

INSPECTION REPORT

The Community College, Chulmleigh

Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113509

Principal: Mr B Cooper

Reporting inspector: Mr T Jardine
12890

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th October 2002

Inspection number: 249172

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 students: 11 – 16 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Chulmleigh
Devon

Postcode: EX18 7AA

Telephone number: 01769 580215

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Hamlyn

Date of previous inspection: 12th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12890	Mr T Jardine	Registered inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The college's results and students' achievements <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?</p> <p>How well is the college led and managed?</p> <p>What the college should do to improve further?</p>
12775	Ms J Goodchild	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students' attitudes, values and personal development <p>How well does the college care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the college work in partnership with parents?</p>
1085	Mr J Laver	Team inspector	English Drama	
19278	Mr B Allan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
20832	Dr M Galowalia	Team inspector	Science	
8503	Mr A Allfree	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
3827	Mr J Knight	Team inspector	Geography	
17732	Mr D Martin	Team inspector	History	
8501	Mr P Hartwright	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
32115	Mr J Foster	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
23323	Dr J Harvey	Team inspector	Music	
18888	Ms J Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education Educational inclusion, including race equality	
10807	Mr P Quest	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	

12191	Mr C Moxley	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an 11 to 16 years mixed comprehensive with 525 students on roll, 268 boys and 257 girls. It is controlled by Devon Local Education Authority and situated in Chulmleigh, north Devon. The students' socio-economic circumstances vary widely and are average overall. The vast majority of students are white but six are from minority ethnic backgrounds. English is an additional language for two students but neither is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs is average; they have mainly moderate learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, the proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is well above average. Students' attainment on entry varies somewhat from year to year but is typically just above average. The college is involved in national initiatives to raise standards through study support, summer schools and mentoring.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chulmleigh Community College is an effective school that provides a good standard of education. Students' achievements, personal development and behaviour are good and their attitudes to education very good. The quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management are good. The college provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards at GCSE are well above average
- Over two thirds of the teaching is at least good
- Most students achieve well
- Leadership and management are good and governance very effective
- Budgetary control is very good
- Excellent links with the community support students' learning and involve parents

What could be improved

- The difference in attainment between boys and girls
- The behaviour of a small but significant minority of students that affects their own progress and that of others
- The provision for modern foreign languages
- The provision for food technology

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been good since the last inspection in May 1997. Standards in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science rose faster than those nationally until 2001 when they were well above average compared to all schools and above average compared to similar schools. They declined in 2002 to below average compared to all maintained schools and well below average compared to similar schools due to the low ability of the group and serious staffing problems. However, current students in Year 9 are on target to achieve above average standards. GCSE results improved in line with the national trend until 2001 and rose dramatically in 2002 when they were well above average in comparison with both all schools and similar schools. Good progress has been made with almost all the key issues identified raised in the last inspection. The main exception is the provision for modern foreign languages, which remains unsatisfactory. Other aspects have also improved markedly such as the quality of teaching, the provision for almost all subjects and the spiritual

development of students. The increase in enrolments by 23 per cent suggests that the school's reputation in the community has improved.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	B	A	A

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

The performance of students in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science in 2002 was below average overall: it was well below average for English, below average for mathematics and average for science. The results in 2001 were well above average and in 2000 above average. The reason for the poor performance in 2002 was the lower ability of the students, the poor performance of boys in all subjects and the poor performance of girls in English, compounded by serious staffing problems in English and mathematics. As students' attainment on entry in 2000 was below average their progress at the end of Year 9 was satisfactory overall. The college's results were increasing at a rate faster than the national average until 2001. Girls have increasingly outperformed boys since 2000.

At GCSE in 2002 the proportions gaining five or more A*-C grades and five or more A*-G including mathematics and science was well above average and the proportion gaining one or more grades A*-G was above average. The average total GCSE/GNVQ points score was well above average compared to both all schools and similar schools and has increased in line with the national trend until 2001. It rose steeply in 2002 but comparisons with the national trend are not yet available. The school has exceeded its targets for GCSE. In the period 1998 to 2001 girls' results have been well above average and boys' results above average. The proportion of A*-C grades was above average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science.

In comparison with schools in similar circumstances in 2002, based on the percentage of free school meals, the results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below average and at GCSE they were well above average. The proportion of A*-C grades was average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. These comparisons are adversely affected by the high proportion of students whose parents are self-employed and who are not entitled to free school meals.

Current standards of work are above average overall at the end of Years 9 and 11. At the end Year 9 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and at the end of Year 11 standards are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Standards in most other subjects are above average at the end of Years 9 and 11 apart from art and design and modern foreign languages where they are below average.

Students' achievement is good overall. Achievement during Years 7 to 9 is good in English, mathematics and science and during Years 10 to 11 it is good in English and science and satisfactory in mathematics. Achievement is very good in drama and information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 10 to 11 and unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages in all years. Students with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) satisfactorily.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; most students work hard and are keen to join in extra-curricular activities
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; behaviour out of class is particularly good and in class mainly good
Personal development and relationships	Good; students respond positively to the attention given to their individual needs, they feel confident about approaching staff over academic or personal matters.
Attendance	Average; normally above average but foot and mouth disease reduced the rate of attendance in 2001-02.

A significant minority of students in a few classes, do not respect the right of others to learn and have little regard of the effects of their behaviour on others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	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 teaching of English, mathematics and science is good in all years. In the majority of other subjects the quality of teaching is also good. It is very good in drama in all years and in ICT in Years 7 to 9. It is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages in Years 10 to 11 and in the food technology component of design and technology. Literacy is well taught and numeracy satisfactorily taught. The differing needs of students are effectively met by a mixture of setting based on prior attainment, the selection of appropriate resources and tasks and the provision of individual help. Most aspects of teaching and learning are good apart from the quality and use of ongoing assessment, the use of homework and students' own knowledge of their learning which are satisfactory.

Overall students' learning is good. Students learn very well in drama in all years and in ICT in Years 7 to 9. Learning is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages throughout the college. The main barriers to learning are disruption by a small number of students in a few classes, especially in Years 8, 9 and 10 who adversely affect their own progress and that of others.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; broad and balanced and relevant throughout the college. Extra-curricular activities, equality of opportunity and the provision for personal, social and health education are good
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good; the college provides a caring environment in which students with SEN are well looked after and make good progress
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; students' needs are identified and satisfactorily assessed by appropriate individual lessons and by making all teachers aware of their needs

Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; spiritual development is satisfactory and moral, social and cultural development are good. Race relations are good
How well the school cares for its students	Arrangements for child protection are excellent and monitoring of academic performance and support and guidance are very good

The college works very well in partnership with parents. The contribution of the community to the curriculum is excellent. The arrangements for study support after school are particularly good and access to computers is better than normal.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; clear direction and a desire to involve all staff in understanding the opportunities and challenges facing the college. Good emphasis on improving standards
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good; well informed, hold a strategic view and act as a critical friend of the college
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; very detailed analysis of external examination results and students' progress are carried out and effective action taken
The strategic use of resources	Very good; budget allocations are clearly linked to the college's educational objectives

The college is very effectively governed and well led and managed by the principal and senior staff. The match of staffing and learning resources to the needs of the curriculum are good and the accommodation is satisfactory overall. A high degree of cost effectiveness is achieved by applying the principles of best value thoroughly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are expected to work hard • The approachability of staff • students like college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close working with parents • Information about students' progress • Amount of homework set

The inspectors fully agree with parents' positive comments but not with their concerns. The inspectors judge that the setting of homework is satisfactory and generally extends students' learning and the development of independent learning skills. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents, particularly about the progress of their children, is very good. The efforts made by the college to work closely with parents who are dispersed over a very large area are good. The contribution made by parents to students' learning is very good helped by the courses run by the Parents as Partners in Learning Project.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Current standards of work are above average overall at the end of Years 9 and 11. At the end of Year 9 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and at the end of Year 11 standards are above average in English and science but average in mathematics. The impact of the national strategy to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 are evident in English but not yet in mathematics or science. At the end of Year 9 standards are: above average in geography, physical education and drama; average in design and technology, ICT, history, religious education and music and below average in art and modern foreign languages. At the end of Year 11 standards are well above average in drama: above average in ICT, history, geography, physical education and music; average in religious education and citizenship and below average in art and modern foreign languages. The standard of work of girls is significantly better than boys in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages. The standard of work of minority ethnic students is in line with those of most other students. Standards of literacy are above average and standards of numeracy are average.
2. Students' achievement is good overall. Achievement during Years 7 to 9 is good in English, mathematics and science and during Years 10 to 11 it is good in English and science but satisfactory in mathematics. Achievement is very good in Years 10 to 11 in drama and ICT. Achievement is good in geography and physical education in all years, in ICT and drama during Years 7 to 9 and in history, religious education and music during Years 10 to 11. Achievement is satisfactory in art, citizenship, and design and technology in all years and in history, religious education and music during Years 7 to 9. Achievement is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages in all years due to deficiencies in the teaching, resources and leadership and management students with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress overall: it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. Students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make satisfactory progress throughout the college.
3. The performance of students in the national tests in English, mathematics, and science taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 was below average overall; it was well below average for English and below average for mathematics and science. The results in 2001 were well above average and in 2000 they were above average. The results in 2002 were much lower due to the lower ability of the students, the poor performance of boys in all three subjects and the poor performance of girls in English, compounded by serious staffing difficulties in English and mathematics. As students' attainment on entry was below average in 1999 their progress by the end of Year 9 was satisfactory overall. Progress in the period 1998 to 2001 was good. Girls have increasingly outperformed boys since 2000. The college's results were improving at a rate faster than the national average until 2001.
4. At GCSE in 2002 the proportions of students gaining five or more grades A*-C and five or more grades A*-G including English and mathematics was well above average and the proportion gaining one or more grades A*-G was above average. Most SEN students gained five or more grades A*-G at GCSE. The average total GCSE/GNVQ points score per student was well above average for both all schools and similar schools and the trend was in line with the national trend until 2001. The total points score increased steeply in 2002 but comparisons with the national trend are not yet

available. In 2001 boys' and girls' results were both above their national averages. During the period 1999 to 2001 girls' results were well above average and boys' results were above average.

