sometimes to extend and develop work begun in class. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' special needs and provide appropriate support.

121. The department does not have any policies for the teaching of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and this affects the quality of learning especially in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities for speaking to help them use and understand the important words specific to the subject. Pupils weigh and measure in a variety of contexts and these activities help to promote their numeracy skills. Insufficient emphasis is placed on ICT and how pupils might use this to analyse and display their work. At present pupils do not use computers in the ways envisaged in the National Curriculum. There is a good number and range of books in the library to support pupils' learning.

122. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers generally provide encouraging and motivating comments. The best quality marking provides a commentary that shows pupils how to improve their work. However, this important aid to learning is not provided by all teachers.

123. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Areas for improvement identified by the last inspection have not all been dealt with successfully and progress since this time has been unsatisfactory. Standards have improved for pupils aged 16, but this is not the case for pupils aged 14 where standards remain below average.

Teaching is monitored and has improved but some still does not stimulate or excite. Curriculum arrangements for designing and making have been changed in response to the last inspection but are still unsatisfactory, as are processes for assessment. Teaching schemes across the different strands of design and technology vary in quality and often lack important detail. They are planned in terms of activities to be conducted rather than specific learning that should occur. Curriculum arrangements for Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory. They do not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition, pupils experience each of the five strands of electronics, food, graphics resistant materials and textiles in turn. They do not have the opportunity to return to any of the strands again before they begin their GCSE courses, thus their learning is disjointed and this results in unsatisfactory achievement over time. For example, one teacher said, "I have to start again in Year 10". Similarly, in the presentation of drawings in GCSE coursework it is by no means obvious that pupils have studied graphics earlier. The arrangements for designing are unsatisfactory. Design opportunities are planned into every strand. As a result, the time allowed for design on each of these occasions is frequently insufficient and often does not allow pupils the required access to an analysis of manufactured products. Thus pupils are not systematically provided with opportunities to attain the higher levels in the National Curriculum. The processes used for the assessment of pupils' attainment at age 14 are not rigorous enough, or moderated sufficiently thoroughly to ensure consistency in the levels awarded by different teachers. Assessment results are not used effectively in planning. Teachers do not have a list of pupils who are gifted and talented, nor have they devised a special programme for them. The department still lacks appropriate resources to teach aspects of Information and communication technology, control and computer aided design and manufacture. For standards to rise further, especially in Years 7 to 9, many issues still need to be addressed.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and lesson planning.
- The skilful management of pupils.
- Opportunities offered for good quality fieldwork.
- The leadership offered by the head of department.

Areas for improvement

- The timetable in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils.

124. Pupils' overall level of attainment in 2001 at the end of Year 9, based on teacher assessments, is broadly in line with that expected nationally, but below the national average at levels higher than level 5. Overall, girls gained higher levels than boys. Results in 2002 declined when compared to 2001, but no national comparisons can be made at this stage. Nevertheless, since 1999 results have shown a marked improvement. The department analyses the results carefully and, in a desire to raise standards further, from September 2002, the college formed a geography department with specialist subject teachers. This replaces the humanities department, which taught the subject at the time of the previous inspection. In lessons seen during the inspection pupils' standards of work were broadly in line with national expectations.

125. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is close to the average. GCSE results in 2001 were below the national average overall but broadly in line with the national norm at the higher (A*/A) grades. Pupils gained better results in this subject than in most of their other subjects. In 2002 results declined because of the poor performance of boys. Following a close analysis of the results the department has implemented clear strategies for raising standards including better support for boys, particularly for coursework, and a focus on examination techniques and revision. In lessons seen during the inspection the pupils' attainment was broadly average.

126. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs. They are fully involved in lessons and respond well when they receive individual support, but work is not always matched to their individual needs. Few strategies are used to enhance the progress of higher attaining pupils, especially the gifted and talented, who are not sufficiently challenged in class. Teachers do not always develop a sufficient depth of understanding in these pupils through rigorous questions and specifically designed materials.

127. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a satisfactory knowledge of how landscapes are formed, for example through the action of earthquakes and volcanoes. They know what a small number of countries, such as Peru and Italy, are like. Their range and depth of general geographical knowledge, however, is weak. Pupils have a good understanding of the links between countries in the world. They understand why people move from one part of the world to another and the social effects of modern industrial practices, for example on young people working in textile factories in Cambodia.

