

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FELTHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Feltham

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102535

Headteacher: Mrs G B Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr R Passant  
2728

Dates of inspection: 9 - 13 December 2002

Inspection number: 249586

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of college: Comprehensive

College category: Community

Age range of students: 11 to 18 years

Gender of students: Mixed

College address: Browells Lane  
Feltham

Postcode: TW13 7EF

Telephone number: 020 8831 3000

Fax number: 020 8751 4914

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Batty

Date of previous inspection: 13 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2728	Roderick Passant	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	<p>What sort of college is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The college's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the college led and managed?</p> <p>What should the college do to improve further?</p>
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the college care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the college work in partnership with parents?</p>
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
32166	Nasim Butt	Team inspector	Science Physics (sixth form)	
10543	David Dewhurst	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
2391	Peter Gossage	Team inspector	The work of the physical disability centre.	
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business education Business education (sixth form)	
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Drama Music	
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History History (sixth form)	

8119	David Milham	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	English as an additional language Religious education	
28097	Sheila Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics Mathematics (sixth form)	
12118	Allan Paver	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
19867	Maxwell Pettitt	Team inspector	Art Citizenship	
18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English English (sixth form)	
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE**

The college is a larger than average mixed comprehensive. There are 1226 students<sup>1</sup> on roll including approximately 100 in the sixth form. Three quarters of the college population are White British students. The remaining quarter come from a rich range of ethnic backgrounds, the main ones being Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian, and Pakistani. There are 40 refugees, mainly from Afghanistan, and eight travellers on the college roll. The percentage of students for whom English is as an additional language is high and 25 students are at an early stage of learning English. The major languages spoken by students in addition to English are Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic and Gujarati. A third of Years 7 - 11 students have special educational needs, which is above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs varies in each year group. A significant proportion of these students have specific learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The percentage of students with statements of special educational need is above the national average. The college has a designated unit of 12 places for students with a physical disability. The percentage of students eligible for free college meals is above the national average, but this figure does not give a true indication of the socio-economic circumstances affecting students. Although employment in the area is high it is mainly in low paid jobs in the service industries associated with the airport. The area the college serves has low levels of adult education and the community has low aspirations. There is a rising crime rate and an increasing number of referrals to social services and the department of child and adolescent psychiatry. The college reports that the community profile has been changing, leading to increasing social and cultural deprivation amongst the students' families. The college is facing increasingly challenging circumstances. The attainment of students when they join the college has recently improved but is below average with few high attaining students. The attainment of the older students when they joined the college was well below average. The percentage of students who join and leave the college at various points throughout the year is very high, six times above the national average. Many of these arrive at the college with a disrupted education and many have additional needs. In the year group that took examinations in 2002, a third were on the register for special educational needs and approximately a quarter did not start at the college in Year 7. The college has a strong commitment to community education and is a focus for adult education in the area. The community also makes extensive use of the sports facilities. Recruitment of staff has been a particular difficulty in recent years. At one point in 2000/2001 25 per cent of staff were on temporary contracts. Staffing has stabilised to some degree in the current academic year, but spending on supply staff remains a considerable burden on the budget. At the time of the inspection 18 teachers were on temporary contracts and 24 staff were trained overseas.

### **HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS**

This is an improving college that provides an acceptable standard of education for its students. The college has at the core of its activities a very strong, shared purpose of raising students' achievements. Standards are well below average at GCSE. The proportion of students gaining grades in the range of A\* to C is below average but is similar to that in schools with equivalent results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests. The quality of teaching seen was good and students made good progress in the lessons seen. However, because of the effects of severe difficulties in staff recruitment, over time students' achievement has been no more than satisfactory, though reasonable in relation to attainment on entry. Inspection evidence indicates that students are now achieving well. The recovery from a recent dip in GCSE results and standards of behaviour has been achieved by high quality leadership across the college, very effective management systems, good quality care, and support focused on individual student's specific needs. In combination, these good features have begun to raise standards. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

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<sup>1</sup> In a 11-18 school it is usual in Ofsted reports to use the term *pupils* for those engaged in education up to the end of Year 11 and the term *students* for those engaged in sixth form education. The preferred term at Feltham College is students and this term is used throughout the report regardless of the age of the students.

### **What the college does well**

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and high quality management across the college ensure common purpose in initiatives to raise achievement.
- Subject departments are very committed to improvement and meeting the needs of individual students.
- Care, guidance and support for students are of good quality. These are underpinned by good relationships between students and the members of staff who have been at the college long enough to allow good relationships to develop.
- The very strong commitment of the college to working with all its students is creating an ethos and culture committed to inclusive education, and a preparedness to find ways of meeting students' needs.
- Excellent use of resources within the community, and of the college's own community provision, enhance students' achievements.

### **What could be improved**

- The high numbers of students who are admitted throughout the year make it very difficult for the college to raise standards.
- While recognising that the college is doing all it can to tackle difficult issues of recruitment of permanent staff, there needs to be greater stability of staffing in order to ensure that: the good practice in the college is firmly established; there is greater consistency in teaching approaches and classroom routines; discontinuity in students' learning is reduced; and, crucially, good relationships between all staff and students are developed fully.
- There are weaknesses in the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum that the college provides, which the college has recognised in its development plan.
- Review the way subjects are planned to ensure that all subjects make specific, clear, contributions to:
  - a) the development of students' skills in: speaking and listening, literacy, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and enhance literacy skills;
  - b) citizenship and other aspects of students' personal development.

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

## **HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Progress since the last inspection has been variable, but satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection there has been an almost complete change in the leadership and management of the college. The college has also faced increasingly challenging circumstances and a significant rise in the number of students joining at different points in the college year. The newly appointed headteacher has introduced an ethos based on mutual respect, and a policy of positive management of behaviour with increased emphasis on students' taking responsibility for their learning, and all staff being accountable for their management. Staff recruitment was, and remains, a difficult issue and has hampered progress. As a result of the turbulence in staffing, standards of attainment and behaviour fell. Since the appointment of the new leadership team in September 2001 there has been very good improvement in the development of management systems to underpin the work of the college. There are now very good management and leadership across the college at senior and subject level. The quality of provision in most subjects is now good. In most of the lessons seen students were achieving well. Standards at GCSE have returned to their former levels and standards are improving. Progress has been helped by local education authority support and the government initiative 'Excellence in the Cities', which has given additional funding. Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) monitored the work of the college in May 2002 and there has been good progress in overcoming weaknesses in teaching identified at that time. A great deal has been done under the new leadership, but overall improvement since the last inspection is no more than satisfactory overall because of the continuing, although reducing, difficulties caused by instability in staffing and a changing student population.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools <sup>2</sup>
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E*	E	E
2001 <sup>3</sup>	Male	Female	All	
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E	E	

**Key**

well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 are rising in English, mathematics and science at the rate seen nationally. Achievement at Key Stage 3<sup>4</sup> is satisfactory over time and good in the lessons seen. It is laying the foundations for the good achievement seen in lessons in Key Stage 4, where standards are now improving. However, over the last four years taken together the trend of improvement in average total GCSE /GNVQ points score per student is below the national trend. The college sets realistic targets for improvement at Key Stage 3 and in GCSE that provide an appropriate degree of challenge for departments. In 2002 the college exceeded its targets at GCSE. Standards at GCSE are above national averages in history, religious education and GNVQ<sup>5</sup> ICT. They are average in geography, just below in design technology, below average in English literature, mathematics, science, art and in the GCSE physical education short course. They are well below average in English music and modern languages. Staffing difficulties in modern languages have been extreme in the recent past. Standards of the current work seen in lessons in all subjects are often higher than is reflected by examination results. Inspection evidence indicates that students are achieving well in all GCSE subjects except music and French, where achievement is unsatisfactory because a secure foundation has not been laid for the subject at examination level. Achievement in music is good and in French is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.

In the subjects inspected in the sixth form, achievement is satisfactory overall and good in English and history. A particularly traumatic event in the community involving a college student in 2001 led to a small but significant number of students giving up on their examination work. The college reports that this, together with staffing difficulties, led to a drop in examination performance in 2001.

Students with special educational needs achieve well overall. Students with English as an additional language (EAL) also achieve well. The more advanced among them outperform the college's average grade per entry at GCSE. Overall, non-White British students outperform White British students. In the National Curriculum tests in Year 9, girls do not outperform boys by the degree often seen. The performance of boys is improving but in these tests in 2002 girls are under-performing. This reflects the low aspirations of White UK girls as a group. Girls' performance improves at Key Stage 4. Higher attaining students are identified and an effective enrichment programme has been developed to raise their aspirations and develop their confidence. Within lessons they are not always challenged sufficiently. Overall, they make satisfactory progress. Examination results are depressed by the significant numbers of students who arrive at the college at varying times. Often these students have had a history of disrupted education or have significant additional educational needs. Learning mentors provide effective support for vulnerable students. Sporadic attendance of some, but not all traveller students, limits their achievement. A local funded post-16 initiative run within adult education is involving

<sup>2</sup> In this context the term similar schools is used to describe schools which have a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals

<sup>3</sup> Data for 2002 for the sixth form is not yet available.

<sup>4</sup> Key stage is a term used to describe a period in a student's education. Key Stage 3 describes the period from Years 7 to 9 - (ages 11 to 14). Key Stage 4 describes the period Years 10 and 11 - (ages 14-16).

<sup>5</sup> GNVQ is a national vocational qualification- General National Vocational Qualification-

successfully two traveller students in a catering course. The fixed term exclusion rate is high but reducing.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Overall, students have satisfactory attitudes to work and college. The majority of students are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. The majority of students behave well for most of the time. There are some who behave poorly and others who have special needs because of emotional and behavioural difficulties. In three-quarters of the lessons seen behaviour was good or better. Behaviour was unsatisfactory in about one in ten lessons and this was often related to the fact that the teacher was new to the class. Behaviour around the college is satisfactory. There can be jostling in the corridors but it is not malicious.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships among students are good. The majority get on well with one another. There is some bullying, usually verbal, but students report that the college is effective in managing this.
Attendance	Attendance during the last three years has been broadly in line with national averages, although last year it was below average. There is a significant number of students whose poor attendance causes discontinuities in their learning and hampers their achievement, particularly when coursework is involved. Good systems are in place to monitor attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	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.*

Although teaching seen in the inspection was good the impact of a turbulent staffing situation means that achievement over time is, overall, only satisfactory. Many students do not find learning easy. Many lack confidence and self-esteem, and find reading and writing difficult. Students require good teaching to engage them in their learning. Fundamental to this good teaching is the development of productive relationship with the students. When, for whatever reason, there is a change of staff, learning can be disrupted much more significantly than in schools where students are more self-reliant. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English and science and it is satisfactory in mathematics. Good teaching was seen in all subjects across the college and in no subject was the overall quality of teaching unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily. Subject teachers do not make enough use of ICT to develop students' literacy skills or support learning. Teachers who have been at the college some time know the students well and plan to meet their needs. There is very good practice within some departments in matching work carefully to the needs of students. There is strong teamwork across the college, which includes teaching assistants and support staff and they make a valuable contribution in encouraging students' achievement and personal development.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. There are some unsatisfactory aspects that relate to time allocations for specific subjects, and the breadth of experiences provided in subjects - particularly the relative lack of opportunities for ICT and vocational courses. The college has introduced a broader range of courses including some vocational courses but given the specific needs of the students this needs further development. This is recognised by the college in its long term planning.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good overall, particularly the management of this aspect. Within classrooms, there is some variability in the way work is matched to students needs, but students with learning difficulties make good progress overall. With specialist staff, progress is very good. The overall provision for students with physical difficulties is good. The college has established new structures to support students with behavioural and learning difficulties and good work was seen going on.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Students make good progress, including those in the more advanced stages of learning English.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision is good. The college works hard to develop students' sense of self-esteem. The overall ethos of the college and development of shared values are fundamental to the good provision. However, although subjects contribute to personal development in a general way, greater precision in planning is required in most subjects to define their specific contributions to citizenship and other aspects, particularly the development of students' cultural awareness.
How well the college cares for its students	Good provision. The college provides good quality care and support. Management of this support is very good. Embedding good practice and developing consistency remain priorities, however.