5. The proportion of grades A*-C gained at GCSE in 2002 were above average for English, average for mathematics and well above average for science. An above average proportion of candidates gained A*-C grades in other subjects apart from art and French, which were well below average and German which was average. The proportion of A* grades increased and was above average for drama, design and technology, English literature and mathematics. All entrants passed GNVQ business studies, many with merit and almost half passed GNVQ ICT.
6. The accuracy of the comparison of the college's results with similar schools, based on the percentage of students eligible for free school meals, is in some doubt due to the presence of a high proportion of students whose parents are self-employed and hence ineligible for free school meals. In comparison with similar schools, based on the percentage of students eligible for free school meals, attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 was well below average: it was very low for English, well below average for mathematics and science and below average for teachers' assessment in ICT. In 2002 students' attainment based on the total average GCSE/GNVQ total points score per student was well above average. The proportion of A*-C grades was average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The attitudes of students towards school are very good. Most work hard and are keen to succeed. In a few lessons in drama, modern foreign languages, music and English their attitudes towards their studies were excellent. Students are keen to take part in events organised by the school such as school productions and representing the school in sporting competitions. Prefects take their responsibilities seriously and make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the day-to-day life of the school. Students from ethnic minorities, or with special educational needs, are fully integrated into the school community.
8. Relationships between students and with staff are good. Students are valued for their individuality and helped to achieve their potential in as many ways as possible. Students are happy to approach members of staff, including the principal, if they are experiencing difficulties with their academic work or have personal problems. Residential opportunities help create good relationships between students and staff. There are many opportunities for collaborative or group work to further develop students' social skills and they willingly share and support each other in their learning. Students are encouraged, through debate, to express their feelings on a wide range of moral and social issues. Most students listen with sensitivity to the views and opinions of their peer group that may differ from their own. There are a significant minority of students who are unco-operative, do not respect the right of others to learn and have little regard for the effect their behaviour has on others.
9. The standard of behaviour within the college is good. The college is a socially harmonious community. Behaviour in most lessons was at least satisfactory, and on occasions excellent. However, in 15 per cent of lessons in Years 7 to 9 and in 10 per cent of lessons in Years 10 to 11, behaviour was unsatisfactory and at times poor. The clear behaviour management procedures for dealing with potentially disruptive behaviour are not consistently applied by all teaching staff and this invariable leads to

the disruption of learning of other students. No students were permanently excluded from the college in 2001-02 and the rate of fixed period exclusions was below average. The governing body is appropriately involved in all stages of the exclusion process.

10. The development of students' initiative and personal responsibility is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. By the time they reach the end of Year 11 students are confident and articulate young people who are able to express their feelings and concerns in a logical manner. Their views are taken seriously by the college. For example, Year 9 students thought that the children's section of the community library was 'boring' and needed brightening up. A small working group was set up to redesign this area. The students made the caterpillar that is the main feature of the area in their lunchtimes. During lunch- and break-times students organise themselves with minimal adult supervision. Prefects are attached to Year 7 tutor groups and help these young students settle into the larger college community. Other students act as mentors to children transferring into the college or having specific difficulties. A group of Year 10 students has been trained as peer educators on raising awareness of the danger of drug use. They have also visited other schools to talk to students.
11. In the year 2000-01 attendance was in line with the national average at 90.7 per cent. This lower level was due to the effects on the community of foot and mouth disease. The attendance of students in the years 1998-99 and 1999-2000 was above the national average. The procedures for the registration of students meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. Overall the quality of teaching and learning are good throughout the college. Teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection in 1997: 31 per cent of lessons were at least very good compared with 11 per cent at the last inspection and the proportion of less than satisfactory lessons was seven per cent compared with 23 per cent at the last inspection. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the college. In most other subjects the quality of teaching is good: it is very good in drama in all years and in ICT in Years 7 to 9; satisfactory in the resistant materials component of design and technology and religious education in all years and in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages in Years 10 to 11 and in the food technology component of design and technology.
13. Most aspects of teaching and learning are good, apart from the quality and use of ongoing assessment, the use of homework and students' own knowledge of their learning, which are satisfactory. The learning of students is held back by unsatisfactory behaviour especially in Years 8, 9 and 10 where a few classes contain a disproportionate number of disruptive students. Learning has improved since the last inspection, in particular students' independent research and enquiry skills is no longer a weakness and access to and use of computers is now good.
14. The teaching and learning methods associated with the national strategy to improve standards in Years 7 to 9 are having a significant impact in English but have not had time to do so in science. In mathematics, the methods had a minimal impact initially but are now satisfactory. All teachers are trying to improve their practice and students have responded well. The booster classes in mathematics and science to help students catch up worked well with girls but not with boys.
15. The good teaching includes many strengths that help students learn and make progress. Teachers' subject expertise in English, science, ICT, religious education and

music enables them to ask searching questions that make students think, helps address students' misconceptions and allows them to introduce material of interest to students. High expectations of students' attainment and behaviour in English, mathematics, art and geography helps raise standards by setting suitably challenging learning objectives that are regularly reinforced during mathematics lessons. The brisk pace and good classroom management of lessons in English, mathematics, science, drama, ICT and geography keeps students engaged, promotes progress and reduces the opportunity for disruption. Good planning in several subjects helps students learn by establishing what students already know, explaining precise learning objectives to students and making use of a wide variety of learning methods and audiovisual aids. Well chosen methods in drama, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages helps students to think by means of searching questions that check their progress and address their misunderstandings. Students' critical faculties are developed in art by means of an end of class review led by the teacher and the requirement for students to judge each others' work. Enthusiastic teaching in drama, music, geography, resistant materials and ICT stimulates students' interest and motivates them to learn. Literacy is promoted by the use of a framework on how to write in geography and history and by reading aloud which gives students plenty of opportunity for speaking and listening in history. The homework set reinforces learning in geography and in history a choice of homework and the inclusion of plenty of practical activities encourages students.

16. Some of the teaching contains weaknesses, which reduce students' attainment and progress. Teachers whose classroom management is not strong suffer most from the presence of disruptive students in Years 8, 9 and 10. Teachers' expectations are not high enough in a few classes in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and music. Conversely, expectations are too high in religious education where the reading age of some of the worksheets used is too advanced for students to use. The work set does not always match the ability of the students in geography, modern foreign languages and science.
17. There is good teaching of students with SEN in most subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography and French but in religious education it is barely satisfactory. The support given to SEN students across the curriculum is good. Learning support assistants adapt schemes of work extremely well, assist some students to manage their behaviour and support others in class so that they can learn effectively. The teaching of literacy skills to students with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, is unsatisfactory, because their particular needs are not yet met. However, the college plans to implement a published programme imminently to address this, for which staff have already received training.
18. The teaching of students for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. Their requirements are met through appropriate individual lessons and by raising teachers' awareness of their individual needs.
19. The teaching of gifted and talented students is barely satisfactory overall and it is an area for development in English, science and modern foreign languages. The main shortcoming in these subjects is that insufficient attention is given to stretching the most able.

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

20. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to students is good. The curriculum is broad and the time allocated to most subjects is in line with national figures. All the legal requirements are met. The timetable cycle covers two weeks and consists of 25 one-hour lessons, in line with the national recommendation for teaching time. Students are grouped in different ways depending upon the subject including mixed ability and setting based on prior attainment. This arrangement works well in most cases but in modern foreign languages mixed ability grouping makes it very difficult for the teacher to devise appropriate tasks for the wide range of ability present. Grouping in some Years, such as 8, 9 and 10, has led to the formation of classes with significant numbers of challenging students that some teachers find very difficult to teach. Some classes are large which limits the amount of individual attention teachers can give and restricts access to resources, for example in design and technology. Students have equal access and opportunity to all aspects of the curriculum.
21. Students in Years 7 to 9 study the full National Curriculum as well as religious education, drama and personal, social and health education. In Years 10 to 11 students study the National Curriculum religious education and ICT at GCSE or GNVQ. They then choose four options from art, drama, French, German, resistant materials, food technology, geography, history, music, GNVQ business, a vocational course at a local tertiary college and a non-GCSE basic skills course.
22. The provision for students with SEN is satisfactory. Small groups are withdrawn to work in the learning support centre, where they benefit from suitable books to read, adapted materials, additional support and good software to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. There are suitable alternative curriculum arrangements for students in Year 10; some attend North Devon College of Further Education for vocational studies, whilst others study for a youth award. The latter group were seen effectively planning and designing an activity trail which the college intends to build. The curriculum was also adapted last year for some Year 8 students, who took part in team-building and outdoor exercises.
23. Students for whom English is an additional language are identified and satisfactorily assessed.
24. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are good and those for teaching numeracy skills are satisfactory.
25. The provision for gifted and talented students is satisfactory although the college is anxious to do more for such students. In ICT some talented students have made Lego models linked to computers and visited Euro Disney to see the influence of ICT on a large organisation. Students attend mathematics courses at Exeter University and a creative writing course. Some students in Years 8 and 9 have obtained GCSE passes in modern foreign languages and ICT.
26. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. The quality of after-school study support is particularly good and much appreciated by students and parents. Lunchtime activities are limited by the inability of the college to recruit supervisors. A good range of sporting activities is provided helped by parents who provide transport after school for fixtures. Most subjects arrange visits to places of interest but there are no foreign exchange visits. Music and drama are particularly strong. There are termly concerts and a high proportion of students are members of the college orchestra and receive

individual music tuition. There is an annual drama production, performances for GCSE and a residential weekend. A curriculum enrichment week is held in the summer term when students are encouraged to broaden their horizons.

27. The college has developed good relationships with local schools and further education colleges. The principal meets headteachers of primary and secondary schools through the academic council run by the local education authority. The special educational needs co-ordinator visits local primary schools together with the head of Year 7. Some subject heads also make visits. Useful information on students' attitudes and values and special educational needs emerge from such contacts. Year 6 students visit the college for a day in the summer term and take part in trial lessons and their parents attend an evening session to introduce them to the college. The college makes sure students know the opportunities available at all local post-16 institutions through careers lessons.
28. The contribution of the community to students' learning is excellent. The community library is shared with the college and often hosts community displays such as work from the art class, a collection relating to local archaeology, opportunities for work experience and handicrafts produced by the members of the womens' institute. Funding bids have been successful and enrich the provision for both students and parents. For example, the mobile ICT project provides learning opportunities in outlying villages and youth workers help to develop youth activities within the college. The recent appointment of a sports development officer working with both primary and secondary schools is developing links between school and sports clubs. The college will benefit from an all-weather area that the local playing field association has secured. It will be sited in the college grounds for students' use during the day.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The programme is co-ordinated well over the five years students are in college and provides good coverage of all the required areas, including sex and drugs education. Professionals from the community support the college well in this area of students' education.
30. Overall provision for students' personal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It has improved since the last inspection, particularly the spiritual and cultural dimensions, though spiritual provision is still relatively weaker than the other three. Teachers of music and religious education have considered fully the contribution which their subjects can make, and a similar process has been started in geography, but there is no systematic appraisal of possibilities in other subjects. This means that opportunities for students' further personal development may be lost.
31. Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory in most subjects, for example in religious education Year 7 students are set homework to research mystery and 'what amazes you'. In geography they are encouraged to reflect on breathtaking natural phenomena. In most other subjects reflection happens more by chance.
32. The college plans carefully to provide collective worship for all students despite difficulties with the accommodation. There are assemblies for most students on most days. These vary in quality from dull to inspirational. The best assemblies include student input, such as lively music from the assembly band, which encourages enthusiastic singing from the students. From time to time outside speakers are invited and there is useful input from the Connect youth worship team. The inspection took place during the nationally designated 'One World Week', when a guest speaker stressed the importance of preserving human dignity by reference to the charity 'Send A Cow', which expects those in Rwanda who receive gifts of animals to be, in time, givers themselves to others in need. The visitor also explained how his personal faith

influenced his actions. This was an excellent presentation, relevant to its audience, and the students responded enthusiastically. Students not attending assembly are given time for reflection in tutor groups on a 'Thought for the Week'. These are well chosen and usually relevant to some aspect of moral or social development and often also to citizenship, for example 'prejudice is the lazy person's substitute for thinking'. The quality of tutors' use of these is variable, but some good examples were seen during the inspection, for example when Year 9 were asked to reflect on what they can do for others.