128. By the end of Year 11 pupils have a sound knowledge of the formation of geographical features such as the Grand Canyon in the USA, but have difficulty in explaining how such features are formed. They have a good knowledge of different environments such as the rainforest in Brazil and ecosystems like the Broads in Norfolk. Pupils understand the relationship between people and the environment, as in their study of the impact of tourism in a national park. Generally pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of geographical terms, such as 'sedimentary' and 'igneous' in describing the formation of rocks. Higher attaining pupils use them correctly in written work. All pupils extract information effectively from resource material such as maps, textbooks, and videos. They have a good understanding of the methods of geographical enquiry and a number of techniques for the collection and analysis of data and drawing appropriate conclusions. Pupils draw accurate graphs and analyse them correctly. They generally write full and accurate answers to questions. Higher attaining pupils write extended answers fluently.

129. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good and this leads to very good learning. Teachers have extensive knowledge of the subject. They use this effectively to ensure that pupils understand topics fully by giving clear explanations, which they illustrate with appropriate examples. The preparation and organisation of lessons is very efficient; lessons start promptly and move from one activity to another at a brisk pace. Imaginative teaching and a lively pace arouse pupils' interest and curiosity. Pupils assimilate information quickly and work hard to complete tasks briskly and accurately. The quality of lesson planning is very good. All lessons are carefully structured with a wide variety of well chosen activities designed to provide relevant information, harness pupils natural curiosity, reinforce their understanding and involve them in the work. As a result pupils are well motivated, listen carefully, and are keen to produce their best work. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 8 made very good progress in studying the reasons why people migrate. Following a lively review of previous work, they discussed a poem, quickly and accurately defined the key words they would be using. A newspaper account of a migrant's journey from Somalia to Derby was read. The pupils recorded the relevant information, mapped the route,

successfully recounted the story to a friend, correctly listed the reasons why the migrant came to Derby and concluded with a review of their work.

130. Expectations are high and relationships with pupils are friendly but firm. Extremely skilful class management establishes a productive working atmosphere and ensures that pupils behave very well. Teachers expect careful and accurate work so pupils generally present work neatly and keep books in good order. Marking is up to date with encouraging comments but rarely includes targets, or advice, on how pupils might improve.

131. Leadership of the department is good. There is a well-structured scheme of work, including a full and well thought out programme of fieldwork. Good opportunities are provided for personal development such as when pupils consider the moral issues of low paid factory labour in developing countries and the moral and social issues raised by people seeking asylum. A major weakness is the timetable arrangement, which results in the interruption of the teaching for all groups in Years 7 to 9 for a total of twelve weeks each year. As was reported in the previous inspection, such arrangements break the continuity of teaching and impede progress. Thus, despite the very good quality of teaching, the pupils' achievements are less than expected. Nevertheless, there is a clear sense of direction, teaching is very good and there has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. The department has the capacity to raise standards still further in the future.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The skilful management of pupils.
- The leadership offered by the head of department.

Areas for improvement

- The timetable in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that work set for pupils with special educational needs is of the right quality.

132. At the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment, based on teacher assessments, is in line with national average standards. Girls achieved higher levels than boys but they achieved similar results at the higher levels. Results declined in 2002, though no national comparisons are possible. Nevertheless, since 1999 results have shown a marked improvement. The department analyses the results carefully and, in a desire to raise standards further, from September 2002, the college formed a history department with specialist subject teachers. This replaces the humanities department, which taught the subject at the time of the previous inspection. In lessons seen during the inspection pupils' standards of work were broadly in line with national expectations.

133. Pupils studying the GCSE course in Years 10 to 11 reach an overall standard that is in line with national expectations. Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were well below the national average. In 2002 they significantly improved, though no national comparisons can be made at this stage. The results for girls were better than those achieved by boys, but one fifth of boys gained either A/A* grades. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was in line with national expectations and the department has clear strategies for improvement, including increased support for boys. The move away from humanities to history is already having a positive impact on standards.

134. Most pupils make good progress, but for pupils with special educational needs progress is satisfactory. These pupils generally work hard and are fully involved in the lessons but work is not specifically matched to their individual needs in a subject, which requires considerable literary ability. Higher-attaining and gifted and talented pupils make progress, which, though good, is not rapid enough, as they are not challenged sufficiently by the materials that the teachers provide, or by the questions they are asked.

135. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a sound knowledge of the past and of the way of life of the people who lived in previous centuries. Pupils understand and can make use of historical source material such as wills, which one group in Year 8 used effectively to find out about the lives of people living in the local area in the sixteenth century. By the end of Year 9 pupils use source material confidently, but understand its limitations. Higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of chronology and knowledge of events in the past. Year 10 pupils understand the achievements of the Romans and that people at that time had different values to those of today, for instance, over the issues of slavery. Year 11 pupils have a sound knowledge of the topics they are studying. The majority of pupils can describe and explain major changes that have taken place in the past such as the industrial revolution. Pupils understand that there may be bias in source material and that there can be different views of the past. This was highlighted in lessons on recent Irish history, including events such as 'Bloody Sunday'. Higher-attaining pupils write fluently and use historical terms correctly. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs write satisfactory descriptions but find explanation difficult. Their lack of literacy skills constrains their levels of attainment.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons start promptly and at a brisk pace. The aims of the lesson are made clear so that pupils know what they will learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which is used to provide clear examples and well-structured explanations. Most lessons start with a well thought out activity to gain pupils' interest, such as a discussion of the change brought about by the use of mobile phones to introduce a lesson about the industrial revolution. Some aspects of lesson planning could be sharper. More attention should be focussed on the provision for pupils with special educational needs and on the needs of gifted and talented pupils. In a very good Year 7 lesson the pupils acted as archaeologists studying a large collection of artefacts. They used this evidence and their detective skills to decide the correct time period to which the 'discovery' belonged. Pupils are well motivated, have a positive attitude to the subject, and are keen to learn. The majority are willing to be involved in the lesson through asking and answering questions, but teachers have few strategies to involve passive pupils. Teachers also use a range of good quality resource materials including pictures, written text, maps, videos, and artefacts, but often these are not fully exploited with incisive questioning to engage pupils' natural curiosity. Teachers establish good relationships in their classroom, manage the behaviour of pupils in lessons very skilfully and maintain an industrious working atmosphere. Pupils behave well, try hard to present work neatly, and keep their books in good order. Books are regularly marked but comments rarely explain how the work could be better or set targets for improvement. Homework is purposeful.

137. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear understanding of the opportunities that history offers to make a contribution to pupils' personal development as, for example, when they study the morality of the Holocaust and have the opportunity to visit a memorial and talk with survivors. The teachers in the department are very well qualified and experienced. Resources are of good quality, but the library resources are unsatisfactory. The timetable arrangements in Years 7-9 are poor. Pupil's study of history is interrupted for two six-week periods each year. This model represents a significant disruption to the continuity of teaching, makes arrangements for visits difficult and results in the teaching of some classes being split between two teachers. This issue was reported at the time of the previous inspection. Leadership offers a clear

sense of direction, development planning provides clear priorities for the future and the response to the previous report is good. The department is committed to raising standards further and has the capacity to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Relationships between pupils and their teachers.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- The quality of teaching in most lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of work set for pupils with special educational needs and for higher attaining pupils.
- The use of assessment data as a tool to improve standards.
- The working conditions.

138. For the past two years, ICT in Years 7 to 9 was taught through other subjects. During this period, there are limited records and no samples of work were available. Additionally, no pupils took external examinations in 2001. As a result it is not possible to compare standards in examinations and assessments to national standards for 2001. Teacher assessment for 2002, for pupils at the end of end Year 9 indicate that the standards recorded were well below national expectations. However, since non-specialists carried out these assessments, there are doubts about the validity of these results. There were no public examinations in this subject in 2001 as no course was offered. In 2002 students were entered for a GNVQ Intermediate examination. Results were particularly pleasing with almost all pupils passing the exam, demonstrating a high level of competency of the pupils completing the course, but no national comparative figures exist.

139. The department is newly formed this September and consists of three specialist support staff and three additional part-time non-specialist teachers. Two additional significant changes have been made since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are receiving a weekly ICT lesson and, for the first time, all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following an accredited ICT course. The arrangements for the teaching of ICT prior to the start of this academic year have been disjointed. This has affected the pupils' achievement, especially in Years 7 to 9. Now that the department has been reformed and the quality of teaching and learning is good, the progress pupils make should also improve.