The community college with its adult and outreach work contributes to the post-16 college curriculum. The adult provision also provides a backdrop of different learning approaches so that the college has the confidence to explore unconventional and flexible approaches to schooling with, for example, out of hours learning for significantly disaffected young people. The college works hard to develop the partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is supported well by high quality leadership at senior and middle management levels across the college. There is a strong and united sense of purpose and clear sense of direction. The focus is on students' achievement. Performance management arrangements are making a very good contribution to raising achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is both supportive and effective. They are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the college.
The college's evaluation of its performance	The college evaluates its performance well, using a wide range of data.

The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. Students and adults use accommodation very well. Funding for resources and staff development is squeezed because of high heating costs and because employing temporary supply staff is expensive.
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Difficulty in the recruitment of staff remains a major issue. There is a lack of resources in some subject areas. Accommodation is attractive and well cared for both by students and care-taking staff, who take evident pride in their work. Although identified as having the space for nine forms of entry, main teaching rooms and laboratories are used for 95 per cent of the time. Toilets are an issue for students-particularly girls.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The college expects their child to work hard and achieve her or his best, and that it is helping their child become mature and responsible and that their child is making good progress.</li> <li>Teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour.</li> <li>The amount of homework their child receives.</li> </ul>

The number of returns to the parents' questionnaire was relatively small (40) and only three parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with parents. Overall, the parents who responded have positive views of the college and its work. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents, but feel that behaviour is satisfactory and that, in general, appropriate homework is set on a regular basis.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form is smaller than average and has slightly more boys than girls. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. Many students have low paid jobs before and after college and at the weekends. The number of students with statements of special educational needs is above average, reflecting the fact that there is a unit for students with a physical disability on site. A small number of students are wheel chair users. Numbers in classes are small, sometimes too small for secure judgements about how good standards are. Many students' attainment is well below average when they start their courses. The college provides a basic range of AS and A2 courses and one GNVQ course at foundation and intermediate levels in ICT, a diploma in childcare education and an accredited ICT networking course. The college plans to extend the range of vocational courses in September 2003. Students can retake core GCSE subjects through community provision. Students are expected to, and do, play a significant role in the life of the college.

**HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

Overall, the college makes satisfactory provision for the sixth form. Students are supported well by high quality care and support, often informal in nature, by the head of sixth, team of tutors and subject staff. The quality of relationships between staff and students is very good and is often a key factor in a student staying on. Although the college development plan identifies the recruitment of more students as a priority, recruitment is done with integrity, in that staff are open about the nature and range of the courses the college can and cannot provide. Overall standards are well below average. Teaching and learning were good in the lessons seen. Over time achievement is satisfactory, given the fact that many students start their courses with very modest GCSE grades. The time allocated for advanced courses is less than might be expected nationally. There was insufficient access to computers for students and insufficient attention to the development of key skills. Since the inspection the college has significantly improved ICT facilities. The curriculum is carefully constructed about a basic range of courses and good use is made of the community adult provision so that the sixth form is cost effective.

**Strengths**

- Teaching and learning are good and students make good progress in lessons.
- Standards are rising in Year 12.
- Relationships are very good.
- The quality of care is very good.

**What could be improved**

- Raise standards by:
- Broadening the range of courses so that students have access to appropriate courses to achieve success.
  - Allocating more time to advanced courses.
  - Increasing students' access to computers.<sup>6</sup>

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

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS**

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Overall judgement about provision, with comment</b>
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<sup>6</sup> Subsequent to the inspection, in early January 2003, the college has installed an additional network of computers for sixth form use.

Mathematics	The college makes <b>satisfactory provision</b> for mathematics. Teaching and learning are good. Most students achieve appropriately given their starting points. Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to post-16 mathematics lessons.
<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Overall judgement about provision, with comment</b>
Physics	Provision is <b>good</b> . Standards are above those expected nationally, and the very good teaching ensures that students make good progress.
Business Education	The college makes <b>satisfactory provision</b> for the teaching of business studies. Access and opportunity are good although attainment on entry is low. Achievement is satisfactory. The shortage of curriculum time limits opportunities to enrich the curriculum.
History	Provision is <b>very good</b> . In 2001 students achieved results in line with national averages. Teachers provide a high level of individual support, which enables students to make good progress and achieve well.
English	The college makes <b>good</b> provision. Good teaching, the induction programme, enrichment activities, procedures for monitoring progress and very effective subject leadership, all contribute to students achieving well in the subject.

Other sixth form work seen included the following. Good teaching in a chemistry and biology lesson included good explanation and a well-structured sequence of activities. This led to students gaining a thorough understanding. Drama and theatre studies are well taught at AS-level. Media studies is developing as a popular subject; work from the previous year was of good quality indicating good teaching. Teaching seen in one art lesson was satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in A2 geography, and most students make progress in line with their prior attainment.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are well guided and supported. The college is honest in the advice it offers and deals with its students with integrity.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Senior managers have a clear and attainable vision of the development of the sixth form and this is well supported by the head of learning and his team. They work successfully to provide a secure environment in which students can mature.

### STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel safe because they trust the teachers who know them well and work hard for students' interests.</li> <li>• The college is honest with them and they are given very good guidance.</li> <li>• They are treated as adults and given their own good social space.</li> <li>• Students are encouraged to attain high standards and many can demonstrate good progress in their work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is insufficient access to computers.</li> <li>• The employment of supply teachers and teacher shortages generally slow their progress.</li> <li>• The range of subject choices is narrow.</li> </ul>

Students are very loyal when speaking about the college. The inspection supports their very positive views of the sixth form provision and agrees with their perception of what needs to be improved.

## **COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The college's results and students' achievements**

**Overall, achievement over time is satisfactory, given students' relatively modest starting points. Students were making good progress in the lessons seen.**

1. Up to 2001 the rate of improvement in National Curriculum tests taken in Year 9 was above the national trend. A dip in results in English in 2002 brought this trend close to the national trend. External evaluation of the college's 2000 data indicated that the college's performance in the Year 9 tests was close to that of schools with similar prior attainment on entry. The same kind of evaluation in 2001 indicated that the college was not doing quite as well as other schools. Sophisticated analysis in 2002 of the results achieved by the 80 per cent of the cohort taking Year 9 tests, an analysis that compared individual students' intake scores with their test scores in Year 9, indicated that the college was doing much less well than other schools nationally. In combination, these analyses suggest an overall picture of declining performance at age 14 up to the time the 2002 tests were taken.
2. This contrasts sharply with the inspection evidence, which indicates that learning in Years 7 to 9 was good or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen. It was satisfactory or better in well over nine out of ten lessons. In lessons, therefore, students are making good progress overall. Clearly, the significantly greater stability of staffing since September 2002 is leading to improved learning, but the impact of this over time has yet to show in improved attainment.
3. Comparison of Year 9 test results with those in schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals indicates that the college is performing well below average. Although free school meals are an indicator of social disadvantage, in this particular case they do not give a full indication of the range or types of challenge that the college is facing.
4. At GCSE the impact of staffing turbulence is marked. GCSE results dipped significantly in 2001. They recovered to above their 2000 level in 2002. When Feltham performance in 2002 at five or more grades A\* to C is compared with performance in schools with similar scores at Key Stage 3, Feltham is broadly in line with these schools. College data, rather than national and as yet unconfirmed data, indicate that performance is also similar if the average total points score per student is compared. The proportion of students scoring five A\* to G grades was below average in 2002. The proportion of students gaining one GCSE grade A\* to G was well below average. The quality of results at these lower grade levels can be partly explained by the introduction of alternative accreditation for lower attaining students.
5. This picture again contrasts sharply with the inspection evidence gained from scrutiny of work and lesson observations. Learning in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons at all attainment levels and it is good or better in six out of ten lessons. In lessons, students are making good progress as a result of the good teaching. But, as with Key Stage 3, the impact of this improved progress has yet to be reflected in improved attainment.
6. In the sixth form there is a similar picture. Learning in the lessons seen was never less than satisfactory and it was good or better in eight out of ten lessons. As is the case elsewhere in the college, the good progress seen in lessons is not yet reflected in overall improved attainment.
7. Students with special educational needs make good progress overall. With specialist support it is very good. Progress is sometimes less effective in a few lower sets where there is no specialist support and staff turnover means that teachers have not yet experienced the usual training. Students at the centre for students with a physical disability (PDC) achieve well.
8. Students with EAL make good progress in the college. From April 2001 to April 2002, 75 per cent of the students who have experienced full-time education progressed from Stage 1 of language learning to Stage 2 or better. In the same time period, 83 per cent of students with little

or no previous education progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 or better. About 70 per cent of the students progressed from Stage 2 to Stage 3 or better in the same time period. Two students who arrived in September 2002 and were at Stage 1 are now at Stage 2 and will soon be returning to full-time mainstream teaching. Students who are at Stages 3 and 4 do well in public examinations.<sup>7</sup>

9. The percentage of students who have EAL is high. In the college at present about 25 students are at the earliest stage of learning English. There are about 40 students at Stage 2 and large numbers at Stages 3 and 4. There is one full-time teacher and several part-time teachers to give support to this number of students and, in consequence, the demands on the staff are considerable.
10. Indian, Philippino and Black African heritage students do well. Students of Black Caribbean origin perform similarly to White British students. There is some evidence that girls are not performing as well as they might in Key Stage 3 tests although there was no evidence of this within lessons. Their performance as indicated by examination results improves at Key Stage 4.
11. Good systems are in place to monitor the progress of students. The students are tested in the college on arrival and targets set for them. These targets are reviewed every term, using a 'needs analysis' sheet. New targets are set accordingly. Regular reporting back to local education authority is also carried out. These systems ensure that the students' progress is monitored as closely as possible.
12. There are a number of factors that are helping to raise students' achievement. In some cases these are dealt with at greater length elsewhere in the report and are therefore only indicated here.
  - The ethos of the college is very caring and supportive of all students. The college is very inclusive and staff work very hard to keep students focused on learning and achievement. Staff strive to create a secure and calm environment where students can gain success in a range of activities not necessarily academic. Although this ethos has been established, it is not yet fully secure. Members of staff seek to increase students' sense of self-esteem through a range of strategies such as mentoring, with a view to raising students' expectations. They work to create an ethos where students gain a view that not only is it acceptable to succeed, which has been largely established, but that it is acceptable to try to succeed.
  - A key factor is the good quality of relationships that exist between staff and students upon which the college ethos is built.
  - Members of staff work very hard on behalf of the students and students' success is central to what the college seeks to do.
  - Members of staff manage students well because of this commitment. They are prepared to challenge but also to do it in a non-confrontational way.
  - There is very good emotional support for students, both through specialist agencies and the staff's shared and unconditional commitment to the students.
  - Members of staff who have had the chance to develop professional caring relationships with students know them well. There are good examples within the college of work that is carefully matched to students' needs.
  - Assessment systems are effective; the individual student's progress is tracked carefully.
13. There are, however, also factors that make the raising of standards of achievement more difficult. The first two relate directly to circumstances that create insecurity and turbulence in a college seeking to establish for the students a foundation of security and calm. For a significant number of students, college represents a fixed point in an otherwise disturbed personal world, and the stability of this fixed point gains in importance because of that.
  - The most obvious is the impact of staff turnover. The college has now achieved a critical mass of staff that provides the college with an element of stability and allows the positive

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<sup>7</sup> Students with English as an additional language are identified as being in one of four groups. Those at the earliest stages of acquiring English are recognised as being at Stage 1 whilst those who are almost fluent are regarded as being at Stage 4.

factors outlined above to develop. The high quality of leadership at senior levels within subjects and departments has meant that the impact of the turbulence in staffing has been kept to a minimum. Members of staff have worked extremely hard to support staff new to the college. Managing this constant turnover of staff - at one point 25 per cent of the members of staff were on short-term contracts - has evidently been an ongoing reactive process and long-term development at departmental level difficult. Nevertheless recruitment of permanent qualified staff remains an issue because in this college more than in most other schools, staffing stability is a key factor in the development of relationships and the ethos, which in turn are key factors in raising students' achievement.