33. Provision for students' moral development is good. Students' work is valued and displayed well. There is a conservation area, used for study and to encourage students to become involved in environmental projects. The English, music and drama departments are currently collaborating on a college musical about asylum seekers, which is raising awareness of both moral and social issues. In geography and in religious education students consider ethical problems presented by the developing world and by racial prejudice. The moral issues of genocide and its aftermath in Rwanda were mentioned by a former student in the 'One World' assembly, and human rights are considered in art. However, in mathematics, students studying bias were not asked to consider the moral issues arising from the use of biased statistics, and an opportunity was missed.
34. Provision for students' social development is good. During the inspection, some good collaboration was seen in Year 7 geography field work, and the success of the lesson owed much to the good quality of this. The primary schools' sports taster day gave many opportunities for Year 10 students to act responsibly as ambassadors for the college. Many extra-curricular activities, such as the drama group, orchestra, sports teams and residential opportunities, make a good contribution to the social development of participants. Parents point out that the pairing of Year 11 with Year 7 encourages older students to be responsible and caring.
35. Provision for students' cultural development has improved since the last inspection, especially in terms of non-European cultures, and it is now good. In English lessons, for example, Year 11 students study poetry and literature from India and other cultures. Geographers in Year 8 learn about Brazil and in Year 10 about Italy. In religious education there is good coverage of the major world religions. Music lessons include a wide range of world music for listening and appraising. There is multicultural input to college assemblies. An African Christian tutor worked in the college for two years through the Connect programme. This led to the founding of the Sanyu drumming group, which in turn led to a music trip to Uganda and to twinning of the college with a school in Kampala. This is intended to broaden students' horizons, not least because Ugandans value education for its own sake, an attitude which the school hopes that Chulmleigh students will note and share fully.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

36. This is a caring college where the personal and academic needs of individuals are met through careful monitoring of both their academic progress and personal development. The good relationships between staff and students make a significant contribution to this.
37. The educational and personal support and guidance that students receive is very good. A lot of care is given to the transition of students from primary school to secondary school. The good relationship that tutors form with their group contributes significantly to both the personal development and academic progress of students. Both the academic

spotlighting and academic mentoring schemes ensure that students who are underachieving are identified and supported to achieve their potential grades in end-of-year national tests and GCSE. Students in Years 10 and 11 benefit from discussions with the principal and vice principal of the college who help them to set relevant targets to meet the goals they have set themselves. Study support sessions after college provide additional help and facilities for students to complete both homework and coursework. The weekly pastoral team meetings provide a forum for students who are causing concern to be discussed. These meetings are attended by external agencies who effectively support the college in the development of strategies to help these students. The college cares well for students with special educational needs. Individual education plans are written and updated to enable appropriate learning.

38. The personal, social and health education that students receive contributes well to their personal development. Careers education raises students' awareness of the need to consider the importance of making appropriate choices when deciding on which subjects to study at GCSE, further education or the world of work.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. The computerised registration system ensures that absent students are quickly identified and, if no message received from parents, contact is established with home. Regular printouts of attendance enable pastoral staff to monitor and track the attendance of students.
40. The college's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. A range of strategies, such as daily reports and pastoral support plans, are in place to support students. House points are awarded for good behaviour and work. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are recorded and monitored systematically by senior management and parents called in to discuss strategies to reduce these incidents. The timeout system enables students whose behaviour is disrupting the learning of others to be removed from the lesson. The option of internal exclusion is used as an alternative to excluding students from the college whenever possible. Exclusion procedures appropriately involve the governing body and parents at all stages. The college, however, does not have the resources to meet the specific needs of some groups of students whose behaviour is a cause for concern to ensure that they are able to maximize their learning opportunities.
41. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. This is borne out by the comments of students who felt that if incidents occurred the procedures ensured they were effectively dealt with.
42. The arrangements for child protection are excellent. The nominated members of staff have received the appropriate training and they ensure that all staff are updated on changes to procedures. Appropriate systems are in place for children in public care. Health and safety procedures are good.
43. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. Whole-college procedures are very good. The results of external examinations are systematically analysed and this makes a significant contribution to improving standards. Data is collected from primary schools and the college's own assessment tests to provide a baseline from which students' progress can be tracked during their time at college. Half-termly formative assessments in all subjects form the basis of the tracking system to ensure that all students achieve their potential. The achievement of boys and girls and other groupings, such as students from ethnic minorities, is monitored and their progress systematically tracked. Procedures for assessment are good within departments. In history, procedures are unsatisfactory because there are no common

assessment tasks in Years 7 to 9 to effectively judge students' progress. Concern was expressed at the parents' meeting about the lack of ongoing marking of GCSE history coursework to give students the opportunity to improve their work.

44. Arrangements for the assessment of the needs of incoming students with special educational needs are satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of whole-college assessment data in identifying students' special needs and subsequently in writing their individual education plans.
45. Use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is good. The baseline data on students enables predicted grades for end of Year 9 national tests and GCSEs to be set. Students are aware of their predicted grades and the level they are working at throughout their time in the college. However, the college's grading system does not equate to National Curriculum levels. Students do not know what to do to reach the next National Curriculum level. The quality of marking of students' work is often good but there are inconsistencies between teachers. Sometimes there is a lack of clarity in telling students how they achieved their grade and what they need to do to improve their work further. Reports to parents are good and provide sufficient information for parents to be clear about what their child has studied, how they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the college provides and achieves are good. Forty parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection and 21 per cent of parents completed the questionnaire on parents' views.
47. The parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting felt their child liked coming to college, were expected to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the college if they had any concerns. The concerns expressed were about the amount of homework that children received, the information they received about their child's progress and the ability of the college to work closely with its parents.
48. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive comments but not with their concerns. Inspectors felt that the setting of homework was satisfactory and generally extended students' learning and the development of independent learning skills.
49. The effectiveness of the college's links with parents and the quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the progress of their child, are very good. Parents receive a termly progress review and an annual report. Annual reports ensure that parents can see what their child has studied, what they have learned and targets are set to help them improve their work further. A range of letters is sent to parents when concerns arise about such things as attendance or behaviour or to celebrate achievements. The Parents as Partners scheme has improved communication between the college and parents by providing a parent representative throughout the large catchment area. The work of this group was hampered over the last year through the foot and mouth epidemic. Inspectors judge that the commitment of the college to work with its parents is strong.
50. The contribution of parents to children's learning is very good. The excellent community work the college undertakes has a significant impact on this. The Parents as Partners in Learning project has run two computer courses, 'how to live with your teenager' and 'helping with homework'. Currently a pilot project is running in two of the outlying villages

on after college study clubs that involve both primary and secondary students. Parents can attend courses later in the evening to gain skills and knowledge to help them support their child.

51. Parents are fully involved in the annual review of statements and to some extent in developing their child's individual education plan. However they are insufficiently involved in the setting targets for such plans.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the principal and key staff are good. Together they show a commitment to raising standards and to providing a clear direction for the work of the college. The principal is anxious that all staff play an active part in the development of the college and considerable efforts are made to ensure they understand the opportunities and challenges facing the college. Information is widely shared among teaching and non-teaching staff. Five teachers, representing all parts of the college, are elected to serve on the senior management team. All teachers are given a chance to contribute to the college development plan and they receive the final draft, which ensures all views are heard and communication improved.
53. The college aims are appropriate and comprehensive, they refer, amongst other things, to promoting a caring environment, developing students' potential and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The very good support given to students, the attention to students' individual needs, the commitment to treating teaching and non-teaching staff equally and the excellent displays that enliven much of the college all suggest that the aims are being implemented. The students interviewed were very supportive of the college and had few suggestions for improvement.
54. The college is well placed to improve and has the capacity to succeed. Teachers' expectations are good in most subjects and never less than satisfactory. Standards in most subjects are good and only unsatisfactory in two subjects. The good leadership shown by the principal, the widespread sharing of information and the clear college development plan means that staff know what needs to be done to improve the college and are aware of how to do it.
55. The middle management of the college is good. The majority of subject departments are well led and managed and only one is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. The national strategy to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 is being implemented well in English, mathematics and science but its impact is only evident in English at present. All staff have specific job descriptions that are reviewed annually. The success of the science, ICT and drama departments is due in part to the high standard of leadership and management they enjoy. Heads of year and form tutors monitor students' progress and support and guide them very well.
56. The governors carry out their responsibilities very effectively. They act as a critical friend whilst remaining strongly supportive of the college. They have a clear strategic view of the college that influences its direction. Several governors bring a high level of expertise from industry and education that is of benefit to the college. They exercise corporate control through the decisions of the governing body supported by a series of sub-committees. They are well informed about the college by the principal, by visits they make, by taking part in joint in-service training with staff and in some cases as parents or grandparents of students. They are aware of the problems of recruitment and retention of staff and the inadequacies of the accommodation as well as the relative

success of the different subject departments. They play an appropriate part in the creation and monitoring and implementation of the college development plan and the appraisal of the principal. Finance, staffing, exclusions and examination results are all carefully monitored and reviewed. All legal requirements are met.

57. The college monitors and evaluates its performance well. There is extensive monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the principal, vice principal and subject heads. Hence the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching force are well known. Some teachers visit each others classes. Good practice is spread by means of a mentor system for new staff and for those having difficulties. Staff with good ideas are encouraged to share them during staff training sessions. There have been considerable improvements in the teaching of mathematics and history both of which were criticised at the last inspection and some improvement in the teaching of modern foreign languages. Improvements in all these subject have been adversely affected by difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers. Examination results are analysed in great detail by the principal. Comparisons are made between subjects, by gender and with schools nationally. The relative underachievement of boys is recognised. Heads of subject departments devise action plans to address areas of weakness.
58. The match of staff to the curriculum is good. Classes are relatively large and hence time for individual attention to students is reduced. On the other hand there is a high proportion of learning support staff who are well deployed and pay particular attention to the needs of students with special educational needs. Likewise the relatively large number of administrative staff carry out a wide range of clerical duties on behalf of teachers hence reducing the latters' workload. All teachers are qualified but not all classes are taught by subject specialists, however this does not substantially affect students' progress. The policy for SEN has some omissions but it is clearly written.
59. A policy for performance management is in place and annual reviews of all staff are carried out. The governors monitor the principal's objectives closely. The staff development programme is innovative and includes examples of research based on practical concerns of the college. The college says that performance management has helped teachers take on more responsibility, change roles and improve the match of the work set to the ability of the students.
60. New staff including newly qualified teachers are carefully inducted and well supported by the head of their main subject department and colleagues. However support where they teach outside their subject specialism is not always forthcoming.
61. The college identifies appropriate priorities and targets and takes the necessary action to try and meet them. The governing body has agreed targets for GCSE results in recent years that the college has exceeded. The college analyses assessment and performance data very carefully and uses it to predict students' likely progress, which is then monitored regularly by the principal and heads of subject. Where underachievement is identified appropriate action is taken. The main priorities in the college's development plan are well chosen to improve students' progress, for example excellent teaching and learning and enrichment, improved ethos, better communications and in-service training and an environment that encourages learning.
62. The supply of books and equipment is good and access to ICT very good, a clear improvement since the last inspection. The library is used by both the college and the community hence there are many more books than normal, although some are aimed at adults. The quality of the book stock varies; there is a shortage of teenage fiction and little for modern foreign languages. Literacy is particularly well supported in Years 8 and

9 through class visits. Some subjects, such as humanities, make particularly good use of collections of books to research topics. However, information on lending rates and the use by subject areas shows that the library is underused.