140. Pupils on entry demonstrate a broad range of skills, covering most aspects of ICT. In lessons and in work seen, by the end of Year 9, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Achievement is satisfactory. All students, including those with special needs, achieve competence in the basic ICT skills of word processing, slide show presentations, desktop publishing, use of the Internet and the use of simple spreadsheets and databases. Core team staff have good knowledge of the subject and provide a good structure to lessons. This structure supports students well in their learning and enables them to work through each task methodically and master the main skills. Lower-attaining students cover a range of basic techniques with good individual support from teachers. In some lessons, however, work is not sufficiently simplified for these pupils and insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the technical language used in ICT.

141. In Year 8, students demonstrate a good knowledge of how to set up a web page. Higher attaining pupils are able to add links to other pages. Year 9 pupils gather personal information and enter this into a database. They can then compare this to national data their class teacher has taken from the Internet. Year 7 pupils extend their communication skills when preparing a slide show presentation about themselves. Higher attaining pupils are able to add special effects such as sounds and moving of text and pictures.

142. Students are newly entered for a GCSE course in ICT in Years 10 and 11. Additionally, the college offers a vocational course and pupils taking this examination develop a good range of ICT skills as part of the course. In lessons seen pupils develop good skills in using databases, desktop publishing and spreadsheets to process and present data. They develop a satisfactory understanding of numeracy, enabling them to use spreadsheets and apply the appropriate formulae to calculate and present the processed data. All pupils are competent in the use of the school network and the Internet to gather information and present this as part of their coursework. Higher attaining pupils following the vocational course develop a broad range of skills. They design web pages, produce different types of documents used in business, plan presentations and use desktop publishing programmes. In class, pupils explain their work well using a good range of technical vocabulary, which they apply accurately.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some teaching that is very good. No teaching is unsatisfactory. Where the teaching is good or better, teachers plan and prepare work well, set clear learning goals and provide a good structure to lessons. Emphasis is also placed on the current initiatives to develop number and literacy skills. The three core teachers have good knowledge of the subject and are well prepared for lessons. As a result pupils are supported well and offered specialist help. Teachers use questions effectively to evaluate how well pupils understand and retain the information covered. They promote a wide range of technical vocabulary, which pupils use appropriately when they talk about their work in class. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to increase their reading skills and are encouraged to read from a range of texts, using books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Though teaching methods are generally good, sometimes there are insufficient strategies to include the full range of pupils. This limits the progress of the more able and talented students and of some of the pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and include them effectively in learning activities. The assessment and involvement of pupils in setting their own targets for improvement and reporting progress to parents are not yet fully developed. Indeed, there is much scope to improve the use of assessment data as a tool for improving standards. All students should be given realistic target grades based on their prior levels of attainment.

144. The contribution of other subjects to pupils' ICT skills is satisfactory and improving. There is good use in English, physical education and modern foreign languages. In English they use word processing programmes to draft and re-draft their work, produce presentation programmes for desktop publishing as well as using the Internet. In physical education they use digital cameras to capture images and compare the techniques of professionals to their own. In modern foreign languages, they use word processors to draft and redraft their work and presentation programmes. Information and communications technology is not well used in design and technology, where they fail to meet the national requirements for its use. ICT is not used extensively across the curriculum and, in all departments, the quality of independent study can be improved by encouraging pupils to make more use of the Internet for example.

145. Leadership and management are very good. The new head of department has already made significant improvements in the provision for ICT despite a short time in post. Documentation, including development planning, is thorough. Key areas in need of improvement have been identified including improvements in ventilation. Some specialist

rooms have inadequate ventilation and this leads to hot, stifling and unpleasant working conditions. Specialist ICT lessons are now provided, but have had insufficient time to affect standards significantly. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, since provision was reduced significantly soon after the inspection. This decline has been reversed and the college has invested considerably to increase the level of resources and staffing. Standards are now rising as a consequence.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The very good and excellent teaching offered by some staff.
- The recent improvement in GCSE results.
- The above average standards being reached by pupils at the end of Year 9.

Areas for improvement

- Eliminate pockets of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Improve further the standards recorded by boys.
- Ensure that all lessons cater for the full ability range.
- Use assessment data with more accuracy to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness.

146. For their first year in the college, pupils study both French and German. This gives them a good basis on which to choose which language to continue with in Years 8 and 9 or whether they want to study both languages. From 2001, pupils in Year 10 can follow one or both languages to GCSE, or choose to study for a lower level qualification, a certificate of achievement in French or German.