- The second most obvious factor eroding this stability is the very high numbers of students the college takes outside the normal start to the academic year, six times the national average. Many of these students have specific additional needs and some, a disrupted education. The college accepted the equivalent of four extra classes during the previous year spread over, in the main, Years 7 to 11 and there have been similar numbers year-on-year. In the 2002 Year 11 cohort, 25 per cent had not started the college in Year 7. The organisation of assimilating such numbers drains management energy and teachers' time as they try to find out what individuals know and need to know. More importantly and less obviously this process can undermine the college ethos as individuals new to the college test boundaries, and whilst it is speculative, they can change the dynamics of groups and classes, or try to create pecking orders where none existed. It makes continuity difficult, not only in academic contexts but also in students' learnt expectations of what the college stands for in terms of behaviour, attitudes and relationships.
14. What the college requires in order to raise achievement above all else is stability. Currently it is dealing with instability on two fronts. Too much time is inevitably being spent at senior and middle management levels reacting to staffing difficulties and integrating students and managing resultant problems. Time and stability are required to embed the positive emergent ethos of the college, to embed and hone routines and expectations shared by staff and students, to allow all staff to develop positive relationships and allow for consistent approaches within departments. The leadership and management across the college are of high quality but this quality has been and is being diluted in crisis management. Subject leaders know what needs to be done and they have achieved a great deal, many in a short space of time, reviewing and revitalising their subject curriculum. They need now the stability to refocus on raising student achievement rather than worrying about preparing a lesson for yet another non-specialist supply teacher to teach. The college is doing all it can to address difficulties in recruitment. It therefore needs to seek the support of the local education authority in reducing the number of casual admissions- at the minimum, for a period of time in order that it is in a stronger position and the spiral process of raising achievement, whereby success breeds further success, is secure.
  15. The other factors that act as a drag on achievement are linked to specific difficulties that students have. Developing coherent and consistent strategies to tackle these difficulties has been made more difficult because of the staffing situation. Most students enter the college with low reading and writing skills and this hinders their progress. In the last round of testing a quarter of Years 9, 10 and 11 and half of Year 8 had reading ages below that normally associated with ten-year-olds. The college is tackling this lack of literacy skills in a satisfactory manner. Students also have low levels of numeracy skills and the college is making satisfactory efforts to improve them.
  16. The college is tackling students' low literacy skills in a satisfactory manner. The National Literacy Strategy<sup>8</sup> has been introduced but it is not fully developed in every subject partly because the instability in staffing has affected full implementation. The library makes a good contribution to developing students' reading skills through encouraging volunteer readers from community organisations, working with departments and organising reading activities to promote reading. Students generally have good listening skills but their speaking skills are weaker. Most do not speak at length or give analytical responses. Communication skills are stronger in subjects such

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<sup>8</sup> The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy have been introduced into primary schools for a number of years to raise standards, and are just moving into secondary schools. The strategies recommend specific approaches to teaching and the way time and classrooms are organised. The Literacy Strategy outlines specific approaches to language work.

as drama and religious education where talk is a central feature of learning. A good example was also seen in a Year 11 mathematics statistics lesson where high attaining students used discussion skills well to identify areas for improvement in their mock exams. Spelling and sentence level work are a problem for some. They use writing frames and scaffolding<sup>9</sup> in most subjects, but do not use drafting skills extensively in business education and do not write at length in assignments associated with physical education examination work. In geography, humanities and religious education, students use a range of writing styles. Key words are taught in all subjects and opportunities are provided in geography for students to read privately and hear teachers read aloud.

17. Overall provision for numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Provision within mathematics to develop the students' numerical skills has, however, been hindered by the changing staffing profile. This is now satisfactory. There is growing expertise within the department in making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to develop students' number skills in Years 7, 8 and 9, and to co-ordinate numeracy provision across the curriculum. College training to raise teachers' awareness of the need to enhance numerical skills in all curriculum areas has been well received by departments. Although not yet well established, there is positive enhancement of numeracy in several curriculum areas. There is, however, no separate provision within the post-16 curriculum for teaching the key skill of application of number.
18. Students' standards of attainment in numeracy are below average overall, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Years 7, 8 and 9 have benefited from their experience of the National Numeracy Strategy in primary schools, and students in these years generally show reasonable facility in basic calculations. Groups observed showed confidence in dealing with percentages of quantities in practical contexts such as sales and were able to use mental methods to arrive at reduced prices. Younger students mostly know table facts and are efficient in using the four operations of number<sup>10</sup> in simple contexts. Students of all ages have difficulties when working with fractions, ranging from a very limited understanding of equal parts of a whole to difficulties in simplifying fractions and performing operations involving numbers less than one. Generally, however, students' skills in numeracy support their work in many subjects, and although some reach all too readily for a calculator, most use calculators efficiently and sensibly.
19. In science, numeracy is embedded in the scheme of work and the students' graphical skills are used regularly, particularly in their GCSE courses. Both plotting and interpretation of graphs are enhanced during their experimental work. Students studying AS and A2 courses in physics are supported through their manipulative algebra skills when working with formulae. In geography, the students' application of their statistical skills generally assists their work, particularly pictorial representation. Accuracy in measurement and estimation skills is well supported in design and technology. In physical education, students of all ages rank numbers in team league tables and enhance their understanding of shape and space through the use of technical language. Most students use time lines successfully in history. In business education some Year 11 students struggle with cash flow calculations because of poor number skills. However, in Year 13, students manage calculations well in their work on critical path analysis. There is some use of formulae in spreadsheet work in ICT. Individual education plans for students with special needs include targets for numeracy where appropriate.
20. There are also other factors that cause discontinuities in learning. The most obvious discontinuity is caused by absence. Overall, attendance is just below the national average. The college make strenuous efforts to improve attendance but nevertheless achievement for some students is hampered by erratic attendance.
21. There are some issues of discontinuity caused by the organisation of the college timetable. The time allocation for modern foreign languages is below average and students with special educational needs are not getting their full entitlement to modern foreign languages currently because of contingency arrangements drawn up when staffing in modern foreign languages was a particular difficulty. Staffing difficulties have also meant that in some cases the curriculum has

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<sup>9</sup> Writing frames and scaffolding are techniques designed to help students improve their writing.

<sup>10</sup> The four number skills referred to here are addition, subtraction, multiplication and division

been distorted and bent somewhat to accommodate them and it has also meant that some classes are taught by more than one teacher.

## **Sixth form**

22. Overall, standards in the sixth form are well below average. In 2001, students in physics attained above the national average and in history they attained at the national average. In all other subjects attainment was well below average. In 2002,<sup>11</sup> examination performance in drama fell and in business studies remained the same. Both of these subjects have a history of staffing difficulty. Standards also fell in history. In most other subjects performance improved. Individual students attain high levels in some subjects and achieve well. Overall, students achieve satisfactorily, given their relatively low starting points.
23. In lessons, students make good progress in English, pure mathematics, history and physics. Progress in lessons is satisfactory in business education, but is hampered in statistics and applied mathematics by the lack of allocated time. Students on the diploma for childcare education make good progress helped by the presence of adult students in all lessons. Attainment overall is better in relative terms in Year 12 than in Year 13.

## **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

**Overall, relationships among students are good whilst their attitudes towards college and their work, behaviour and personal development are all satisfactory. Whilst this represents an apparent decline in standards since the previous inspection, there is clear evidence of improvement in these features over the past year.**

24. Students' attitudes to college are satisfactory overall. In the discussions with all year groups, students indicated a good level of satisfaction with what is provided. For example, a group of Year 11 students were positive about the fair and friendly way in which they are treated by most staff. They were also positive about the sports facilities, the links with outside businesses, the way students with physical difficulties are integrated and students' opportunities to take responsibility. Teaching styles in some lessons, difficulties in accessing working computers and the lack of sporting activities in winter for girls are the main areas that need improvement, in their opinion. They also spoke about the negative impact on their learning of the high levels of staff turnover in previous years.
25. Take up of the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially sport and music, is good. In the majority of lessons observed in Years 7 to 11, students' attitudes were good. Most students listen sensibly and show appropriate levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. However, in a minority of lessons, a significant minority of students show unsatisfactory attitudes to work. They are reluctant to answer teachers' questions or the set questions during individual work. As a result, their learning is significantly reduced. Most students' favourite subjects and lessons are those where they are practically involved, such as physical education, design technology, art and working with computers. In contrast, only a minority of students say they enjoy mathematics and science, when there is no practical work. The best attitudes and behaviour occur in lessons where expectations are high, work is demanding and students are busy and engaged in a variety of practical activities, which provide the right level of challenge for them. Students speak of wanting more opportunities for oral and practical work and less copying from the board in some lessons. Students with special educational needs are positive about the extra support they get.
26. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Throughout the day, the majority of students behave sensibly. In corridors, at breaktime, lunchtime and between lessons a generally orderly atmosphere prevails among most students. Among a small minority of students, mostly boys, there is occasional jostling, although this is rarely malicious. However, in a small minority of the lessons, across all year groups, inattentive and sometimes disruptive behaviour is a feature. This is often caused by students with special needs, because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Students in all year groups indicate that most get on well with each other, and that incidents of racism are

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<sup>11</sup> Data for 2002 examinations at AS and A2 is currently not available.

very rare and well handled when reported to staff. Whilst there is some bullying, especially in Years 8 and 9, incidents are taken seriously by staff and usually resolved effectively. Most students take good care of property and resources. A small minority of students occasionally cause damage to toilets. The steps that the college has taken to deal with this problem cause difficulties for girls in particular accessing the toilets.