63. The quality of the college's accommodation is satisfactory overall but there are several unsatisfactory features. About half the buildings are temporary and many are in a state of disrepair. The college says cold conditions in the temporary classrooms in winter affects students' ability to concentrate. The community library building is purpose-built and the accommodation for art, history, ICT and geography are good. The refurbished accommodation for science is good but there are not enough laboratories for all classes to be taught in them. The accommodation for design and technology and physical education is poor and for music unsatisfactory. There is no dedicated space for drama and insufficient hard play area. Public areas and many classrooms are enlivened by excellent displays that improve the learning environment. Plans are in place to ensure access for disabled students, which are required under recent legislation.
64. Management of the college's budget is very good. The principal and the administrative officer monitor spending of the budget and provide the governors' finance committee with regular reports. The college's spending decisions relate closely to the priorities for improvement identified in its development plan. A practical example of the careful monitoring currently taking place is the close scrutiny of spending on supplies and services. By deliberately spending more than average on ancillary staffing, the way is kept clear for teachers to concentrate on their work. The college has very thorough procedures for ensuring that it obtains best value for any expenditure. Consequently financial control is very secure, the management of general funds and designated grants is very good, and expenditure against them is accurately recorded. This shows clearly that designated grants are used properly for their specific purposes. The college makes very good use of new technologies for administration purposes. The use of computers in the curriculum is very effective. All the recommendations of the latest audit have been implemented fully. The college has been very successful in generating extra funding, notably through the income generated by its information technology centre, which is widely used by the local community. Taking into account the characteristics of the college, the background of its students, the unit costs and the efficiency with which the college is run, it gives good value for money. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The principal, governors and staff should now:

(1) Raise the attainment of boys by:

- applying the teaching strategies already in place more consistently and rigorously to key areas such as literacy;
- ensuring lesson content engages the interest of boys and raises their aspirations.

(Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 66, 67, 70, 78, 79, 81, 88, 93, 95, 102, 113, 124, 126)

(2) Address the poor behaviour of a small but significant minority of students by:

- ensuring that the college's behaviour policy is consistently implemented;
- reviewing the way students are grouped in order to improve the learning opportunities of all students in those groups where disruption is commonplace;
- identifying and sharing the good practice of those teachers who manage and motivate all students.

(Paragraphs 9, 20, 83, 96, 105, 111, 127, 125, 152)

(3) Improve the provision for modern foreign languages by:

- considering grouping students during Years 10 and 11 based on their prior attainment;
- providing more regular tuition for students beginning German in order to create a sound basis for GCSE;
- providing extension work for gifted and talented students in Years 10 and 11;
- improving the achievement of boys in Years 10 and 11 by monitoring their progress closely, setting targets and providing mentors.

(Paragraphs 124-131)

(4) Improve the provision for food technology by:

- improving the teaching and learning of the subject.

(Paragraphs 12, 73, 102, 105-107)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	129
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	38	49	32	6	1	0
Percentage	2	29	38	25	5	1	0

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

Information about the school's students

students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	525
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	35

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	67

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	2

student mobility in the last school year	No of students
students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	48	53	101

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	12	30	29
	Girls	36	25	40
	Total	48	65	69
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (74)	65 (79)	68 (82)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (43)	34 (44)	31(45)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	23	34	30
	Girls	44	41	38
	Total	67	75	68
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (67)	75 (84)	68 (80)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (38)	36 (45)	39 (40)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	47	46	93

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	27	45	47
	Girls	34	46	46
	Total	61	91	93
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	66 (55)	98 (98)	100 (99)
	National	51 (48)	89 (91)	95 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	49.7
	National	39

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	54	61
	National		

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
468	20	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
52	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	25
Number of students per qualified teacher	19.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	498

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.2
Key Stage 4	22.4

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1,582,329
Total expenditure	1,584,560
Expenditure per student	3,348
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,408
Balance carried forward to next year	32,639

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	525
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	54	8	5	4
My child is making good progress in school.	27	52	4	4	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	54	4	2	19
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	58	16	2	8
The teaching is good.	23	53	4	1	20
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	34	15	4	21
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	49	10	3	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	53	1	3	6
The school works closely with parents.	18	44	17	6	15

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

24	39	5	5	26
25	48	10	2	15
23	40	10	5	21

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

- Good teaching, leading to good learning by many students.
- Students achieve well during their time in the school.
- Good leadership and management, particularly in addressing issues such as boys' underachievement, and implementing the National Literacy Strategy.

Areas for improvement

- Improving the attainment of boys further.
- Improving behaviour management in a minority of lessons.
- Consistently challenging more able students.

66. Overall, standards in English are above average. Standards of students at the age of 14 in the 2001 national tests were well above average and above those of students in schools of a similar context, principally because a high proportion of girls achieved grades of Level 5 or above. The test results for 2002 declined for both boys and girls in Year 9 to well below the national average based on their points score. This group of students joined the college with levels of attainment below average. However, they also underachieved because the English department suffered from major staffing problems, which have since been resolved. Current standards of students by the age of 14 are above average including in the key areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This represents good achievement overall, particularly by girls, in relation to their prior attainment on joining the college. A substantial minority of boys achieve less well, particularly in writing, although the gap in attainment between girls and boys is now less significant than it has been in the previous few years, because the college is beginning to successfully implement strategies to raise boys' standards. Both more able students and those with special educational needs achieve well.

67. By the age of 14 students develop the confidence and skill to read aloud, and with confidence and accuracy, as when reading their poetry on the theme of war. Students discuss their work and listen well to each other. The range and quality of students' writing improve considerably. For example, by Year 9 students become more confident in writing in a variety of genres, such as gothic, all the while expanding their vocabulary and learning to structure their work in more interesting ways. Some of the textual analysis of Shakespeare in Year 9, and the work done on comparing poems by Wilfrid Owen, shows a mature understanding. The work of some lower achieving students reflects less progress, being characterised in some instances by poor presentation and careless errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

68. The proportion of 16-year-old students achieving A*-C grades in the 2001 GCSE

English language and literature examinations was above the national average, reflecting a consistently upward trend over the past three years, a trend sustained in 2002. Girls attained a higher standard than boys, particularly in English literature. The inspection confirmed that standards are above average by Year 11 including in the key areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This represents satisfactory achievement for girls, and good achievement for boys, in relation to prior attainment at the age of 14. More able students and those with special educational needs achieve well. Students continue to develop their confidence in debate, as when discussing poetry from the Indian subcontinent, and they also improve their capacity for accurate and thoughtful extended writing. This is particularly evident in students' literature assignments, for example when analysing different presentational devices used in a text such as *Lord of the Flies*.

69. The overall standard of teaching and learning in English are good. Where the teaching is good or better, it demonstrates several qualities: very good subject knowledge which is conveyed to students through focused questioning and explanation; high expectations to which students respond well; a brisk pace and varied activities which keep students engaged; clear objectives based on good planning and very good classroom management. These features were particularly evident throughout a Year 9 lesson in which the teacher successfully engaged a large mixed ability class by enthusiastically and expertly conveying the essence of persuasive writing techniques through the medium of poetry. The students were able through a series of briskly paced exercises to write their own poems on the theme of war, whilst improving their understanding of a range of literary devices such as alliteration and rhetorical questioning, and so achieve a high standard of personal and evocative responses. Similarly, the use of video combined with good questioning and a careful focus on key vocabulary and imagery helped Year 11 students to appreciate the dilemmas of Indian and Pakistani poets trying to combine different languages and cultural experiences in their work.
70. Where the teaching is less effective, it is usually the case that classroom management is less strong, and learning is restricted because a number of students are not closely focused on the task. Although students' attitudes are mostly positive, there is a minority of students who do not concentrate sufficiently and do not learn at an appropriate rate. Sometimes the work is not sufficiently challenging for more able students, as when Year 10 students were encouraged to write definitions of words from dictionaries rather than formulate their own definitions of vocabulary which they already understood.
71. Leadership and management in English are good. The department has begun to address the issue of boys' underachievement and has revised schemes of work to take account of major developments such as the National Literacy Strategy and citizenship. All elements of literacy are being effectively addressed, as evident for example in the keenness of most students to read and discuss their work aloud. The use of ICT has also been successfully incorporated into English, particularly in the wordprocessing of assignments, and the department is making a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, students study a range of poetry from other cultures, and they are encouraged to collaborate effectively in the classroom, thereby developing their social skills.
72. Standards for younger students have improved since 1997, and standards of 16 year-olds are still above average. Teaching is more consistently good. The level of resourcing and the use of ICT have improved. These factors, along with the development of initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy, mean that overall there has been good improvement in English since the previous inspection.

Literacy across the curriculum

73. The college has developed an effective strategy for promoting literacy throughout the curriculum and standards are above average. In several subject areas there have been successful attempts to improve students' skills in reading, speaking, listening and writing. For example in music students are encouraged to read aloud when using worksheets. When Year 8 students were considering collage in art, the teacher initiated a good discussion of the results. Speaking and listening skills are developed appropriately in modern foreign languages. In history there is careful attention paid to developing persuasive writing as well as improving grammar and vocabulary. Literacy skills are given less attention in some other areas. For example in mathematics there are too few opportunities for extended discussion and students are provided with insufficient definitions. Similarly, in food technology there is insufficient emphasis on extending appropriate vocabulary. However, overall the increasing attention being paid to improving literacy skills is having a positive impact upon standards in several areas of the curriculum.

Drama

Overall the quality of provision in drama is very good.

Strengths

- The very good standards of many students.
- Very good teaching, resulting in very good learning and very positive attitudes on the part of students.
- Very good leadership and management of a small but successful department.

74. Students of all levels of ability, including more able students and those with special educational needs, attain good standards and achieve well by the ages of both 14 and 16. Between the ages of 11 and 14 students make good progress in learning how to improvise dramatic performance on a theme such as *Johnny Salter*. In so doing, they improve their confidence and also their knowledge and understanding of appropriate features such as posture, positioning and gesture, thereby becoming more effective performers. Students between the ages of 14 and 16 continue to make good progress in learning; they develop the ability not just to perform effectively but also to manage the planning and rehearsing of dramatic pieces. They also learn to evaluate and refine the finished product effectively, for example when improvising scenes from family life. The good standards seen accurately reflect the very good GCSE results for the past few years, which have consistently been well above the national average, often with all students obtaining an A*-C grade.
75. The overall quality of teaching in drama is very good. Strong features of the teaching include very clear planning, with the objectives of each lesson made very clear to students. Classroom management is very effective in keeping the students interested and on task. There is an appropriate emphasis not just on improving students' performance skills but also on increasing their confidence and their evaluative skills, by highlighting key concepts and aspects of good performance. As a result most students learn very effectively. This was evident, for example, in Year 9 performances of *Johnny Salter*: the detailed emphasis which the teacher gave to analysing and evaluating performance in terms of conventions of pace, movement, character and attitude helped to significantly increase students' awareness of the importance of these devices. Knowledgeable teaching reinforced by good use of student self-assessment succeeded in enthusing Year 7 students embarking on 'a coach journey to a haunted castle'. A thoughtful level of evaluation by Year 11 students was observed in response to the

performance of an extract from *A Taste of Honey*.

76. There is very good leadership and management in drama. The drama teacher compensates for deficiencies in specialist accommodation through skilful use of available resources, and the scheme of work is coherent and thorough. The drama curriculum is enriched through residential trips and the opportunities for students to plan and carry out college productions such as *The Roses of Eyam*. The department makes a good contribution to developing students' literacy skills through promoting clear speaking and good listening, and ICT is used for example in the annual college production. There is also very good provision for moral and social education through an emphasis on encouraging good social interaction and the addressing of moral issues through drama, such as the treatment of asylum seekers.
77. The good standards and attitudes reported in 1997 have been maintained, and the standard of teaching is now even better. Overall there has been good improvement in drama since the previous inspection, and it is one of the strengths of the college.