147. In 2001 most pupils in Year 11 followed a GCSE course. Their results in both French and German were well below the national average but similar to those in other subjects. In French boys did better than girls, which is the opposite of the national picture. In German more boys than girls were entered and their results were lower than those of girls. In 2002, the results for both subjects were greatly improved, but fewer pupils were entered for the examination. Boys' results in French remained better than girls although only a small number chose to study the language. In German there were similar numbers of boys and girls. Girls' results were better than those of boys as is the case in most schools. In both 2001 and 2002 all pupils entered gained at least a G grade. This is better than the national average. In addition, almost all those who followed the certificate of achievement course in 2002 gained a qualification in a language after one year of study.

148. Both girls' and boys' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2001 was broadly similar. It was well above average for the number of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 and above, but was below for those gaining Level 6. No pupils gained Level 7. In 2002 results improved considerably but there are, as yet, no national figures for comparison. A significant number of girls and some boys attained Level 7. Boys' attainment overall was below that of girls. The department is aware of the relatively lower levels gained by boys and has begun to take steps to modify teaching styles to improve boys' learning.

149. Standards throughout the college are above average in both French and German. Pupils overall attainment is average at the start of Year 7. They make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and their achievement is good. The pupils in Year 11 began Year 10 with average attainment. Their progress and achievement are also good, largely because of the good and very good teaching offered by some teachers. Pupils in general are achieving well in the skill

areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In Year 8 they are introduced to the past tense, which is vital if they are to attain Level 5 and above. This work is consolidated in Year 9 where they also begin to learn the future tense. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, show in their work that they can use these tenses. Higher attaining pupils are more able to modify what they have learned to express their own ideas. The work of average and lower attaining pupils is less accurate and uses a more limited range of vocabulary. This criticism can be especially made of the work of some boys. In general, pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into lessons and they too make good progress. They are well supported by the learning support assistant who works regularly in the department. In the better lessons, the work set is more closely matched to the aptitudes of individual pupils, but this is not well done in all lessons. Lower attaining pupils at times cannot remember previously taught work. Where teachers have not planned to take this into account, pupils' progress is hampered.

150. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall both in French and German. Three quarters of lessons are at least good, and some are very good or excellent. A quarter of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. This affected progress in the lessons concerned, but there was a lack of evidence to suggest that unsatisfactory teaching is having a long term adverse affect on achievement. This is because groups are shared and the more effective teachers succeed in plugging gaps. All teachers have a good command of the languages they teach and thus provide a good model for pupils to imitate. Generally relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good. In most lessons, the teacher sets very clear objectives for what pupils will learn and plans a good range of activities which interest them and motivate them to work hard. As a result, most pupils have good attitudes to learning the language and learn well in lessons. Most lessons challenge pupils. Often when pupils ask for translations of words, instead of just supplying this the teacher reminds them of where they have met the word before, or points out its similarity to an English word, thus making them think for themselves. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative. When working on a reading exercise, pupils go to collect a dictionary to check the meaning of words. Pupils also make good use of the booklets the department has produced for each year group. These contain all the vocabulary and grammar points they are taught. Some pupils are so keen they go ahead in these booklets to learn words they have not yet met in class. Teachers make a good contribution to the teaching of basic skills. Pupils are taught how to listen carefully to ensure they can understand what people are talking about on tapes. They also learn how to tackle a reading text, which contains words they do not know. Information and communication technology is well used, particularly to practise redrafting work to improve it. In most lessons not a moment is wasted. In the last five minutes a brief new activity is often begun to ensure pupils work and learn right to the end of the lessons. Sometimes this time is used to remind pupils of what they have learned during the lessons. This helps to fix it in their memories. Homework is generally well used to reinforce, or extend, the work begun in the lesson, but at times is not equally suitable for all pupils. Almost throughout pupils' behaviour is very good. Where lessons are unsatisfactory, this is because the activities planned do not cater well for all pupils, including the gifted and talented. On other occasions classroom control and the management both of pupils and time are weaknesses. As a result pupils, especially boys become restless and lack concentration and standards of work in the lesson decrease.