27. The levels of permanent and fixed term exclusions were well above the national averages in the previous college year. Nevertheless, the level of fixed term exclusions showed a strongly declining trend, which has been maintained during this term. During the week of the inspection, six students, spread across Years 7 to 11, were absent due to fixed term exclusions, whilst a further 12 Year 11 students were out of college on a planned two-day motivational programme. Parents' questionnaire responses reflect this mixed picture in relation to students' behaviour.
28. Relationships between adults and students and among students are good overall. Adults act as good role models. Most teachers value students' work and effectively praise effort and good work. For example, students in all year groups mention the positive support provided by teachers and the fair way in which they are treated as a key reason why they like college. As a result, the majority of students are comfortable expressing views and asking questions of their teachers, for example. This assists their learning. Good relationships among most students, including those with special educational needs, are a positive feature. As a result, in lessons the majority of students work well in pairs and small groups by supporting each others' learning with explanations, for example. Nevertheless, in a small minority of lessons, particularly with temporary supply staff, the distracting behaviour of a minority of students, mostly boys, significantly reduces the overall quality of relationships between adults and students and among students.
29. Students' personal development is satisfactory overall. A significant majority of students routinely show responsibility and thought for others. Most are comfortable speaking with visitors. When questioned in groups, most students are comfortable expressing their viewpoint and listen with respect to different views expressed by others. Their views are strikingly clear and insightful on both the things they like and the things they would change in their college. Most students show concern for others, if they are ill or otherwise upset. The year councils, comprising two students from each form and the college council, comprising two students from each year group, are making an effective contribution to the life of the college. Sixth form and Year 11 students have helped in setting up the Feltham Listening in Confidence (FLIC) group, who provide support, each lunchtime, for students with a range of concerns, including bullying. They are also discussing practical initiatives, such as litter reduction. Sixth form students mentor students in Years 7 to 9 and support students who experience difficulties with reading. However, across year groups, lesson observations confirm there is a small minority of students, in addition to those currently excluded, who disrupt the learning of others and are mindless about the consequences of their actions' impact on others.
30. Attendance is broadly satisfactory overall. At between 90 and 91 per cent in each of the previous three years, it is just below the national average. College data show that the broadly satisfactory overall picture tends to mask a wide variation in student attendance. Whilst the majority attend at good rates, there is a significant minority with unsatisfactory attendance. In the inspection week, a week before Christmas, attendance was significantly lower than the annual figures, at 87 per cent. The unauthorised absence level, at 1.9 per cent, for the most recent year, is above the national average.
31. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although a small minority of students can turn up late to some lessons. Most students come to college on time and get to nearly all lessons promptly during the day. There is no significant level of internal or external truancy, due in significant part to the effective practices of taking a register in each lesson and first day of absence response by college, in cases of suspected truancy.

## **Sixth form**

**Students' attitudes to college and their work are good overall. This is reflected in very positive attitudes in all sixth form lessons. No student has been excluded from the sixth form in the last three years. Students' attendance is broadly satisfactory overall. Observations during the inspection indicate that there is an issue concerning the punctuality of some students. The stability of staffing has been an important influence on student attendance on some courses, for example business education and drama.**

32. Students' personal development and relationships are good overall. Students interviewed during the inspection were articulate and measured in their judgements about the college. Relationships between staff and students and among students are very good. Students are very positive about what the college provides, as shown in the student questionnaire returns, student interviews and subject discussions during the inspection. They are fiercely loyal to their sixth form because they feel they are treated as adults and provided with good, refurbished social space, which is respected and cared for. Some would not have returned to extended education except to the college and most prefer this college because they are known by teachers who work very hard for them and who are always accessible to provide additional support outside lessons. This is a particular feature of English, history and physics. They feel safe because teaching and learning are not interrupted by misbehaviour and because they are given very good support.

### **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

**Although the teaching seen in the inspection was good the impact of a turbulent staffing situation in recent years means that achievement over time has been, overall, only satisfactory. Progress in the lessons seen was good.**

33. The teaching seen was good and, in consequence, students made good progress in lessons. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in English and science and it is satisfactory in mathematics. The best teaching took place in subjects where there was significant stability of staffing. Good teaching was seen in all subjects across the college and in no subject was the overall quality of teaching unsatisfactory. There has been significant investment in developing the quality of teaching and learning and there has been good improvement since the HMI visit in May 2002.
34. Many students at Feltham do not find learning easy. They have poor literacy skills, are often conscious of this and find achieving success in academic work difficult. As a consequence many lack self-esteem and the confidence to try. Many are not self-motivated. The college's commitment to equal opportunities means a commitment to tackling disaffection and a culture of low aspirations, particularly amongst many white UK girls and boys. This is not easy, especially when a student's attitudes and behaviour are such that they provide plenty of arguments for exclusion and little scope, other than the college's commitment, for keeping the student within the college community.
35. Feltham students require good teaching if they are to make progress that is at least satisfactory. Teachers have to engage, motivate and enthuse students. They have to develop in them a sense of success and give them precise skills. They have to praise challenge and support to overcome some students reluctance and difficulties. Above all they have to establish a connection with an individual student, a bond, a professional relationship that allows them to urge, cajole and press the student to achieve more. This is not possible without staffing stability and over the past two years there has been little of that. When, for whatever reason, there is a change of staff, learning is disrupted much more significantly than in schools where students are more self-reliant. For the students at Feltham, *their* teacher is very important and when *their* teacher is not present then it takes time for the students to re-form a relationship. The fact that the overall quality of teaching seen was good reflects directly on the current greater stability of staffing and the development of these, crucial, good relationships.
36. The fact that students' attitudes and behaviour are good and in nine out of ten lessons are at least satisfactory reflects the work done in developing teachers' skills in managing behaviour in a positive way. Some of the students do present difficult behaviours and are prepared to challenge adults and authority without qualm: they can bring into the college attitudes, behaviours and

problems that are not of the college's making. Such students can stretch the commitment of even the most committed teacher. Yet the college is seeking to find ways to engage and re-engage such students in learning, and helping these students take responsibility for their actions and manage their own behaviours and problems.

37. Teachers, in the main, provide good models of courtesy, and praise effectively what has been achieved. Many through their lesson planning devise practical approaches to learning that are intrinsically interesting and gain students' attention. Humour is often used well to create a pleasant working atmosphere. Most teachers give a clear indication of where the lesson is leading, which provides the students with a 'map' of the lesson that shows how it fits into what has happened before. At the end of the lesson, most review with the class what has been achieved. Lessons are usually conducted at a good pace to keep students engaged and interested. In some lessons, students' enthusiasm wanes towards the end of the hour-long period, especially when the lessons lack a variety of active approaches to engage and hold students' interest. Students respond well to oral work and practical activities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which most use well to secure students' interest. They also have, in the main, high expectations of what is to be achieved, which they communicate well to students.
38. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory or, occasionally, poor, it was most often because the teacher was new to the class, lacked the foundation of secure relationships and found managing the class particularly difficult.
39. Staff who have been at the college some time know the students well and in their planning address students' additional needs so that those with EAL or special educational needs make good progress overall. The identification of students who are gifted or talented is helping to raise teachers' expectations.
40. Overall, the quality of the teaching of students with EAL is good. Some excellent teaching was seen, and some satisfactory teaching. The excellent teaching is characterised by very positive working relationships between the students and the teacher. The students enjoy the learning and so they work with enthusiasm and their progress is rapid. A varied range of activities is used in these classes and this maintains students' interest and motivation. This best teaching is particularly characteristic of the beginners' induction programme. The standard of teaching in the in-class support groups is more variable and this largely reflects the fact that the teaching is sometimes hampered by the fact that the class teacher is working in a particular way that makes it more difficult for the support teacher to access individuals or groups of students without disturbing the whole class. The department has yet to develop additional strategies that would overcome these particular limitations. The students' behaviour and attitudes are good and they are keen to learn. They make the best of the opportunities presented to them.
41. The teaching of students with special educational needs is good and in the college's specialist facilities it is usually very good. In one lesson seen, for example, the excellent use of a range of materials, very effective establishment of routines, highly effective questioning that engaged the students, and tasks that were carefully adjusted to students' range of attainment - ensured that the students made very good progress. With non-specialist staff who have little training, teaching is much less effective.
42. The potential of ICT to counteract poor literacy skills is not being taught enough in most subjects. Redrafting rather than being a slow laborious process can be straightforward. Currently insufficient use is made of ICT across the college, not only to support learning but also to tackle the students' perceived low self-esteem, associated with lack of literacy skills.
43. The college has developed good systems of assessment that work well at a number of levels. However, teachers could make more use of assessment to accelerate students' learning. Teachers mark work but often comments are directed to students' attitudes. Targets are not always specific enough to inform the students what they need to do to reach the next National Curriculum Level or to achieve a higher grade. There is good practice within the college particularly, for example, in the marking of coursework in English, which needs to be shared.

## **Sixth form**

44. At the core of rising sixth form standards is a close identity of interest between the teachers with good subject knowledge and small groups of students who begin to mature as learners in dialogue with their teachers. Teachers work hard to help students develop the ability to analyse and synthesise information. They make themselves available outside lessons and provide regular *clinics* to support learning. The growth of independent study skills is hampered by limited access to ICT and the Internet. The involvement of students in their own target setting is a growing strength. Teachers have a battery of baseline information about each student and are beginning to use it well to set targets for improvement. Students know their own targets, and particularly in Year 12 can show how they know that they are making progress: they can point to growing skills in essay writing and to improving grades in assessed work. They know what they must do to improve further.

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

**Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. There are some unsatisfactory aspects that relate to time allocation for specific subjects, the breadth of experiences provided in subjects - particularly the lack of ICT. The college has introduced a broader range of courses including some vocational courses but, given the specific needs of the students, the curriculum needs further development. This is recognised by the college in its long-term planning.**

45. The college has effective systems for review of the curriculum and a clear vision of the developments needed. Senior managers are already putting in place means of improvement. With the exception of the use of ICT in subjects the appropriate statutory curriculum is in place.
46. The formal curriculum is supported by a good selection of extra-curricular opportunities. There are strengths in the subject curriculum in English, science, separately taught ICT, physical education, design and technology and religious education. In all other subjects, with the exception of modern foreign languages, the curriculum is satisfactory. The time allocation for modern foreign languages is below average and this affects the progress that students make, in particular students with special needs in Years 7 to 9. Students' learning in Years 10 and 11 is affected because students are taught in wide ability groups that make it difficult for teachers to take account of all their needs successfully. Just under half the students do not study a modern foreign language at GCSE though the disapplication<sup>12</sup> procedures are followed correctly. The college is trying to raise the status of modern foreign languages to students and parents.
47. The timetable is constructed around a 60-minute period, in order to reduce movement around the college and to minimise the possibility of disruption. It also provides a significant period of time for practical activities. However, the relatively long periods do make it more difficult to tune the timetable in order to provide time allocations broadly in line with national average time allocations. In some classes, particularly the lower attaining groups, students begin to get restive towards the end of lessons. Time allocated to optional subjects within the GCSE provision, and to physical education, is less than expected nationally. Staffing difficulties also mean that there are problems of timetable management related to the number of classes taught by more than one teacher, for example in English. The college has placed under review the organisation and management of the college day.
48. Given that there is now greater stability of staffing, the college needs to review all schemes of work, including those for subjects which already provide good curriculum experiences, to ensure that all subjects are making specific, clear contributions to the development of students' skills in: speaking and listening, literacy, and the use of ICT to support learning and enhance literacy skills and aspects of students' personal development, particularly citizenship. As part of that process there also needs to be examination within departments of how work is to be adapted or modified to provide appropriate support for students who find learning difficult, and also challenge for students who are gifted. There is already good practice in the college but this needs to be shared between departments. Although the college meets its statutory obligation to teach all students through the medium of ICT, lack of access to computers means that many subjects cannot teach parts of their subject through the use of ICT: in consequence, they do not assess or record ICT experience. Provision for improving skills in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, but now needs to be addressed consistently throughout the college in order to raise standards in a coordinated way.
49. A few students at GCSE follow work related education programmes. This is an aspect of the curriculum the college wants to develop in order to achieve a better match between the curriculum and students' needs. A City Learning Centre is under construction on the college premises, and the local education authority is redeveloping a disused school to provide facilities for the training of modern apprentices and the teaching of a number of national vocational qualifications. These are not yet in place, but form part of the long-term strategic curriculum thinking of the college and

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<sup>12</sup> Parents have to apply formally to enable students not to take a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4. This procedure is usually referred to as disapplication.

offer exciting prospects for the development of a broader curriculum both at GCSE and in the sixth form.