MATHEMATICS

Overall the provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Above average standards and good achievement by girls.
- Teachers' high expectations and precise planning.
- Improvement since the time of the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Overall standards by raising boys' achievement and direct teaching of mental computation strategies.
- Use by all teachers of clearly defined objectives for students' learning.
- students' understanding of their targets and how they might improve.

78. Standards of current Year 9 students are above average. In recent years, attainment in national tests has been improving steadily with students making good progress and achieving well, reaching levels well above the national average and above that for schools in similar circumstances in 2001. The results were lower in 2002, arising from the particularly low levels attained by boys. This partly reflected their lower attainment at the time they entered the college, but was exacerbated by ineffective arrangements for teaching them. Many of the students taking national tests in 2002 were identified by the college as requiring additional lessons if they were to reach above average standards. These arrangements, part of a national programme to improve attainment in Years 7 to 9, proved successful for the girls who were taught well and made good progress in order to attain well above average results. However, the boys made poor progress, attaining below average results. The college has revised these arrangements in the light of this experience.
79. Standards of current Year 11 students are average, matching the results attained in GCSE examinations in the last two years. The students attained well above average standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 but made unsatisfactory progress during Year 10 due to staffing problems. They now enjoy good teaching and are making up lost ground so that they are on target to reach average standards by the end of the year. Boys make broadly satisfactory progress; girls make good progress.

80. Students with special educational needs and those few for whom English is an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Students with a talent for mathematics attend special classes in co-operation with Exeter University and the proportion of students attaining the highest grades at GCSE has risen in recent years.
81. By the end of Year 9, students are well prepared for starting the GCSE course. For example, above average students can find quadratic equations by analysing sequences, which prepares them well for coursework. However, they are not sufficiently familiar with the expected range of transformations to apply them to any but the simplest cases. Average students can determine linear functions from sequences, use graphs with integer scales in all quadrants and interpret scattergrams. Below average students practise basic number work, such as the use of fractions, solve elementary linear equations and construct statistical graphs, although their interpretation of graphs is weak. At all levels, students' competence in mental numeracy is below the standards expected of them. They often rely on fingers when calculating simple sums and differences or use recurrence patterns rather than confident knowledge of multiplication tables. The standard of girls' written work is higher than that of boys. Furthermore, they are more reflective when thinking through problems. Where boys are often the first to offer answers, girls are more often correct.
82. In Year 11, above average students can apply principles of direct and inverse proportion to solve problems. They can reliably factorise quadratic expressions and so simplify algebraic fractions. They acquire a good knowledge of vector notation and apply this to problems in geometry. They recognise independent and mutually exclusive events and can solve problems of probability involving them. Overall however, their competence in geometry and statistics is less than in algebra. Average students are well prepared for coursework, being able to find equations from sequences arising in investigation of functions. They have a good knowledge of circle theorems that they can apply to solving problems. They apply statistical processes well in other subjects, such as correlation in geography. Below average students can construct scale drawings carefully, solve problems using a variety of units, including time, and solve simple equations. They can use written methods for number work but can only recall elementary knowledge of tables. Students generally, including some of the most capable, have a hesitant recall of tables and have limited strategies for efficient mental computation.
83. Overall, teaching is good, although it varies widely from very good to satisfactory. In all years, the best teaching is characterised by high expectations with challenging, well-defined objectives for students' learning dominating all aspects of work. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher regularly reinforced the clear objectives for students to use technical expressions to describe features of statistical graphs so that by the end of the lesson they were not only able to draw them carefully but describe their important characteristics and interpret them well. Teachers use questioning well to stimulate students' thinking and reasoning and assess progress so they can provide further explanation when necessary to overcome misunderstandings. In lessons where teaching is less effective, expectations are not high enough and objectives are not sufficiently clear to be either meaningful to students or for progress towards them to be effectively sustained through the lesson. For example, the teacher's low expectations of presentation standards for cumulative frequency curves drawn by above average Year 9 students did not provide a good enough basis for the accurate interpretation of which many were capable. Teachers work hard to sustain the participation of students who have behavioural difficulties, without detriment to others. For example, a teacher patiently re-engaged the interest of an increasingly distracted, challenging Year 9 student. In this way, the teacher avoided the need to send him to a room set aside for disruptive students. Whilst students are familiar with the marking conventions used

consistently by teachers, and can say whether they are working 'on target' or not, few can say what their target level or grade is and how, in precise terms, they can improve their work. All teachers are structuring lessons in accordance with the latest guidance to improve provision in Years 7 to 9. Some do this well whilst others, less familiar with the practice, are in the early stages of using the strategies effectively.

84. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed head of department has a clear commitment to securing improvements, shared by the mathematics team. Current priorities are well thought through. Initiatives taken already provide a framework for raising standards of teaching and students' achievement but have not been established for sufficient time for their impact to be evident. Steps taken to take account of the latest guidance for improving standards in Years 7 to 9 are in the early stages. For example, clear priorities have been established and teaching plans revised to take account of the suggested framework. Basic links are being established with primary schools but as yet there have been no professional visits for classroom observation of good primary school practices.
85. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. At that time standards at the end of Year 9 were average; they are now above average. Standards at the end of Year 11 were below average; they are now average, with more students attaining the highest grades. A high proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory, characterised by slow pace and low expectations; it is now good. Standards of numeracy were unsatisfactory; they are now broadly satisfactory.

Numeracy across the curriculum

86. Standards of numeracy are average throughout the college; an improvement from the time of the last inspection. However, skills remain weak in so far as many students have a poor recall of multiplication tables and rely on fingers when calculating simple sums and differences mentally. This hampers the progress of more capable students in efficient factorisation of quadratic expressions. Other students do not readily see factors for simplifying fractions and resort to using calculators for work that should be done mentally. Graph work is generally sound but many students, including those attaining well in other work, struggle to provide reliable interpretations of graphs. For example, Year 9 students had difficulty applying a graph for linear conversion in science. Other subjects contribute to numeracy, for example, in modern foreign languages, mental calculations are practised in target language, and strategies for finding simple percentages in history reflect teachers' application of the numeracy policy.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- Standards attained at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are above average.
- Students make good progress and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good in some lessons.
- Leadership and management are very good; the staff are a highly committed team.

Areas for improvement

- Students' understanding of scientific concepts.
- Attention to the learning needs of gifted and talented students.
- Students' use of ICT to learn science.

87. Standards of work seen in Years 9 and 11 are above average. The students make good progress and achieve above average standards due mainly to good teaching and learning. The previous inspection found the standards in most aspects of science at ages 14 and 16 were above average but that standards and progress in practical science were below average. The main reasons for these judgements were poor accommodation and inadequate resources. The college has made good improvements in these areas. As a result the students now receive good opportunities for scientific enquiry.
88. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been above average or well above average since the last inspection but in 2002 they were average. This was due to the lower attainment of the year group compounded by the underachievement of boys. Attainment of boys and girls is similar. GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average and above average compared to similar schools. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Students' performance in GCSE science is similar to their performance in other subjects. Progress of students with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language is good as a result of good provision and involvement in learning.
89. By the end of Year 9 students' above average standards are seen in their knowledge and understanding of the way they explain the difference between a chemical change and a physical change. They explain how three states of water represent a physical change as opposed to the formation of new substances when a chemical change takes place. They explain how animal adaptations help their survival in a particular habitat, for example of mountain hare in Scotland and brown hare in Derby. Average attaining students are beginning to understand factors that affect animal populations. Lower attaining students can explain the chemistry of burning magnesium. They understand the idea of loudness and pitch in terms of pattern of amplitude and frequency of sound waves.
90. By the end of Year 11 students' above average standards are evident from their work across the four areas of the curriculum. For example, they understand the ionising effect of alpha, beta and gamma radiation. They explain how properties of different groups and periods are indicative of the way elements react. They investigate factors that affect the rate of reactions. They explain fluctuations in the population of scale insects and lady beetles on orange trees as a model of predator-prey interaction. Higher attaining students have good understanding of velocity-time graphs and the functioning of kidney tubule. Lower attaining students explain osmosis using experimental evidence of comparing potato chips soaked in pure water or salt water. They show good awareness of fair testing.
91. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. In about one quarter of lessons observed, it is very good. Much of the very good teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9. Overall, good teaching is reflected in teachers' very secure knowledge of the subject and how it is used in discussions to induce interest and motivation and in demonstrations and illustrations to stimulate intellectual involvement. Getting a boiled egg into an empty milk bottle and coloured fluid up into an inverted flask preheated to expel air provided a dramatic demonstration and gave rise to an extended discussion to explain the observed phenomenon. The discussion revealed weakness in students' understanding of scientific concepts. A well-planned text-based lesson developed students' literacy and independent learning skills, however, better matching of information and tasks to students' ability could have raised expectations of their work further. Teachers promote students' numeracy well. For example, the students are

required to work out numerical questions on force, mass, acceleration and speed. Students' use of ICT in areas such as data logging is underdeveloped. Good management of students and effective use of time leads to good pace and productive learning. Effective use of questioning and discussions provide good information on how well the students are learning and what needs to be done to help them make good progress. Marking guides students' learning effectively.

92. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The leader provides a clear direction for development. The department acts as a team of highly committed teachers and has created a very supportive learning atmosphere. Monitoring of teaching is a regular feature as is that of the curriculum and students' behaviour. Assessment procedures are good and the information is used effectively, for example, for setting of year groups and setting targets for students to improve learning. More needs to be done for gifted and talented students such as teaching them thinking skills and making sure they are consistently challenged. The department has good ICT resources. Powerpoint presentations are developing satisfactorily. The interactive whiteboard and multimedia resources are used effectively for teaching. A clear timescale for implementing the Key Stage 3 national strategy for teaching science has been planned but it is too early to have an impact on standards. An audit has established priorities. Staff has identified training needs and some training has been completed. Work on implementing the strategy is progressing smoothly with a target date for launch in September 2003.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good teaching which is re-motivating students and is raising standards.
- Good long- and short-term plans which provide a good basis for future development.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results to reach the well above average standard of previous years.
- The attainment of boys by ensuring that the curriculum has sufficient breadth to interest and motivate them.

93. In 2001 GCSE results were well above average which has been the consistent pattern for a number of years. Boys did less well than girls with many fewer boys than girls taking the subject. Results in 2002 declined steeply to below average due to a staff bereavement, which affected the continuity of teaching and consequently attainment. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls was much greater in 2002.
94. When students enter the college standards are below average. Students make rapid progress and those currently in Year 7 are achieving standards in line with the national average. This was seen, for example, in their recent drawings of animated toys, which show a good use of line and good understanding of complex forms. The standard of work in Year 9 is below average due to the period of staffing uncertainty last year. Work from this period frequently lacks challenge and drawing in particular is superficial. Since the appointment of a full-time teacher in September 2002 standards have improved and these students are now beginning to make substantial progress. For example, the collage work done by Year 8 students shows a bold use of shape and a good understanding of the way in which materials can be combined to create interesting textures and surfaces.