151. The leadership and management of the department are good and the curriculum co-ordinator provides very clear direction for its work. Monitoring of teaching is largely effective, as are the strategies used to improve pupils' attainment. The head of department is aware of some weaker teaching and has introduced a range of assessment and other strategies to minimise any adverse effect this may have on the quality of learning. However, at present Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to analyse results and pinpoint areas of strength and weakness. The department provides well for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The library

stock of books to support languages is inadequate. However, the department has a good stock of magazines, pamphlets, books and other items in French and German, which provide good opportunities for pupils to read in the language they are learning. Although the college has not formally identified gifted and talented pupils the department uses the data the college provides, in addition to their own knowledge of pupils' capabilities. The highest attaining pupils are invited to attend the 'clinics' the department holds at the end of the college day where they can be given extension work. The department plans to offer an additional language to these pupils when funding allows. The department has very good links with parents. When pupils have problems, for example with completing homework or coursework on time, parents are contacted and invited to attend, with their son or daughter, one of the monthly 'clinics' the department holds to talk with teachers about how they can best be helped. However, formal reports to parents are insufficiently detailed and do not give a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do.

152. Since the time of the previous inspection attainment has risen in all year groups and a good level of improvement has been made. All pupils have been set target levels or grades to aim for which are reviewed regularly. The department has used a variety of strategies to ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers now share ideas effectively and more work is now aimed at higher grades in GCSE. The department makes very good use of any visitors from countries where French or German are spoken to allow pupils to meet and speak and listen to people speaking the language they are learning. However, this is insufficient to satisfy the National Curriculum requirement for contact with a native speaker.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The increasing number of pupils involved in instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum needs updating to ensure sufficient opportunities for singing and music technology.
- The accommodation for music.
- The library and other resources available for pupils to use for research purposes.

153. Since the previous inspection, the music department has made satisfactory progress. The quality and range of music-making experiences offered to pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 have greatly improved. There is currently no GCSE music group.

154. Standards are satisfactory. They are close to national expectations for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teacher assessments of Year 9 pupils undertaken last summer show that standards are improving. Standards of the best written work are high with evidence of appropriate and well-presented personal research being undertaken. Thirty-three instrumentalists now have tuition and numbers are increasing as the range of opportunities improves. The provision for rock music, however, should be extended from its present minimal level and the staff and pupil band extended to enable talented instrumentalists to develop their ensemble playing. Extra-curricular activities are beginning to impact positively on the previously 'bleak musical life' of the college and are contributing to cultural enrichment.

155. Pupils' learning and progress is good, especially when they respond confidently and show high levels of interest in their work. Pupils in Year 7 use keyboards and percussion to

create short impressionistic group pieces. Year 8 pupils show ability in performing a four-part Pavan, playing sensitively and working together well. Year 9 pupils successfully perform a 12 bar blues sequence in pairs and peers listen attentively. National Curriculum assessment levels are used to set learning objectives. Pupils' attitudes to music have improved and are now often very good. As a result, behaviour in lessons has now improved.

156. Teaching and learning is good. This is a commendable improvement since the previous inspection and lessons are now have more pace, are better planned and involve pupils in more practical musical activity. The teacher and teaching assistant have well developed musical skills and subject knowledge and are effective in motivating and monitoring the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and are able to follow the same activities as their peers; many succeed equally well in practical work with teacher support. Special provision is made where pupils experience problems with literacy. More use of relevant visual displays would enhance the learning environment and support the learning of key subject vocabulary and the Literacy Strategy. Pupils' work is regularly marked and homework is regularly set. Many homework activities require research. The quality of this work would be enhanced if the college library resources for music were improved. More modern books and better supplies of CD- ROMs to stimulate pupils' interest are needed. There are too few of these resources and this adversely affects the quality of learning.

157. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but departmental curriculum documentation lacks depth and assessment criteria are not clear. References to key skills and how the subject plans to contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are elusive. The assessment and recording of pupils' work needs more clarification. The curriculum needs revising to ensure pupils are offered more singing opportunities, particularly in Year 7, and more opportunities for composition. Links to other areas of the curriculum and support for literacy and numeracy should also be identified in documentation. The omission of singing and music technology related activities needs addressing, particularly if GCSE music is to be reintroduced. Such provision would also support music making by less able pupils and offer another means of providing an inclusive and more contemporary department. As stated in the previous inspection report, accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and do impinge on learning and the quality of pupils' aesthetic experiences. The provision of instrumental lessons and remission of fees, when appropriate, is a positive development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Improving GCSE results in physical education and dance.
- Very good leadership and management.
- The very good teaching and learning in the better lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The procedures for reporting pupils' work.
- The pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education and dance vocabulary.