50. Provision for the teaching of personal and social education including sex and drugs education is satisfactory. It is, however, hampered by the fact that the college has not been able to appoint a co-ordinator. As a result, in Years 7 to 9 the conventional personal, social and health education and the new 'You can do it' provision on emotional intelligence have not been rationalised. The teaching of citizenship is in the early stages of implementation. The current provision is satisfactory but fairly basic and the headteacher is aware that further developments are required.
51. The provision for students' personal development, particularly with regard to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. The college works hard to develop students' sense of self-esteem, to make them feel important and valued. This aspect of spiritual development is fostered well. It is given attention in subjects such as English and religious education as when, for example, Year 8 students read and discuss issues on creation in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Moral development is also fostered well, for example in personal, social, health and citizenship education when students consider the youth justice system and issues of right wrong across a range of contemporary situations. In English there was an excellent example when a Year 11 class gained a powerful insight into the impact of racial inequality under the apartheid system through their reading of Afrika's *Nothing's Changed*. In geography, issues surrounding conservation and eco-tourism provide opportunities to explore moral dilemmas.
52. Provision for students' social development is good. The college is building an ethos based on respect for others, and to this end it seeks to foster the 'community' spirit of the college. There is an increasing number of opportunities for students to take responsibility. Students are encouraged to act as role models and mentors, to co-operate and work together. The inclusive ethos of the college is a powerful contributor to students' social development. The excitement of students participating in the concert or helping with the traditional party for senior citizens, both of which were held in the inspection week, was palpable. Both events provided opportunities for real teamwork and success. Students' cultural development is satisfactory but less well provided for than the other three aspects of personal development. English and modern foreign languages make good contributions to developing two aspects of the cultural dimension. In English, students explore the British cultural heritage and that of other cultures through their reading of texts. In modern foreign languages some aspects of two European cultures are explored. Whilst there are exceptions and other good examples, in general, subject teachers need to consider how the students' curricular experience can be broadened to reflect more ambitiously differing cultural traditions- particularly the cultural traditions represented in the college.
53. The college has been unable to appoint a coordinator of careers education to promote extended education and training in line with planned improvements to the curriculum. The quality of guidance offered in college is satisfactory and an experienced teacher manages the work experience programme. Provision for careers and vocational education is satisfactory overall. Students complete their progress files in Year 9 and undertake work experience with associated preparation and follow up in Year 10. In Year 11, students explore their post-16 choices. The new 'Connexions' service is providing good support by giving all Year 11 students a careers interview. Year 11 students speak positively about their work on a curriculum vitae, letters of application and interview skills. The numbers entering further education from the college at the age of 16 (at just over 50 per cent) are lower than the west London average. A further ten per cent move into work with some element of training.
54. The college is an inclusive organisation that strives to involve all its students and the community in its work and to make very good provision for equality of access and opportunity. The curricular provision for students with special educational needs is good. There are some very good features, for example the adaptation of the literacy strategy for younger students. Individual education plans are in place, and are effectively used over the course of each week. Within lessons, there is some variability in the degree to which work is matched effectively to students' needs, but students with learning difficulties are enabled to make good progress overall. With specialist staff, their progress is very good. The overall provision for students with physical disabilities is good.

55. The curriculum provision for students with EAL is good. A significant and strong aspect of the EAL department's work is the induction programme for beginners. In this the students are withdrawn from the normal timetable for intensive language tuition. The students are taught general English as well as subjects such as geography. These withdrawal classes are very effective as is evidenced by the rapid progress the students make in them. Students also enjoy the classes. Some students are supported in normal lesson time in subjects that rely heavily on language such as science and the humanities. More general support is available during the lunchtime clubs, and in a homework club. These clubs, and the general ethos of the department, support the students with EAL in a much broader sense than in language learning alone. The experiences make them feel valued, and in this sense the department makes a significant contribution to the students' personal development.
56. All heads of department and heads of year receive information about new entrants. This enables them to plan their lessons with the EAL students in mind. Information about EAL students is also available to all staff via the notice boards. Two teachers have recently completed training in providing for the needs of EAL students and training for all teachers has been planned for 2003.
57. The college has established new structures to support students with behavioural and learning difficulties and good work was seen going on. The college is also experimenting with developing out of hours provision and more flexible approaches to learning for disaffected students. The community outreach work with its focus on helping members of the community articulate their needs, rather than providing a specific curriculum, is providing a good alternative model to meeting the needs of very disaffected students.
58. The college has constructive relationships with its partner institutions. Those with the contributory primary schools are good and further development is planned for them. Relationships with local colleges are secure and will grow further as the vocational training wing opens and develops. There are very good relationships with another secondary school where joint in-service training is very productive.
59. The contribution of the community to students' learning is excellent overall. The college has developed excellent relationships with the local education business partnership; there is an exceptional range of active and long standing business links with global companies and the army. Several of these partners greatly enrich events such as a science day for Year 7 students, an industry day for Year 9 students, mentoring by e-mail and sixth form induction days for Year 11 students. Apart from the learning arising from the work related to the companies' products, students gain valuable insights from presentations and workshops on finance, thinking skills, motivation and teamwork, for example. These links also provide a very good basis for Year 10 work experience placements. The second major contribution comes from the college's own involvement in community education which not only extends the curriculum but also establishes the college as a focus for community learning and sporting and recreational opportunities. Students are used to adults attending the college and the presence of adults on the campus as learners provides further effective role models.

## **Sixth form**

**There is a keen awareness of the need to develop further the sixth form curriculum, a clear vision of what is realistic and a strong drive to improve by means of effective planning. Developments now taking place offer great potential to open out the 14-18 curriculum. It is a college priority to broaden the range and level of courses available (within the financial constraints generated by student numbers) in order to ensure that students are on the right courses to achieve success.**

60. Overall curriculum provision is satisfactory because the college is honest about what it can and cannot offer. The college provides a basic range of AS and A2 courses, one GNVQ at foundation and intermediate levels in ICT, a diploma in childcare education and a course for ICT technicians. Students can retake core GCSE subjects through community provision and take a community sports leaders' award. The number of A2 courses depends on the retention rate for Year 12 to Year 13. The percentage staying to Year 13 is now rising. Developments now taking place offer great potential to open out the 14-18 curriculum. It is a college priority to broaden the range and

level of courses available (within the financial constraints generated by student numbers) in order to ensure that students are on the right courses to achieve success.

61. Although a basic provision, what makes the curriculum relevant and responsive to the needs of the students is the teachers they know who will be teaching it. Many of the students who stay on do so as a direct result of the respect they have for specific members of staff.
62. The college seeks to develop key skills by trying to ensure that all students gain GCSE passes in English, mathematics and ICT. As in the main college, there is a need for subjects to identify clearly how they are going to promote the development of students' literacy skills and use of ICT. Access to ICT needs to be improved. The college meets the requirement to teach religious education in the sixth form by organising specific conferences based on moral and religious themes. The time allocation for AS and A2 courses is low.
63. This is an open sixth form with open but guided access to courses. Groups are small but the provision offers all students the opportunity in a safe environment to mature and develop. Within it, individual students achieve significant personal success.

## HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

**The college provides good quality care and support. Management of this support is very good. However, embedding good practice and developing consistency remain priorities. Whilst assessment procedures are now broadly effective, in order to promote good progress consistently, key messages arising from the data need to be more readily accessible and routinely used by subject teachers.**

64. Procedures to promote and ensure students' well-being are good. The college has good arrangements for induction to Year 7 and other classes. Transfer arrangements into Years 10 and 12 are well established and appropriate. The additional support now provided, as part of *Excellence in Cities*, for the significant proportion of vulnerable students, some with very complex problems, is used effectively. The presence in college of a part time educational psychologist provides responsive diagnosis of difficulties. Four learning mentors, working on transition from Year 6 and Years 7 to 9, provide crucial support with absence issues. Staff in the new Achievement Centre provide important additional support for disaffected students. There are effective links and involvement with social and health services. Child protection procedures and those for "looked after" students are good. The procedures to follow and the designated staff member are known by adults in the college. Students are made appropriately aware of the issues as part of their personal and social education. Students confirm that they are very well cared for when they are ill or otherwise distressed and would feel comfortable approaching adults, in relation to any personal problems.
65. Procedures to ensure students' health and safety are good overall. Teachers make students aware of health and safety issues in lessons, for example in design technology, physical education, science and ICT in relation to e-mails and use of the Internet. An important emphasis is placed on students taking responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. This effectively contributes to the development of a safety conscious attitude among students. Health and safety forms an important and growing part of the governing body's deliberations. Fire alarm testing and the inspection of portable electrical equipment are routinely carried out. Fire drills are carried out regularly. First aid arrangements are well established and appropriate.
66. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good overall. Systems for collecting raw attendance data are very good, whilst measures to recognise high attendance are frequently applied and effective. The additional support provided, as part of *Excellence in Cities*, is having a positive impact. For example, learning mentors working with Years 7 to 9, make first day of absence contact in the case of students with attendance and truancy concerns. As a result, absence prevention measures are good. There is a significant amount of data analysis, which is widely shared among pastoral staff. However, this work has not yet examined the attendance levels of different groups, such as different sets in key subjects or different ethnic minority groups, to provide further insights on areas for development in curriculum and other provision. The

monitoring and support for Traveller students is very good, with strong links with the welfare officer experienced in Traveller education. Of the eight students, two have very good attendance and the attendance of a further three students is improving but from a low base.

67. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are good overall. The positive behaviour policy, classroom expectations and associated merit and commendation systems provide a coherent basis for student behaviour, discipline and personal development. The main emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour, and most students respond positively. Measures to create and maintain discipline are appropriate, proportionate and consistently applied by most staff.
68. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying, are good overall. There is a clear proportionate set of sanctions, in relation to unacceptable behaviour in lessons and outside. Parents are effectively involved where concerns arise. Students confirm that the measures taken to resolve incidents of bullying, racism or other anti-social behaviour are usually effective. Reporting arrangements on racist incidents are well established and effective. The daily work of the FLIC group is an important peer support mechanism for some students, whilst making it clear what is unacceptable behaviour among the student community. The significant decline in fixed term exclusions over the past four terms is an indication of the positive impact of the alternative strategies of using an internal exclusion room and the BASE (Behaviour, Attitude, Success in Education).
69. College arrangements to assess the students' attainment and progress are good. There has been systematic development since the last inspection. Efficient procedures ensure that the college has reliable information on the students' attainment when they arrive, and provide a sound basis against which to judge future assessments. Targets are set for individual students and cohorts, informed by national tests and other standardised data. As students progress through the college their achievements are tracked and monitored by college-wide systems involving termly departmental assessments. Optional and progress tests in the core subjects as well as national tests and examination results assist curriculum areas in ensuring the validity of their assessments. Thus the college has a clear picture of each student's progress at key points. Heads of learning and heads of faculty provide support systems for those students identified as underachieving.
70. The college's inclusive ethos provides very strong support for the students' academic progress. There is an extensive programme of mentoring by a range of agencies both external and within the college. Very successful mentoring by e-mail involves personnel from IBM. Staff from the nearby British Airports Authority work regularly with students to support and raise aspirations. Senior managers, teachers, learning mentors and older students are all involved in activities to encourage students' academic achievements. There is a good programme of enrichment activities for identified gifted and talented students to raise their expectations. For example there have been Excellence in the Cities sponsored trips to Cambridge University and residential trips to Glamorgan for Year 10 students to help them set their sights high. Students notice the 'wall of fame' in the main reception corridor of very recent students' examination and university entrance successes.
71. The college makes good links with primary schools to anticipate the needs of students with special educational needs and makes thorough assessments to enable it to deal effectively with the high demand for later admissions of students with special educational needs. The college provides a wide range of very good specialised support for students with special educational needs. There is good ongoing monitoring of the needs of students; and managers, specialist teachers and support staff use their detailed personal knowledge of students to ensure flexibly changing provision, often on a weekly basis. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties appreciate the use of the Annex building, which contains units providing sessions of support for students with behaviour targets. It enables them to sustain their access to education and makes available a supportive environment during breaks. The use of an extra educational psychologist also enables additional student support through one to one and small group sessions for students as well as through providing additional advice to staff and programmes of training.

72. The college's assessment policy provides clear guidance to departments in formulating their own assessment policy and practice. Data from examinations are carefully scrutinised and analysed within and across departments. Excellent analysis of mathematics test and examination results, for example, is providing a sound basis to develop the mathematics curriculum. Thorough examination data analysis in history has enabled the department to identify reasons for boys' underachievement. Generally departments have good centralised working records of the students' assessments. However, not all departments are yet proficient in linking grades and levels awarded for tests, homework and classwork to students' predicted grades. At classroom level, assessment information is not universally well used to inform teachers' planning. There are very good examples within departments of formative and diagnostic marking. In history, for example, constructive, consistent marking provides students with regular feedback on how they can improve. However, there is still a need to ensure that the best practice is disseminated across all curriculum areas.
73. Procedures to monitor and support students' personal development are good. The monitoring system systematically recognises good attitudes to work. This recognition and reward provides students with frequent and public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. Performance review evenings and associated targets effectively identify and review areas for improvement in attitudes. The good assembly programme, supported by the personal social and health education provision give students good opportunities to reflect on the lives and needs of themselves and others. The recently introduced 'You can do it' provision for Years 7 to 9, aimed at improving emotional intelligence, provides these students with important opportunities to develop their self-confidence, persistence and skills in organising themselves and getting on with others. The year and college councils provide students with good opportunities to raise and help address a wide variety of issues. The college organises a good range of sports, music and wider community events.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Assessment***

74. Overall, the procedures for assessing the students' attainment and progress are good and follow the patterns of the main college. There are regular reviews of the students' progress but with an added emphasis on individual guidance and support, involving both parents and students. Information on the students' achievements at the end of Year 11 is used appropriately to set target grades for AS and A2-level examinations.
75. Most students receive regular advice and guidance from their subject teachers. The head of sixth form monitors the students' overall progress. In several subject areas the monitoring of the students' day-to-day progress is good. In English, for example, very regular assessment activities are carefully marked against examination criteria from the start of the course. There is meticulous marking in geography to improve the students' literacy skills as well as to inform the content of their written work. However, not all subject teachers relate marked work consistently to target grades to keep students informed as to how well they are doing. Some marking of homework, in mathematics for example, is cursory and pays insufficient attention to the processes by which students arrive at solutions.
76. The college has made solid progress in developing post-16 assessment procedures since the last inspection but there is still a need to ensure that the best practice is consistently applied across the A-level subjects offered.

### ***Advice, support and guidance***

77. The quality and accessibility of information, and formal advice and guidance given to students is good overall. It is enhanced further by a very high degree of informal support given to individual students by members of staff which adds significantly to the formal support and provides, overall high quality care. Staff work very hard to ensure that students succeed and achieve as well as they might. Students are made clearly aware of the entry requirements for Foundation, Intermediate and AS courses, during Year 11. Sixth form induction, carried out over three days,

is comprehensive and effective. All students are interviewed, action-planning sessions are held with form tutors and team working and problem solving day sessions are organised with the help of the local education business partnership. Progress reviews are frequent. Following Foundation, Intermediate, AS and A2 results, discussions and realistic guidance are significant features.

78. Careers education and guidance for future courses and career opportunities is satisfactory overall. A significant amount of careers guidance and work contacts are provided, especially for the Foundation and Intermediate sixth form students, with the support of the new 'Connexions'

service. The Head of sixth Form is the prime source of advice in the preparation of personal statements for university entrance. Appropriate software and literature are available to support students with their decisions about choice of third level institutions.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

**Overall, the partnership with parents makes a good contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Despite some important concerns among parents, the college's links with parents are effective overall. Most parents meet their key responsibilities of getting students to attend college regularly, and they support students' progress by attending the frequent progress reviews.**

79. According to the questionnaire returns, parents are positive about what college provides and achieves. However, only around three per cent of parents (40 in all) replied to the questionnaire and only three attended the pre-inspection meeting. Inspection evidence broadly supports parents' positive views and some of their key concerns. Most parents who responded consider that their children like college, make good progress and are expected to work hard. They value the approachability and general responsiveness of staff. They are positive about the improvements started by the current headteacher. Most are positive about the teaching and the information they get on students' progress. They are positive about the opportunities outside lessons and college's part in helping students become mature and responsible. A significant minority have concerns about inconsistent levels of homework. Inspectors consider that homework levels and associated arrangements are satisfactory. However, they are justifiably concerned about the impact of high levels of staff change and the behaviour in a minority of lessons.
80. Links with parents make a good contribution to students' learning. Parents are consulted regularly, using the same questionnaire as was used in the inspection. As a result, the college has successfully responded to parents' concerns about, for example, inconsistencies in homework and levels of information about students' progress. Members of staff are approachable and generally responsive to parents' concerns. Students' homework planners enable effective routine two-way communication between college and home. The quality of information to support students' progress, including students' annual reports, is good overall. There are termly opportunities for updates on progress, through the mixture of target setting and review days at which the form tutor meets with students and their parents and conventional parents' evenings. The students' annual reports are of satisfactory quality. The students' current performance, including areas for improvement in attitudes, is effectively shared with parents. Identification of key areas for improvement in subjects, together with potential and predicted performance at the ages of 14 and 16 is not a feature, however. Regular newsletters, together with other letters and notes, keep parents very well informed on college life. The prospectus gives a very clear outline of the college's expectations and character. The governors' annual report clearly informs parents on the work of governors.
81. Parents' involvement with the work of the college makes an adequate contribution to students' learning and the life of the college. Most parents fulfil their key responsibility of ensuring students attend college regularly. They respond positively to individual requests to discuss issues, such as student progress, behaviour and attendance. Parental attendance is now good at the target setting and review days, for example. The Year 7 settling-in meeting, Year 9 Options evening and meetings for parents of students in Years 9 and 11 on how parents should provide support prior to

public examinations, are all well attended. A range of productions and the two annual awards evenings are well attended and regarded. However, a minority of parents do not fulfil their key responsibility of ensuring that students attend college. This is reflected in the above average level of unauthorised absence. There is a Feltham Friends Association comprising a small, dedicated number of parents who provide support to the college. The college finds it hard to recruit parent governors. Inspection of students' homework diaries indicates that few are regularly signed by parents.

82. The college has good links with parents of students with special educational needs. They are well involved in reviews and all parents have access to a weekly, 'surgery'. A valuable extra feature is that an educational psychologist works directly with some parents in helping them to handle issues at home that are related to their children's targets. The long established service of a few key staff is particularly valuable in forging a good level of community understanding.

### **HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?**

83. The college has at the core of its activities a very strong, shared purpose of raising students' achievements. Students are at the heart of what the college is about. Members of staff want students to succeed and they work very hard on their behalf. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the college and a commitment to improvement. Despite the many challenges the college faces and in some areas the efforts involved in inducting and supporting new staff, morale is high. The college has a clear sense of direction, which is reflected in the consistent and committed way that staff work with students. The work that staff has done is now beginning to show results. Students were making good or better progress in two-thirds of the lessons seen, as a result of good teaching. The greater stability of staffing this term has contributed to the fact that a majority of students now want to make and are making good progress in their learning. Clearly, reaching this point has not been easy over the past two years. The college uses a wealth of data to monitor students' performance in terms of attainment, behaviour and attendance. Heads of learning now track students' progress carefully and those who require additional support or challenge are identified.
84. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has restructured the college, put a new leadership team in place and introduced an ethos based on developing mutual respect. Despite the high turnover of teachers she has developed a commitment to improvement among staff, and the teamwork and mutual support necessary to cope with change. She has helped staff focus on the students and their needs and established along with the governing body a clear sense of direction for the college. She is very committed to ensuring that the college meets the needs of students and provides the best opportunities for them to succeed. She has established open and shared communication systems and has, essentially, changed the college while steering it through a particularly difficult period.
85. She has been supported in this process by the senior leadership team. The college has a 'flat' management structure, without a series of intervening layers between the class teacher and the headteacher. The senior leadership team appointed in September 2001 brings a range of individual skills and strengths to the task and, collectively, they provide the strength to manage change effectively. Leadership at departmental level is at least good. Across the college the leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good.
86. Management across the college, centrally and within departments, is very good. Systems are in place, are mostly very effective and generally work well. In classrooms, because of changing staff, the systems that are in place are not always used consistently. For example, assessment information is not necessarily used profitably by every class teacher, but nevertheless the systems are there and are potentially effective. The college runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
87. Performance management arrangements make a very good contribution. All members of staff, including support staff, are set annual objectives. The objectives are linked closely to the very good college development plan. Regular lesson observation is very well established in departments. The link between individuals' objectives and their professional development needs is a routine feature of the process.
88. The governing body is both supportive and effective. They are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They have a clear understanding of their role, are involved in monitoring the work of the college and, through the work of the strategic planning group establish what needs to be done.
89. The college has budget difficulties and is currently heading for a deficit. This is caused, in the main, by the additional cost of employing supply staff and because funding allocation difficulties

which have yet to be resolved. Resources are deployed effectively. Students and adults use the accommodation very well. Although officially designated as having space for nine forms of entry and therefore not officially classified as being full which means that the college is available for casual admissions, the main teaching spaces and laboratories are used for 95 per cent of the time. The college is working hard to maintain its staffing levels. However, expenditure on learning resources is below average and there is a shortage of resources in some subjects. Expenditure on staff development is also below average. Grants of money are well used for their intended purposes.