95. Standards of work in the folders of students currently in Year 11 are below average with the attainment of boys being significantly below that of girls. Again, standards were affected by the period of staffing uncertainty last year. The work seen in lessons though still below average shows improvement. For example the good preparation work based on collections of facial imagery are being well used to develop such things as collage, which exploits the potential of colour overlays, and large chalk and charcoal drawings of figures which show a good understanding of shape and proportion. Students in Year 10 have completed half a term of the GCSE course; sketchbook work is of an average standard and observation drawings on a portrait theme indicate that these students have the potential to gain higher grades at GCSE.
96. Teaching and learning are good with some examples of very good teaching. The very good teaching is characterised by the decisive action that has been taken to arrest the decline in standards and to re-establish a work ethos based upon a well thought-out methodology, which places high importance on the development of ideas using sketchbooks. Expectations are high, and as a result students are developing a more positive approach to their work, with those in Year 11, for example, showing higher levels of confidence and application. Each lesson has a clear structure with students being given explicit targets at the start of a lesson. This is often coupled with good demonstrations of technique or suggestions of how best to approach work, as in a Year 8 lesson where students discuss the potential of the materials used and the teacher demonstrates how best they may be combined to create different surfaces. All lessons end with a review of what has been done with students discussing their work and commenting on their own success. This contributes to the raising of standards. Although the majority are now responding well in lessons a number of boys in Year 9 show poor levels of engagement with the subject and as a consequence standards reached are lower than they should be.
97. Management is good. The newly appointed teacher in charge of art, has a very good understanding of what needs to be done in both the long and short term to raise standards. This task is being enthusiastically tackled with the review of the curriculum high on the list of priorities. There is a desire to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between opportunities for students to work in two and three dimensions and to make art using computers, which could well have positive impact on the attainment of boys. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, in particular standards have declined, but all the indications are that this will only be for a brief period.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The college has carried out a thorough audit of the curriculum to establish where aspects of citizenship are currently being taught.
- In planning for the introduction of the subject due weight has been given to all three strands of the programme of study.
- Good training has been carried out.
- Some good teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Not all subjects have clearly identified where the element of citizenship is embedded in their subject and hence opportunities are missed.
- Plans for the monitoring of the subject have yet to be fully developed.

98. Standards at the end of Year 9 and 11 are average and their overall progress is satisfactory in all years. In the lessons where citizenship has been clearly identified the level of attainment is good. Students showed a good understanding of the subject and are able to respond in a thoughtful and responsible manner. For example a Year 11 group confidently considered the role of the police in the criminal justice system. Music lessons play an important role in helping students consider wider global issues as part of the 'One world Week' and theme and drama lessons explore such topics as conflict in society. In these lessons students of all ability achieve well. When citizenship is not clearly specified, students are not aware of the fact that they are studying the subject. For example the history department has identified several areas in the curriculum which have close links with citizenship but these are not made explicit and hence students are unaware of the subject being covered and their attainment and progress is unsatisfactory.
99. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; it is good when citizenship is explicitly identified. Teachers prepare resources well using a good variety of teaching methods to interest and motivate the students. In a geography lesson students thoroughly enjoyed playing a game that explored the principles of trade and interdependence because the subject was relevant to the knowledge aspect of citizenship and the process used encouraged the development of the skills of enquiry and communication.
100. The college has made good plans to ensure that students actively participate in a wide range of activities that develop citizenship. An already active college council is being encouraged to take a more significant role, for example they were responsible for choosing the very articulate students that met the inspectors. Year 11 students act as mentors to Year 7 students, Year 10 students acted as ambassadors for the college during a visit by primary school students to take part in sports and prefects contribute to the day-to-day running of the college. The very positive links with Uganda widen students' understanding of their responsibility in the world.
101. The introduction of the subject has been well managed; due weight has been given to all three strands of the programme of study when planning the introduction of the subject. Some good staff training has been carried out. A thorough audit of the curriculum has highlighted areas for development and resources have been provided where necessary to ensure students receive their entitlement. Plans for monitoring students' progress are in hand with careful consideration being given to the possibility of introducing a short course GCSE.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The good teaching in resistant materials has improved standards year on year.
- The good technical instruction which ensures that students have a good understanding of tools and materials.

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards in food technology lessons by improving the quality of the teaching and learning.
- To improve the trend of GCSE food technology results.

102. In 2001 GCSE results for design and technology were above average with girls doing better than boys. Results for 2002 improved and the gap between boys and girls was reduced. The results for resistant material technology are consistently better than those for food technology. In particular, the proportion of grades A*-C is significantly better and the trend over time is improving whilst that for food technology is flat. When compared with the other subjects they study students tend to do better in design and technology.
103. When students enter the college their experience of and attainment in design technology are well below average. By the end of Year 9 standards are average overall; they are average in resistant materials and below average in food technology. Overall students' achievement is satisfactory. For example in the folders of students currently in Year 9 who are designing and making an electronic alarm, the standard of graphical presentation is satisfactory with the work showing a progression from the visualising of ideas through to the development of a product. In contrast to this, folders in food lack coherence, presentation is below average and much of the work incomplete. When students make things in resistant materials standards are good. For example in a Year 7 lesson where students made a name holder they understood the working characteristics of acrylic, were able to use the correct techniques to file and finish, and use a strip bender and moulds to form the material accurately. Standards of making in food are average, for example in a Year 9 project students investigated alternatives to red meat when making burgers; they combined ingredients appropriately and cooked and tested to a satisfactory standard. No practical work was seen in textiles, but indications from folders and from discussions with students are that much of this work remains unfinished at the end of projects and standards are below average. The very large classes in Year 7 in particular, have an adverse impact on standards. For example in a Year 7 lesson there were too many students for the resources available, so that some needed to do homework instead of a practical task.
104. Standards overall are average in Year 11. Students' achievement during Years 10 to 11 is satisfactory. Standards in Year 10 are average, for example students showed a good understanding of the working characteristics of wood and a degree of precision in cutting and shaping when designing and making an experimental joint. Similarly the chair project completed by the current Year 11 students shows a good understanding of materials and their application. The standard of work in folders in both food and resistant materials reflect the standards in the recent GCSE results. No practical work of students in Years 10 and 11 was seen in food technology.
105. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall: they are good in resistant materials and unsatisfactory in food technology. Where teaching is good lessons and projects are well planned. Lessons have a clear structure and precise targets for what is to be taught are discussed. For example, in a Year 8 lesson students were making an animated toy which exploits different types of cam; the lesson started with students and teacher identifying what was to be achieved in the lesson so that students were able to plan their work more effectively. In contrast, the unsatisfactory teaching in food technology does not set clear objectives at the start of lessons resulting in students not fully understanding what they are expected to do. In a Year 10 bread-making project, a confused introduction to the lesson and an unclear explanation of the task, meant that students did not understand what they needed to do and as a result they became demotivated and behaviour deteriorated. Technical instruction is good, for example, in a Year 9 lesson where the good teaching of soldering techniques and component assembly helped to raise standards. Students respond enthusiastically in resistant materials lessons which are characterised by good relationships and eager involvement. Behaviour in food lessons is often unsatisfactory and on some occasions is linked to the lack of pace in lessons.

106. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The routines of management are well established with regular meetings of teachers used to identify areas for development. The curriculum has been well planned and appropriately matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The weakness in management is that departmental expectations with regard to curriculum content and assessment are not being effectively implemented in all areas of the curriculum. For example, the clear departmental assessment policy is not fully used in food technology with many end of unit assessment sheets lacking such components as students' self assessment and targets for improvement.
107. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The management of the department has improved and access to ICT is much better. The quality of teaching and overall standards remain average, both are better in resistant materials than in food technology. The accommodation and resources remain poor but new facilities for resistant materials are about to be constructed and the food room refurbished.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Examination results, which have been well above the national average for the last five years.
- The overall standard of teaching, which has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Very thorough marking, which includes detailed comments pointing the way forward for students.
- Very good fieldwork arrangements.

Areas for improvement

- Inconsistent matching of tasks to the needs of individual students.
- The comparatively low proportion of students achieving grades A* and A in the GCSE examinations.

108. Results in the GCSE examinations have been consistently well above the national average for the last five years. The 2002 results showed a marked improvement on those for 2001. Comparatively few students however, obtain an A* or A grade. Girls outperformed boys by a smaller margin than the national gender difference. These results represent a marked improvement since the previous inspection.
109. Standards by the end of Year 9 are above national expectations and in line with teachers' assessments for the last two years. As students were above national expectations when they joined the college in Year 7 this represents satisfactory progress during Years 7 to 9. All students have good map-reading skills. Higher attaining students have a good grasp of such concepts as racial stereotyping in the USA. The high standard of their work on this topic is evident in very impressive displays on classroom walls. Lower attaining students can express such ideas orally, but have difficulty in doing so in writing. In general, weak literacy skills hamper the progress of about one fifth of students.
110. By the end of Year 11, attainment for most students is above average, with several students well above. This represents good progress by such students during Years 10

to 11. Higher attaining students can extract relevant information from a range of sources to make accurate notes. They have, for example, a very good understanding of coastal processes. In their coursework, students set up hypotheses and test them using simple statistical techniques to analyse their gathered data. They use computers to improve the presentation of both text and graphs. Lower attaining students record their results using simple graphs, but are less sure in drawing conclusions from them. There is no obvious gender difference in attainment in any year group.

111. Overall, teaching and learning is good, never less than satisfactory and frequently very good. This represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection. The best teaching is characterised by brisk pace, challenge, enthusiasm for the subject and sensible allocation of time to different activities. Students' response to this good teaching is mostly positive. The high proportion of students that choose to continue with the subject in Years 10 and 11 illustrates their liking for the subject. An example of very good teaching was seen in a Year 10 lesson on the European Union (EU). Students reached a good understanding of the relative advantages and disadvantages of EU membership through a well-conducted simulation exercise. Students' learning is assisted by the helpful guidance they receive in the use of a range of resources. In several lessons teachers help the development of students' literacy by using a framework to help them write assignments, practise in reading aloud and lists of important geographical terms. Good questioning technique ensures that students of all abilities become actively involved. Most lessons start with a clear statement of aims and a review of recent learning, enabling students to recall and consolidate what they have learned before. In some comparatively less successful lessons there is insufficient matching of tasks to the needs of individual students' capability. In a small number of lessons, silly or truculent behaviour of a small minority has an adverse effect on learning. In most cases, such behaviour is dealt with effectively and without confrontation. Students with SEN make progress at a similar rate to that of others. Their teachers know them well and they receive valuable help from learning support assistants. Homework is set regularly and provides valuable reinforcement to classroom teaching. Work is marked regularly, and teachers give helpful comments on how students can improve their performance.

112. Geography is deservedly a popular subject in the college. There has been a good response to points raised in the previous inspection report. Tracking of students' progress is much improved. A thorough revision of schemes of work is in hand. Well-organised fieldwork gives students opportunities to enjoy the practical aspects of the subject and to work independently, both individually and in small groups. Leadership and management of the subject, delegated within the humanities department to the teacher in charge of the subject, are effective in raising standards. Teachers are not resting on their laurels. They realise that if current high standards are to be maintained and improved, more work needs to be done to enable higher attaining students to attain the highest GCSE pass grades, and to ensure that tasks are more closely matched to individual need.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The lively teaching.
- The shared commitment of the history department to improve.
- The visits to historic sites and museums.