158. The proportion of pupils following the dance GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in 2001 is above the national average. In physical education, attainment at GCSE A*-C grades in 2001 was well below the national average. Results in 2002 show improvement and predictions for 2003 show a continuation of this trend. The improvement is because of improved teaching and more higher attaining pupils choosing physical education as one of their options. Standards of work seen support predicted grades. Comparison of pupils'

standards of attainment on entry to the course and the standards attained in the GCSE examinations indicates that most pupils make satisfactory; with some making very good, progress through Years 10 and 11.

159. For present pupils, standards of attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9, for both boys and girls, are in line with national expectations and all pupils, including those with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. They are developing competence in basic gymnastics and dance techniques and in urban adventure team building skills. Their development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work co-operatively in pairs and in small groups. However, activities do not always develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education vocabulary. Nor do they allow pupils to develop their observation and assessment skills, so that they are not always clear about what they can do and how to improve. By the end of Year 11 most pupils, including those on non-examination courses, are recording above average standards and they are all making good progress. Their continued good progress in the development of basic techniques, as in dance, enables them to transfer these basic movements into advanced sequences and solo performances. While the learning of pupils with special educational needs is well planned for, the progress of some higher attaining, talented, pupils is restricted. There is a lack of consistency in setting challenging tasks and insufficient attention to their knowledge of what they can do well and what they need to do to improve.

160. The overall quality of teaching is good; in several lessons it was very good. Learning is similarly good. The strengths of teaching include good planning based on very good knowledge of the subject; the sharing of learning outcomes, with pupils, at the beginning of each lesson; the use of strategies that enable all individual pupils to be involved in learning at their own level and relationships with pupils. This means that pupils are able to learn through appropriate activities and in an environment, which encourages learning. Although procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are in place, greater use should be made of assessment in lessons so that pupils are aware of what they can do and what they need to do to improve. Such provision would improve the progress pupils make especially in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The vast majority enjoy physical education and participation levels are very good. There are very good strategies for involving non-performers in learning and there has been a good improvement in the teaching of ICT as part of the physical education GCSE course. Pupils concentrate well and remain on task. They are able to work as individuals, but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Behaviour is good. Pupils develop good relationships with other pupils and the teacher.

161. Leadership and management in physical education are both very good. The department is making very good progress in improving standards in both GCSE physical education and dance. The head of department has a clear vision for the future; development planning is focused on raising standards. The department has recently changed considerably. Standards are rising but the full impact has still to be felt. Some pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9, have had limited exposure to physical education before and this is reflected in the progress they are making. For further improvement, more planned opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their performance against national standards and consistent strategies to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education and dance terminology are necessary. The department has a strong philosophy of care for pupils, which emphasises social and moral development. Teachers are well organised and the subject handbook provides effective guidance on schemes of work, lesson planning and safety matters. The department has made good progress in developing risk assessment since the last inspection. In general, the quality of accommodation and resources has a positive effect on learning, though some improvements to the quality of the flooring in the dance studio are desirable. The department makes a valuable contribution to a range of cross-curricular activities, which enhance learning. The

department has a philosophy of open access, but there are opportunities for elite teams and performers to achieve good levels of results in inter-school matches and competitions. The department is making good use of its Sports College status to develop partnerships with feeder schools and the local community. Such initiatives are helping to raise standards. A good level of improvement has been made since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- A new vigour is seen in the religious education department.
- The new scheme of work and the recently acquired resources to support it, are proving to be effective.
- The rising levels of attainment in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in the GCSE classes in Years 10 and 11.
- The provision of religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The support offered to non-specialist teachers of religious education.

162. After a period of serious decline in standards and very poor results, rapid improvements are taking place, although the full impact of these has yet to be seen. Despite the very low standards of work in previous years, during the inspection the standards seen were in line with national expectations in Years 7, 8 and 9. The work of present pupils seen in Year 10 lessons was above average, but other inspection evidence, such as written work of last year's GCSE pupils and present Year 11 pupils, suggests that their standards are below, and sometimes well below, average. On entry, standards in Year 7 are below those expected for the Derby Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 make good progress because of the enthusiasm and planning of their teacher; their achievement is good. There are no marked differences in the progress made by boys and girls in these years. In the Year 10 GCSE class, eighteen of the twenty pupils are girls. Thus comparisons in rates of progress cannot easily be made.