90. Financial planning is effective in supporting the college's priorities. The governor's finance committee controls and monitors expenditure well. It draws up business plans for new projects such as the planned City Learning Centre, which is to be housed on the College site. It receives regular reports about budget expenditure. The college increasingly searches out alternative sources of funding which it uses to support the college's priorities, particularly to support educational inclusion. Financial controls are very effective. As far as resources allow the college implements every recommended best practice. The recent auditor's report had to make only minor recommendations for improving its systems.
91. The college applies the principles of best value very effectively. It uses the wealth of information that it collects about students to compare its performance with similar institutions. It recently undertook a major review of its systems and practices in the light of unsatisfactory examination results. The college regularly reviews the performance of its service providers and consults effectively with staff and students.
92. The college has effectively adapted to the new requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. Organisational arrangements for students with special educational needs are very good, with a highly appropriate structure, management systems and training programme to meet students' needs. However, the impact is in some measure reduced by instability and shortage of staffing, particularly when students have to work with new mainstream staff who have not been through the full special educational needs training programme. With the structure and range of initiatives both achieved and developing, the quality of leadership and management has improved since the last inspection.
93. Additional finances for students with special educational needs are used fully and effectively and the college deploys appropriately additional resources from its main budget to support the higher levels of need experienced by a significant proportion of students.
94. The EAL department is well managed by a full time member of staff. Three other part-time teachers share the teaching. The department has detailed documentation, which is very clear, and includes a development plan. The accommodation and resources are good. Because no particular issues were raised in the last inspection report it is not possible to establish whether or not there has been improvement since then.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

95. Leadership and management are very good overall. Senior managers have a clear and attainable vision of the development of the sixth form and this is supported well by the head of learning and his team. They work successfully to provide a secure environment in which students can mature. The range of courses is constructed carefully so that the sixth form does not drain the college financially. The sixth form is cost effective. Very good use is made of the community to extend the range of provision. The college is very aware of the small size of some groups and expanding the size of the sixth form in order to extend the range of provision is clearly identified as an objective in the college improvement plan.

### ***Resources and accommodation***

96. The college invests significantly in staffing and many staff gives additional time to support students. Apart from access to computers resources are adequate. Accommodation, both academic and social, is good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

97. In order to achieve the stability required to improve students' achievement and attainment the headteacher and the governing body should:

(1) work in consultation and partnership with the local education authority to reduce the number of casual admissions of students, at least in the short term.

*(paragraphs: 13, 14,)*

(2) continue to seek greater stability of staffing in order to:

- ensure that the good practice in the college is embedded;
- achieve greater consistency in teaching approaches and classroom routines;
- reduce discontinuity in students' learning;
- ensure that good relationships between all staff and students are developed fully.

*(paragraphs: 13, 14)*

In order to improve the quality of education and raise standards the headteacher and senior leadership team should:

(3) review the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum that the college provides to ensure that students are on courses in which they can succeed.

*(paragraphs: 46, 47, 48, 49,)*

(4) ensure that all subjects are making specific, clear, contributions to developing students' skills in:

- speaking and listening;
- literacy;
- the use of ICT to support learning and enhance literacy skills;
- citizenship.

Review schemes of work to make sure that these objectives in language, literacy, ICT and personal development are properly planned.

*(paragraph 48)*

### Sixth form

(1) Broaden the range and level of courses available (within the financial constraints generated by student numbers) in order to ensure that students are on the right courses to achieve success.

*(paragraph 60)*

(2) Provide more time for advanced courses.

*(paragraph 62)*

(3) Provide greater access to computers.

*(paragraph 62)*

## THE PROVISION FOR THE STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES AND THE WORK OF THE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES (PDC)

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

### Strengths

- Positive and supportive relationships.
- Quality of teaching and individual support.
- The procedures and documentation for annual reviews.
- The management of the PDC.

Areas for development

- The use of specific, personal targets.
- The monitoring of inclusion.

98. Attainment of students in the PDC is similar to that of students of the same age in the rest of the college. In each year group some reach or exceed the standards expected nationally. For example, one of the twelve students in the PDC reached nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science at the ages of 11 and 14 and went on to pass seven GCSE examinations.
99. Academic progress is carefully monitored and, like all other students in the college, each student has targets in at least four subjects including literacy and numeracy. The work seen in the PDC and with PDC students in lessons in the main college showed that these targets were a useful focus. The progress made by students in all observed sessions was good. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson the PDC student was able to work directly on his literacy target and also learnt about starch and sugar through experiments.
100. In the sessions seen, students did well. They were able to build on their previous knowledge, and the excellent support provided by the assistants ensured that the PDC students took a full part in lessons. The assistants are sensitive to students' needs and know when to offer support, coach, prompt and stand back. They are a significant factor in the success of PDC students when integrated into the main college.
101. Some students under-achieve over time because their education is disrupted for medical reasons. The breaks in their education are sometimes frequent and long. For example, a student who was performing below national standards at 11 was unable to take the national tests at fourteen because of an operation and the need for subsequent recovery.
102. PDC students each spend a small amount of time in the centre each week. This enables them to have support from physiotherapists and speech therapists. Both of these groups of specialists are very flexible in their approach and this enables integration to be as full as possible. Medical support is available on site and members of staff have been trained in relevant procedures.
103. A few students benefit from individual and small group sessions with the PDC teachers. These sessions are of high quality. The teaching is good or very good and students are given the opportunity to focus on tasks that are critical to their continued successful integration. The PDC is very well organized and run. Day-to-day routines are smooth and procedures are well understood by all staff.
104. Access around the site is good. There is only one lift in the main block but this is not a major obstacle since only a small number of students depend on it. Ramps are wide and of gentle slope and many of the external walkways are covered. Doors are all wide enough for a wheelchair and there are sufficient toilets with disabled access for the number of students on site. A few doors hinged to swing in a single direction cause access problems for self-propelled wheelchairs. The PDC has been refurbished. This development has created a very good facility with spaces for teaching therapy and changing.
105. All the students who attend the facility have statements and these helpful documents have enabled the college to plan and deliver appropriate programmes. However, there are no specific personal targets and the PDC should consider their introduction. In this way they could focus on each student's principal special need more effectively. The process for creating and reviewing individual education plans is very good and the system for maintaining the accuracy of statements works effectively.
106. PDC students are an integral part of the college. The college works hard to ensure they are fully involved. This process of inclusion needs continued ongoing careful monitoring to ensure that the PDC students are treated the same as their peers.

## PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	157
	Sixth form	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		72

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	8	35	55	51	6	2	0
Percentage	5	22	35	33	4	1	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	0	10	16	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	32	52	16	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the college's students

Students on the college's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the college's roll	1,126	98
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	287	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	43	4
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	316	7

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	177

Student mobility in the last college year	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	132
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	155

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
College data	8.1
National comparative data	7.8

### Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	1.9
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	129	114	243

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	76	69
	Girls	55	42	43
	Total	108	118	112
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	44 (44)	49 (45)	46 (43)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	5 (16)	22 (24)	8 (15)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	66	62	47
	Girls	68	48	46
	Total	134	110	93
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	55 (49)	45 (57)	38 (41)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	16 (16)	21 (26)	7 (21)
	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	101	103	204

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	23	67	87
	Girls	31	84	93
	Total	54	151	180
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	College	28 (17)	74 (71)	88 (90)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	College	25.7
	National	39.8

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	24	40

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
College	Number of candidates	16	24	40
	Average point score per candidate	10.1	9.6	9.8
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

### **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 college year**

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
891	92	7
1	0	0
33	1	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
59	0	0
38	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
20	1	0
44	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
56	5	0
69	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 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers* (FTE)	84
Number of students per qualified teacher	21.2

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	43
Total aggregate hours worked per week	988

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.45
Key Stage 4	21.44

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	5,106,507
Total expenditure	4,846,688
Expenditure per student	3,778
Balance brought forward from previous year	-136,197
Balance carried forward to next year	123,622

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

\*This is the total FTE of all teachers. It includes teachers whose professional qualification is not recognised in this country. The total of qualified teachers is 57.6.

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	63
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	49

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	15
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1126
Number of questionnaires returned	40

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	55	10	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	60	10	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	55	15	5	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	52	22	5	2
The teaching is good.	15	70	10	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	10	70	10	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	22	52	2	12	10
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	25	68	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	12	57	8	12	10
The school is well led and managed.	15	62	0	8	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	15	70	5	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	57	5	2	15

(Figures may not add up to 100 because of rounding.)

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision<sup>13</sup> in English is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Students' achievement in the 2002 GCSE examinations.
- Students' better than expected progress over time.
- The quality of teaching.
- The leadership and management of the department.

#### Areas for improvement

- Reading and writing skills.
- Sharing of lesson objectives with students and use of class discussion to establish progress against the lesson objectives.
- Use of ICT.
- Shortage of suitable texts.

107. Attainment on entry has been low for a number of years with most students having reading and spelling scores that are between one and six years below their chronological reading age. Although attainment in Year 7 is improving, literacy skills are still below average. Reading tests and national tests at the end of Year 6 confirm the well below average literacy skills of students on entry. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were low in comparison to the national average, but above average for schools with a similar intake. The English results, the average points score, are similar to those in maths and science. The dip in standards at the end of Year 9 was partly due to the turbulence in staffing and the erratic attendance of some students. When these factors are taken into consideration as well as the starting point of students, achievement at the end of Year 9 is satisfactory.
108. There was a marked improvement in the 2002 GCSE results in English and English literature in the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C. However, the English results were well below average overall whilst the English literature results were below average. Results are improving and students' performance in both subjects is better than it is in maths and science and most other subjects in the curriculum. The proportion of students gaining A\* to C grades is very high when compared with schools that scored similar results at Key Stage 3. Overall, girls do better than boys. Students with special educational needs entered for the exams achieve a pass grade, indicating good achievement. Analysis of the examination results indicate that students from Philipino, Indian and Black African descent achieve better results than white UK and African Caribbean students. The achievement of students at the end of Year 11 based on their results at the end Year 9 is good.
109. Inspection evidence indicates that over time, students make good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Whereas Year 7 to 9 students often make good progress in lessons, this is not sustained in the national tests at the end of Year 9. The factors contributing to these students making slower progress than expected in the first three years include their low literacy skills on entry and the difficulty experienced in recruiting suitably qualified and committed staff over the past three years. Standards of attainment in all year groups are also affected by the erratic attendance of a significant number of students many of whom have low literacy skills, special educational needs or, in some cases, negative attitudes towards learning. Despite these difficulties, the department has worked very hard at introducing a wide range of initiatives to increase students' self esteem, and has forged positive relationships with students in order to

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<sup>13</sup> This judgement is a summative judgement made on the quality and range of curriculum provided within the subject: the way the subject is organised, the quality of teaching and learning, the achievement of students and the resource provision. These judgements are specific to the subject. Whilst it is appropriate to use this judgement to compare the provision for a specific subject between different schools, it is inappropriate to use this judgement to make relative comparisons between subjects within the same school because like is not being compared to like.

improve their attendance record, reading skills and attitudes towards education. Inspection evidence confirms that the department is, against all odds, achieving success in helping students to do well in the subject.