Areas for improvement

- To raise levels of attainment at GCSE so that the more able students achieve the grades they are capable of.
- To ensure a more balanced coverage of the knowledge, skills and understanding of National Curriculum history in Years 7 to 9.
- To establish a consistent and accurate system to assess student attainment in Years 7 to 9.

113. The overall trend in students' performance at GCSE over the past three years has been above the national average. However, in 2001 it dipped to well below the national average for grades A* to C. This was due to a number of factors, the two most important being the number of changes of teacher and a lack of sufficient focus on the assessment requirements of the syllabus. In 2002 results recovered with 62 per cent of students achieving grades A* to C, although no students achieved the very highest grade. Girls' results were much better than boys'. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of students' work confirm that the standards being achieved by the current Year 11 are also above average. This represents good achievement over the two years of the course for all students, including those with special educational needs. What all students can do well is to describe historical features such as the way in which the Nazi party used the Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens to influence young Germans. Middle and higher attaining students are able to analyse and then explain complex historical issues such as the reasons for the weaknesses of the League of Nations. The relative weakness in the work of all students is their failure to select, from the accurate historical detail that they can recall, those points which are relevant to the question and which support their conclusions.
114. The standards of work achieved by the students in the current Year 9 are broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement for all students, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Students of all abilities demonstrate increasingly good knowledge and understanding, such as the Year 9 students who were able to explain the relative merits of nineteenth century roads and canals as a means of transport. The main weakness is the lack of depth to that historical understanding; a depth that can be achieved by studying fewer historical questions in much greater detail than is currently planned for. Students demonstrate an increasing skill in handling historical sources, such as the Year 8 students who explored the reasons for the execution of the Abbot of Glastonbury during the reign of Henry VIII. Students in all years write with increasing confidence.
115. The quality of teaching and learning in history is good in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE. Strong features of the most effective teaching are the good relationships between teachers and students. Teachers' planning of individual lessons is particularly strong. In one Year 7 lesson the students were able to produce some very good empathetic speech writing examining the actions of William of Normandy from the perspective of the defeated Saxons. This was because the teacher first helped them to draw information from a stimulating but challenging video. He then introduced a vivid pictorial source, which with some sharp questioning, served to further increase their knowledge. Then to help them structure their speeches the students were provided with a framework from the class textbook. The explicit teaching of literacy is a positive feature of the subject. The best teaching is characterised by the many opportunities that students are given for speaking and listening. This lively teaching ensures that students enjoy history. The introduction of a choice of homework tasks, including lots of practical activities, is a very positive initiative that allows all students to do well. For example in a Year 7 lesson two girls performed a mini role-play, that they had prepared at home, which examined the impact of the Norman Conquest on the lives of two Saxon

jewellers. The relative weakness within teaching in Years 7 to 9 is where teachers' expectations of students' work are too low. Marking is conscientious and gives good guidance on what students need to do to improve their work. The one exception to this is those Year 11 GCSE students last year who did not receive the final marking of their coursework promptly enough to enable them to make changes. At GCSE the students are developing very good sets of notes as a result of the careful teaching and conscientious marking. Whilst some consideration is given to the syllabus assessment objectives within the teaching this needs to be planned and carried out in a far more systematic way.

116. The leadership and management of history by the teacher in charge since September last are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. In particular, GCSE results have improved and standards at the end of Year 9 are higher. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Learning resources are now adequate although GCSE students do not have their personal copy of the textbook. Good use is being made of the Public Record Office website. All students in each year have the chance to take part in visits to historic sites and museums, which broadens their horizons and creates interest in the subject. The history teachers are very committed to their work and are aware of what needs to be done. The schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 and GCSE are not up to date, and do not give sufficient guidance to those teaching history but are being rewritten. Similarly there is not, at present, a coherent, consistent and accurate system for assessing and tracking students' attainment in Years 7 to 9.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The action taken to improve the provision of ICT across the college.
- The quality of the teaching.
- The effective use of new technology.
- Well above average GCSE examination results.

Areas for improvement

- Day to day assessment and analysis of assessment data.
- Further opportunities to experience computer measurement, recording and control.

117. GCSE results were well above average in 2002 and in the previous two years. In 2002 all candidates gained a grade and the proportion of A* and A grades was above average. GNVQ students also did well; many gained distinction and merit grades. Students made more progress in GCSE ICT than in most other subjects they took. Boys' and girls' results were similar. These results are much better than at the last inspection.

118. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with the national expectations for Year 9. This represents satisfactory progress during Years 7 to 9. Students' achievement is good in Year 9 and very good in Year 7 as they have benefited from modern equipment and consistently good teaching from the moment they join the college. The more able students in Year 9 typically produce 12 Powerpoint pages for a timed presentation during the lesson. All students are able to evaluate the text, graphics, style, format, sound, and fitness for purpose.

119. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average, especially where students take GCSE ICT, representing very good achievement. The course work produced by GNVQ students is also above average and is well presented by the great majority of students. All develop expertise in creating and using databases, constructing queries and producing reports. students also study the use of spreadsheets as part of the coursework and improve their understanding of business skills and numeracy as they develop their reports.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; it is very good in years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. No teaching was unsatisfactory but students need more opportunities to experience computer measurement, recording and control. Lessons are well planned and activities varied to maintain students' concentration and develop their capacity for independent learning. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good and they are able to anticipate aspects that students may misunderstand. Electronic whiteboards are used effectively to demonstrate techniques to be used by students. students are very well managed in spite of the challenging behaviour of some Year 9 groups. Learning support staff and technicians support students' learning well by offering essential help and applying their considerable expertise. In the best lessons students were highly motivated and keen to learn independently. They made good use of textbooks to learn new techniques. Teachers take the opportunities provided during use of the Internet and e-mail to contribute to students' social, moral and cultural development. Students with SEN learn well by using commercial software. There are some weaknesses in day-to-day assessment, for example students were not given enough time to learn from the results of a class test and Year 7 students are not given enough regular and accurate feedback.
121. Many students are able to continue working on assignments at home by using the Internet link with the college. Students are encouraged to improve their work by attending the very good extra-curricular sessions during lunchtime, breaks or after college. Teaching staff, learning support assistants and the technician are available during homework club and at other times, thus very effectively increasing learning opportunities. Most students enjoy the subject and behave well.
122. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. In particular ICT facilities, the knowledge and confidence of teachers and examination results are much improved. The department is well led and managed. The results of assessment are not analysed in sufficient detail. New technology is quickly introduced when appropriate and it is effectively deployed. Students have very good access to computers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

123. The use of ICT to assist the work of other departments has improved markedly since the last inspection due to the increased resources and better training of teachers and the resulting increase in their confidence. Its use is well-developed in mathematics where spreadsheets, Powerpoint presentations and Logo are used. In English it is widely used for wordprocessing and in physical education it is used innovatively to replay action videos. Science uses the Internet for research and illustrative purposes and ICT for data logging. ICT forms a major part of the business studies course. Digital cameras and computer-aided design and manufacturing programmes are used in art and design and technology. In geography and religious education students learn to develop their work by using wordprocessing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing and the Internet. The SEN department uses commercial software to help students learn. The music and history departments have limited access to computers and ICT is little used in modern foreign languages. The use of interactive whiteboards, located in all subject

departments, is increasing rapidly. The ICT learning resource area is very well used by members of the local community.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- High quality teaching of beginners' classes in both French and German ensures good early progress.
- Effective use of work in pairs contributes to the development of students' independent learning skills.

Areas for improvement

- Strategies to counter disaffection among boys to raise their attainment in Years 8 and 9.
- Strategies to improve performance at GCSE, especially that of able students in mixed ability groups.
- Planning the use of ICT into schemes of work in order to enhance learning.
- Opportunities for extended study visits to and contacts with French and German speaking countries.

124. Since the previous inspection in 1997, results at GCSE in modern foreign languages have been consistently below or in some years well below the national average. 2001 German, sat by about half the Year 11 students, was one of the college's weaker subjects for both boys and girls. The smaller number of students sitting the French examination attained well below the national average. In 2002 results improved but boys underachieved badly in both French and German; a small number of girls did well in German, but girls underachieved in French. The low proportion of students awarded higher grades is a weakness.
125. Standards are below average in Year 9. In Year 7 all students are already attaining well in French which they learn with enthusiasm. They speak in full sentences, can formulate questions and make up guided conversations successfully in pairs. One Year 8 French class observed is also making good progress. However in the majority of the classes seen in Years 8 and 9, standards are below national expectations and disaffection and poor behaviour is common. Oral response is limited to single words or phrases and written work is mostly at an elementary level. Hence progress is unsatisfactory during Years 7 to 9; most boys are underachieving, with girls making better progress.
126. In the lessons seen, the more able students in Year 10 are making satisfactory progress in both French and German. Although they are not yet confident, they attempt to speak the language in class and are starting to do more challenging written work. However, in a Year 11 French lesson poor speaking skills and lack of commitment to study, especially from boys, confirmed that standards in Year 11 are below average and progress during Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
127. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall and examples of very good teaching were seen. In the most successful lessons, the teacher used skilful techniques to include students of all abilities in the variety of activities, spoke the foreign language consistently and sensitively to give students maximum opportunity to develop listening skills, and promoted students' own oral confidence in speaking by challenging them to respond. In some lessons, however, problems of poor behaviour and negative attitudes were not overcome, the pace of the lesson was slow and the work insufficiently challenging. Learning in Years 7 to 9 is consequently unsatisfactory overall.

128. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory overall. Mixed ability groupings in French make teaching more difficult; teachers have not found solutions to problems caused by boys' poor motivation, nor are the more able students stretched fully in class or by appropriate extension work. In the small Year 10 German class, teaching and learning are good, though not enough German is spoken and, as a result of the single lesson per week in Year 9, students' language skills are at a rudimentary level at the beginning of the GCSE course.
129. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers in recent years have had an effect on standards and the present situation of one full-time and two part-time teachers, one of whom is an inexperienced supply teacher, is not ideal. Forty-two per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls in the present Year 10 chose not to study a foreign language, and only two students chose to study both French and German, an indication of the unpopularity of modern foreign languages.
130. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. There is no planned in-service training and no analysis of teachers' assessments by gender. There is a range of sound policies, and arrangements for monitoring classroom practice are good. However, the absence of study trips abroad and lack of contact with French and German speaking students mean that language study is not sufficiently relevant.
131. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Attainment in modern foreign languages was an issue raised five years ago and since then there has been a decline in standards at GCSE level. Teaching has not improved sufficiently overall, although teachers' planning is now more effective and lessons routinely contain a variety of activities. There are clear signs of improvement in teaching of beginners' classes in both French and German. Effective use of pair work also contributes to the development of independent learning skills. However reading for pleasure is neglected and the meagre stock of languages books in the library does not encourage wider reading. The use of ICT across the curriculum was also a major issue in 1997, but ICT is not yet planned into the schemes of work for French and German.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11.
- students' enthusiasm for the subject in class.
- The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision to students' cultural development.
- Provision of multi-cultural CDs and instruments.
- High uptake of instrumental tuition.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the level of challenge in Year 9.
- Use of ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- Accommodation.

132. Standards of work seen during the inspection show that most students make good progress in music, though in Year 9 progress is only satisfactory. Both the numbers entered for GCSE and the grades they have received have risen in recent years. Learning is still constrained by unsatisfactory accommodation though the college has ambitious plans to solve this problem in the near future.