163. The new head of department's revision of the religious education syllabus has resulted in a significant shift towards the multi faith curriculum found in the Derby Agreed Syllabus. This, and the wide range of new interesting resources, has raised the pupils' expectations of religious education. The pupils' attitude to the subject is invariably very good and this too is contributing to rising standards.

164. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The head of department has very good subject knowledge, but her three colleagues are non-specialists and require more support. The team of teachers follow the college's policy for teaching improvement and all set targets and pace their lessons carefully but the level of challenge presented to the pupils depends on the level of specialist religious knowledge the teacher possess. Artefacts, modern books, visits to various religious centres of worship and video films are all used. The skilful use of video clips, the handling of Hindu images and pupils dressing in traditional Sikh clothing were typical components of good classroom teaching. Standards and the variety of teaching strategies used in GCSE classes need to be improved. Very few varied forms of written work were seen. There is still too much copying. The library is hardly used and computer based learning has barely been introduced. In the short time since the head of department's appointment, little has been produced specifically for the gifted and talented pupils, or for those with special needs. Thus the attainment of gifted and talented pupils, in particular, is being constrained. Pupils with special needs understand the basic concepts being taught.

165. Though the head of department has only been in post for a few weeks, there are clear signs that her leadership and management are leading to improvements. The newly cast curriculum places more emphasis on a multicultural faith approach to the subject and includes visits to Derby Cathedral and a Hindu temple. However, the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 still fails to meet statutory requirements. The department is introducing methods of assessment, which will enable pupils to gauge their own level of work and know what they must do to improve. The head of department is keen to improve standards and is developing a range of strategies that will enable such a goal to be realised.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A range of vocational courses is offered, including leisure and tourism, ICT, applied science, health and social care, construction, engineering, business and hair and beauty. Some of these are delivered in partnership with the local further education college. Only leisure and tourism and ICT had been externally examined at the time of the inspection. The focus of the inspection was on leisure and tourism.

Overall, the quality of provision in vocational courses is **good**.

Strengths

- The range of teaching strategies that are used to enthuse the pupils.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.

Areas for improvement

- A departmental development plan should be written.
- The literacy and numeracy skills of pupils.

166. Leisure and tourism is offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11, but currently there are only 18 pupils in Year 11 following the course. Most of these are working towards the part one GNVQ intermediate examination.

167. In 2001, 15 of the 37 pupils entered for the part one GNVQ intermediate examination obtained passes; six of the 11 entered for the foundation examination obtained passes. These results are below the national average. In 2002, results rose with 12 of the 13 pupils entered for the intermediate examination obtaining passes, including two with merits. Eleven of the 16 entered for the foundation examination also obtained passes.

168. Standards of work observed during the inspection were average. These standards are higher than those indicated by recent examination results because there are more pupils with higher levels of prior attainment currently following the course. All pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of appropriate terms and can apply them in real-life situations. In a lesson on market segments, pupils were able to correctly explain key terms such as ethnicity, gender and lifestyle and how they influenced the production of magazine advertisements. Other Year 11 pupils studying the marketing mix were able to describe decisions made by firms before they launched new products. Pupils achieve well with boys and girls of all attainment levels developing appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.

169. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain topics well and illustrate them with examples from the business world. Well-planned lessons, with a variety of interesting activities, enthuse pupils and ensure good learning. Sometimes, however, learning opportunities are not maximised because pupils are not given a clear structure in order to guide group discussions. In a Year 11 lesson on market

segments, for example, an outline sheet was given to pupils at the end of the activity; opportunities for learning through discussion were, therefore, limited. A good variety of stimulating resources ensures that pupils' interest is maintained throughout lessons. There is good use of ICT in the subject, though more emphasis needs to be placed on the use and application of number. As a result of good teaching, pupils show good attitudes and behaviour and work well together in groups.

170. The head of department provides good leadership and management, with satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department. Local facilities are used well for fieldwork opportunities for pupils. Priorities for the future development of the course have been identified, though there is no formal development plan. A major aim is to recruit more pupils to the course. The provision of information in the library for pupils following the course is satisfactory. There is little evidence of the use and application of literacy and numeracy skills in lessons. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved as teachers have gained a greater understanding of the examination requirements of the course. The application of ICT has improved.