133. The number of candidates entered for GCSE in recent years is too low to compare with national figures but results in the last five years show a rising trend and in the last two years all candidates obtained a grade in the range A*-C. GCSE candidates tend to get slightly higher grades in music than they do in other subjects they study.
134. Standards in Year 9 are average and similar to the teachers' assessment of students last year. Assessment of their musical abilities when they arrived in the college showed a similar picture, therefore these students have made satisfactory progress. In lessons observed during inspection, standards of listening/appraising were below the expectation for their age. Performing and composing were also on the low side, though about half the students were able to achieve expected standards with helpful support from the teachers or support staff. Students in Year 7 and Year 8 classes achieve higher standards in composing and listening, and make faster progress. This is because they entered the college with higher levels of skill and also because they are offered a more appropriate level of challenge.
135. Standards by the end of Year 11 are above average including in performing and composing. Their compositions show understanding of form and use of key, and also awareness of the occasion for which they are writing. Their listening and appraising skills are slightly below expectation because they are not yet confident and they rarely use musical vocabulary. Year 10 students are relatively a little better at appraising and their composing is good for the first term of the GCSE course. Progress across Years 10 and 11 is good, manifested by the strong views of Year 11 students about how much they have learned through their musical studies.
136. There is no clear difference in attainment between boys and girls.
137. Overall, teaching and learning are good, though with some deficiencies in Year 9. The best teaching is characterised by tremendous enthusiasm for music, which has led to the creation of a classroom containing considerable visual and aural stimulus. Students are welcomed to lessons by music relevant to the work they are doing. Secure musical knowledge leads to focused questioning to help students reach the right answers for themselves. Comments on students' work are accurate and helpful, as are demonstrations on different instruments to show students how to develop their performance skills, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and in the Sanyu drumming group. Moreover, students' capabilities and needs are well known and this information is used both to give them support in class and for planning future lessons. When lessons are less successful it is because it is not clear from the start what musical learning students are expected to achieve by the end. In some Year 9 lessons the level of challenge is not pitched high enough and students do not make sufficient progress. Some lessons run out of time, so students are unable to review their work properly at the end. Learning is also constrained by the accommodation, which hampers students' movement around the room for different activities and shortens the amount of time which they can spend working. Students with special educational needs make progress at a similar rate to that of others. Both teacher and learning support staff know them well and give them valuable help.
138. Appropriate opportunities are taken to reinforce reading, writing and speaking skills, for example by consistent reference to word banks, by reading aloud and by presenting work in interesting ways, such as Year 9 writing up a project in the style of a science experiment, for which many students also made effective use of ICT to achieve high standards of presentation. Students in Year 11 talk fluently and confidently about their work, though they tend to use general rather than music-specific language.

139. Many students show tremendous enthusiasm for music. Relationships between students and their teacher are usually warm, so students feel confident about answering questions. In the best lessons they can behave exceptionally well, for example Year 7 tidied the classroom effectively and swiftly at the end of one lesson, singing while they did so. However, when not sufficiently challenged students in Year 9 drift passively. A substantial number of students elect to learn a musical instrument and to play in extra-curricular groups, both in college and in the local community.
140. Leadership and management are good. The department is led with verve and commitment, and there are good links to other expressive arts, leading for example to a planned musical production about asylum seekers. There has been systematic acquisition of CDs and ethnic instruments to improve students' awareness of non-western musical traditions. Access to ICT is inconvenient especially for composing in Years 10 and 11.
141. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There is still insufficient challenge for students in Year 9 and therefore some students are still satisfied with low standards. However, there has been substantial improvement in cultural awareness, through a greater breadth of listening and the introduction of East African drumming. The latter led to a successful music tour of Uganda by the Sanyu group, and the entire college can now sing at least one song in Ugandan! New assessment procedures for students' work include innovative ways of finding out what they can do when they arrive at the college. This is intended to provide the foundation for future lesson planning to meet their needs as closely as possible and it offers very good potential for raising standards across Years 7 to 9.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- GCSE results over the four previous years have been in line or above the national average.
- Teaching is good so students make good progress.
- students' attitudes are good and they have very good relationships with their teachers.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.

Areas for improvement

- Poor accommodation and provision for teaching the theoretical aspects of the subject.
- Schemes of work to provide planned opportunities for teaching literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship.

142. GCSE results in 2002 were well above average for the proportion of grades A*-C and better than in the other subjects they took. Results in 2001 were average. Fewer girls than boys take the subject and boys' results over time are slightly better than girls' results.
143. The current GCSE students are attaining above average standards. The presentation of written work of higher attaining students, especially girls, is very good. They draw detailed diagrams to illustrate their work and organise their files very effectively. A few students are hindered in the theoretical aspects of the course because they find it difficult to record information accurately. The majority of Year 11 students have a good

knowledge of the social factors affecting participation in sport and they are able to research topics independently and present their findings to others with confidence.

144. Students in Years 10 and 11 in the non-examination classes attain above average standards. Lessons for Year 11 students are organised at a leisure centre 16 miles from the college because the college facilities are poor. This is a very good initiative giving students the opportunity to participate in swimming, fitness and squash but because of the low time allocation for physical education in Years 10 and 11 it is only experienced every two weeks by Year 11 students. This is insufficient time to keep them fit and healthy. Those students in the swimming group have very good technique and produce fast times over 25 metres. Students are able to programme their own exercise routines with an understanding of health and safety in the fitness centre.
145. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average. This represents good progress because students' attainment on entry, in Year 7, is below average. This is the result of students' lack of experience in some areas of the National Curriculum before joining the college, for example in basketball and gymnastics. Year 8 students co-operate well to plan fluent group sequences in gymnastics but a few boys lack agility and control in their movements. Students benefit in their learning from the visual images provided by a digital camera. Teachers use these very effectively to reinforce previous learning and to show examples of good practice. The mixed gender teaching groups allow all students to make good progress in most activities because teachers frequently divide the whole group into smaller ability groups. In basketball, for example, girls and boys have good shooting and footwork skills. However, the majority of girls in Years 8 and 9 find it difficult to improve their football skills in the mixed gender lessons because their skill level is not as well developed as boys. Students are able to warm up and stretch independently and effectively by the end of Year 9. Students' analytical skills are not as well developed as their performance skills and there is a lack of emphasis in promoting this strand of the national curriculum in a few lessons.
146. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good in Years 7 to 9 and is consistently good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, students benefit in their learning because many activities are set incorporating the four strands of the National Curriculum. In some comparatively less successful lessons, teachers focus entirely on students' performance skills and managing the activity rather than guiding students' planning and evaluative skills. All lessons begin with a health and fitness section and this promotes students' knowledge of this strand of the National Curriculum. The department is developing a focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT but schemes of work do not yet reflect these initiatives or include any reference to risk assessment and citizenship. The attitudes of the majority of students are good and they have very good relationships with their teachers. This benefits their learning and allows teachers to manage the unco-operative behaviour of a few students well. The extra-curricular programme is limited by the long distances students have to travel. However, lunchtimes are very well used to promote a wide variety of clubs and practices and after-college fixtures are arranged. Students are enthusiastic and many attend regularly, especially boys in Years 7, 8 and 9.
147. The head of department provides clear educational direction and good leadership for the subject. He has excellent ICT skills and makes effective use of the college's network to further students' learning. He supports the newest member of the department well. The department has improved very well since the last inspection. Very good links have been developed with local primary schools and the college has achieved Sportsmark status. A more balanced programme of activities in Years 7, 8 and 9 has been established to include gymnastics, dance, orienteering, games and athletics. However several classes

are scheduled one lesson in one week and three in the next week. This is not successful and affects students' progression and health and fitness. Assessment procedures have been developed to meet the college's criteria but further development is necessary to link them to National Curriculum levels, to base them on specific activities and to write them in language that students understand. The limited facilities are run down and in need of much refurbishment. However, there are plans to build new accommodation in the very near future. There is no dedicated subject base with appropriate resources and display to help learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The GCSE examination results are well above the national average.
- The considerable contribution that the subject makes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The growing use of ICT to encourage students to develop good investigative skills.

Areas for improvement

- Learning resources and teaching methods that engage and motivate students with special educational needs.
- Distortion of the curriculum from Year 9 due to taking GCSE in Year 10.
- Opportunities for students to explore their own beliefs and values in an open and supportive atmosphere.
- Strategies that encourage the development of higher order skills such as critical analysis and evaluation.

148. The GCSE examination results have been consistently high; they were well above the national average in 2002 and in 2001.

149. Students in Year 8 are achieving standards that are in line with the expected levels of attainment set out in the agreed syllabus. They have a sound knowledge of the key beliefs and customs of the main religions that they have covered. They are able to use religious language well. In Year 9 students begin to study the GCSE syllabus and take the examination in Year 10. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average. They have a very thorough knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus. They have a basic knowledge of the main beliefs and practices of three other religions although at times this is somewhat confused. Their ability to explore their own beliefs and values in an open and thoughtful manner is less well developed. They do not have the self-confidence and independent learning skills to develop a rational and critical evaluation of religious phenomena. Progress for most students during Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory but for those with special educational needs it is unsatisfactory.

150. A small group in Year 11 is taking the short course GCSE. Their standards are average. This group is mainly doing revision work that is looking at the life of Jesus. They lack motivation and involvement, dutifully completing the work, but with no real interest. They are making satisfactory progress in examination skills but their wider understanding of religious issues is limited. Students in Year 10 have a satisfactory understanding of the issues being covered. Standards are average. Progress for most students is satisfactory.

151. There is considerable variation in the standard of teaching. Overall it is satisfactory in all years. Learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but good in Years 10 to 11 when students concentrate on examination work. The subject is led by a very experienced teacher who has an excellent knowledge of the subject content. Non-specialists rely heavily on the lesson plans and resources provided by this teacher. These are not always appropriate to the needs of the students, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers do not own the lesson plan and hence cannot respond well to the individual needs of the classes. There is insufficient support for non-specialist teachers.
152. There is a satisfactory use of a range of teaching methods. A strength is the developing use of ICT for presentations. The department has good modern resources but these are not always effectively used. There is a tendency for teachers to rely on photocopied information sheets that are very wordy and contain language and concepts that are too theoretical and seem irrelevant to the students. They present particular problems for SEN students who cannot relate to them and consequently lack motivation and interest and so make unsatisfactory progress in all years. Students are encouraged to do individual research using computers but a lack of close supervision means that some do not use the time effectively. At times lessons lacked pace with the teacher spending too long talking rather than encouraging students to develop their own learning skills. Most students are motivated and involved although for many students this comes from a sense of duty and a desire to do well in the examinations rather than an interest in the subject. There were some significant instances of very poor behaviour in lower attaining boys because appropriate learning strategies are not in place. Suitable homework is regularly set although the practice of asking students to complete work that they have not finished in the classroom even though it is not necessarily the night for religious education homework is unfair to the students who might work more slowly.
153. The subject leadership is satisfactory. The syllabus follows the locally agreed syllabus but all the work that is set for Years 7 to 9 is completed by the end of Year 8. This means that there is a tendency to try and do too much in some lessons, with the need to cover the content of the syllabus overriding the needs of the students. The demands of the GCSE examination dominate the curriculum to such an extent that the opportunities for students to explore and develop the higher order skills of critical analysis and evaluation in a supportive environment are overlooked. It also means that some subjects are tackled before the students are sufficiently mature to cope with them. Recent changes in the agreed syllabus have been introduced. Assessment procedures are good with the new guidelines on target setting gradually being implemented.
154. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.