110. Whereas standards in speaking are average for most students, listening skills are good and often very good during oral work and when the teacher is reading aloud. Students readily ask questions about their work, and most, including those with special needs or at the early stage of learning English, articulate their ideas confidently, join in role-play, discussion and group work. This was demonstrated in a Year 11 lesson where students made a significant contribution to a discussion of Brathwaite's *Ogun*. They raised pertinent points about the imagery, cultural and historical background of the poem. Most students willingly contribute during oral work, but there are some passive learners. Most students lack variation in vocabulary when expressing complex ideas.
111. Reading skills are below average and often lower than that for a significant number of students. Standards in reading are good for the small number of higher attaining students. The department promotes reading through students habitually reading at the start of most lessons as part of a 'starter' activity. The Progress Units, designed to improve the literacy skills of students with a low reading age is beginning to have an impact on standards. By the end of Year 9, most students have made satisfactory progress in improving their reading scores; however, a significant number still read well below their reading age even up to the end of Year 11. Despite having low reading ages, students are not daunted by the complexity of literary texts. This is because critical analysis is taught well, there is a sharp focus on word and text level work and resources are carefully selected to engage students and reflect their interests. The analytical skills of students are satisfactory and often better when they discuss and explore ideas. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson, many students demonstrated good engagement when reading Sachar's *Holes*. They found the text gripping to the extent that some stayed behind to continue reading. They made predictions and inferences and understood the implied meaning rather than what was stated explicitly. A similar response was seen in Year 9 students' work on *Macbeth*. By Years 10 and 11, most students begin to respond to texts critically. The higher attaining students use detailed research notes to understand texts. Overall, their textual grasp and appreciation are good, as demonstrated in work on *Great Expectations*. Whilst middle attaining students give their personal response, and can comment on the imagery, albeit at a more general level, lower attaining students retell the plot. Overall, although comprehension work and notes are correct, most students do not develop their ideas to gain the higher levels or grades.
112. Standards in writing are well below average. Higher attaining students achieve good standards in writing. Their essays are well structured, vocabulary is skilfully used and grammatical features are used accurately. Most students in all year groups are beginning to use 'mind mapping'<sup>14</sup> to organise their work and they use the drafting process extensively to refine their work and final drafts show improvement in content and style. However, the qualities of students' written work do not express or convey their often-good oral response. Written work shows frequent errors in structuring, punctuation and grammar and this is continuing to prevent them from gaining the higher grades. The department is tackling these weaknesses by focusing on sentence level work, planning and assessing writing through regular timed essays. Some students use ICT well to present their work.
113. Most students have good attitudes to learning in English and enjoy taking part in the activities. They work with absorption and are attentive; however, the erratic attendance of a significant number of students with low literacy skills is adversely affecting their progress.
114. The quality of teaching is good with some very good features. Planning is structured with clear learning objectives which teachers share with students. They link the resources carefully to the needs of students and there is a sequenced approach to developing their learning. They know their students very well and handle them sensitively yet in a firm manner to ensure that they do not lose their focus. They choose resources carefully to sustain students' interest and to ensure that they can access the work. The interactive white board and power point are skilfully used for modelling, demonstrating and reinforcing specific points. As such, activities are combined with challenge in most lessons and students are expected to apply the taught skills based on the

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<sup>14</sup> 'Mind mapping' is an exercise designed to help students structure their ideas prior to writing. Students draw a schematic map of their ideas, which helps them to structure their work into paragraphs.

given model. For example, in a Year 9 lesson students successfully planned their ballads after working with their teacher on planning their ideas. Teachers give very clear exposition, which provides students with a wealth of subject expertise. An example was seen in an excellent lesson with Year 11 students. In this lesson, students were engrossed in the analysis of Afrika's *'Nothing's Changed'*. This was so because of the teacher's authoritative knowledge and approach to enlightening and involving students in the discussion on racial prejudice. They explored the images in the poem and linked them to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions whilst drawing attention to racial inequalities in the world. Even the most reluctant learners were captivated fully.

115. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the objectives are not shared with students, most of whom are passive learners, the plenary is not used and the activities do not stretch them sufficiently. Marking is clear, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where students are given detailed comments and targets for improving their work. There are good opportunities for students to learn independently, as seen in the library induction programme in Year 7 and in a Year 11 when students worked in groups on analysing autobiographical writing.
116. Leadership in the department is very effective, and the head of department has a clear vision of what the department needs to do to raise standards further. Under her leadership, there is a coherent approach to planning as a team. Teaching is now underpinned by clear schemes of work and development planning with clear priorities for improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning is ongoing and there is analytical use of data to identify to inform planning. The curriculum has improved immensely under the new leadership. Students with special educational needs now have the opportunity of dual entry for the GCSE English examination and the Certificate of Achievement course.
117. Financial constraints are severely affecting significant areas of students' learning. Because of staffing difficulties there is a larger than expected number of classes taken by more than one teacher, which is affecting the continuity and progression of students' learning. Teachers are unable to attend external courses because of a shortage of funding. There is a severe shortage of suitable literary texts to meet the demands of the curriculum and students' needs. Computers are underused because there is limited access and this has not improved since the last inspection. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Given the improvement in achievement in Years 10 and 11, the effective management, the good teaching and systems for assessment, monitoring and evaluating progress, the department is well placed to make further improvements subject to stability in staffing, improved funding and better attendance rates.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Students' results in GCSE mathematics are improving.
- The mathematics department is very well led.
- Teaching is at least satisfactory despite the turbulence in staffing over recent years.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good. Students have confidence in their teachers.
- The department benefits from good accommodation and a welcoming mathematical environment.

### Areas for improvement

- The students' attainment in GCSE mathematics remains below the national average.
- National test results at the end of Year 9 are well below average.
- Because of insufficient resources, students have too few opportunities to use ICT to support their work in mathematics.
- Not all students benefit from careful marking of their work.

118. Generally, students' attainment in mathematics when they enter the college is well below average. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 show standards to be consistently

well below average. Attainment at the expected Level 5 and above, in 2002, was below that of similar schools, but matched the students' achievements in both science and English. The proportion of the students gaining Level 6 or better was also below that of similar schools, but above those in English. Boys' test results were higher than those of the girls at both Level 5 and above, and Level 6 and above. Although the college's careful data analysis indicates that the results generally reflect differences in prior attainment, including that of students from different ethnic groups, there remains underachievement among some girls. Nevertheless for most students, given their starting points, progress from Year 7 to Year 9 is satisfactory.

119. In the 2002 GCSE mathematics results, the proportion of the college's students achieving grades A\* to C was below the national average but showed a considerable improvement on the 2001 results. Based on the students' achievements at the end of Year 9, the percentage of students gaining A\* to C grades was well above that found in similar schools. Overall, students achieve well in Key Stage 4 considering their starting point. Boys, however, were less successful in achieving the higher GCSE grades, A\* to C, than girls, despite equivalent starting points. Students from minority ethnic groups achieved at least as well as others in the college. Those students who have EAL gained expected results, including three of the eight A grades. Students who have special educational needs in mathematics successfully achieved their expected grades or better.
120. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment by the end of Year 9 in lessons is well below average, and similar to that recorded in the national tests. Nevertheless, attainment ranges across the mathematics sets from above to well below average. Higher-attaining students have good numerical skills and are confident in using a range of mental methods in their calculations. They have strong manipulative algebra skills and work systematically on a range of tasks, involving inverse operations and solving linear equations, as in a Year 9 lesson for able students. Oral skills are satisfactory with students confident in attempting to explain their work. They are able to express generalisations in words but not always symbolically. Middle-group students are well able to work with directed numbers in the context of temperature, for example, and to recognise simple line and rotational symmetries. They are confident in using time in-word problems. However, they sometimes pay scant attention to the mathematical syntax of their solutions, misusing equality signs, for example. Students do not readily correct errors or return to incomplete work. For some lower-attaining students in Year 9, and for those with special educational needs, weak literacy skills hamper their work in mathematics, as do social and behavioural skills. However, in a lesson on shape and space, they were able to recall angle types and facts in simple diagrams and to begin to measure angles accurately.
121. By the end of Year 11, the standards students achieve in mathematics lessons are below average overall. However, many higher- group students reach at least average standards and show a good understanding of the problem-solving process in their investigative work. They approach tasks systematically and are able to offer algebraic generalisations although they are not always able to explain and communicate their findings clearly. In a statistics lesson in Year 10, such students showed good recall of earlier learning and were enthusiastic in their application of measures of average to problems. Nevertheless, in a higher-group Year 11 class, a significant number of students struggled with GCSE A-grade tasks because of confusion over co-ordinate and vector notation.
122. Significant numbers of students in middle and lower groups have major gaps in their understanding of basic mathematical concepts. For example, in work on fractions, students did not appreciate the concept of equal parts of a whole. Although students are able to carry out mechanical calculations competently, they often find difficulty applying their number skills to problems and in deciding which operations to use. In other areas of mathematics such as shape and space, many students are successful in recalling angle facts and in applying them to simple shapes. Students with special needs make good progress in Years 10 and 11, improving for example, their understanding of time and becoming proficient in using money notation accurately.

123. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall. There is a small proportion of good and very good teaching. Because of the very high turnover of staff, the National Numeracy<sup>15</sup> initiative is only now beginning to influence classroom practice positively. In the best lessons, very thorough planning ensures the work is well matched to the students' needs and earlier learning. The pace of lessons is brisk so that the students make the best use of their time as in a Year 9 lesson on manipulative algebra and a Year 10 lesson on sequences. Oral work is well used to challenge the students' understanding and there is a considered balance between consolidating previous work and acquiring new skills. The thoughtful use of resources, such as the use of the interactive white board, helps students' concentration. Illustrative examples set mathematics clearly in everyday situations, such as the European Parliament. In these lessons, students apply themselves well because there is a sufficient range of activities to engage their interest. In the less effective lessons, teachers mostly plan the content of their lessons satisfactorily, secure in their knowledge of mathematics. However, in some lessons students spend too long on written activities and do not benefit sufficiently from oral interactions or from imaginative and visual resources to support their learning. As a result, too many students become disengaged and waste time in idle chatter. In a few lessons, teaching objectives are too general so that learning outcomes are not clearly distinguished and there are missed opportunities to assess and record the students' strengths and weaknesses. Work is not always well matched to the students' needs, including those with special educational needs. Although individual students often receive good and immediate feedback on their work in lessons, and some marking is appropriately diagnostic, regular and frequent, not all groups benefit from sufficient guidance on how to improve. Incomplete work, such as homework, is not always followed up. Some students reflect some teachers' untidy board work in the poor presentation of work.
124. Since the last inspection, progress within the mathematics department is satisfactory. The department now uses entry data, and test and examination information well to monitor the students' progress over time. The students' standards of attainment in GCSE mathematics are rising. Nevertheless, the department's drive to raise attainment has been significantly hampered by the extreme turbulence in the mathematics staffing over the past two years. Only the present very good leadership and management of the department have enabled the high number of temporary and unqualified mathematics teachers to sustain the satisfactory quality of teaching. A continuous programme of induction and staff development has maintained the morale of the mathematics staff, enabling overseas-trained teachers to adapt to the challenging circumstances of the college. However, much remains to be done, including reviewing schemes of work and improving resources for ICT to enhance the students' experience of mathematics. Priority needs to be given to stabilising the staffing in the department and to continuing the drive to develop the quality of teaching and learning so that standards of attainment in examinations are further improved. The department has a strong and shared commitment to improve its provision for the students and has the capacity to do so. Good accommodation for mathematics is assisting the department in creating a welcoming mathematical environment, well respected by the students.

## SCIENCE

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

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<sup>15</sup> National Literacy and numeracy strategies have been in place in primary schools for some time. They are designed to raise achievement in English and mathematics and recommend specific approaches and teaching styles. The strategies have been introduced into the secondary phase.

#### Strengths

- Good teaching, despite the turbulence in staffing over recent years.
- The students' results in GCSE examinations are improving.
- A very good curriculum in Years 10 and 11, catering for the learning needs of a diversity of students.
- Good leadership and management of the subject.
- Development of good teaching resources to enhance learning experiences in Years 7 to 9.

#### Areas for improvement

- National test results at the end of Year 9 are well below average.
- Students have too few opportunities to analyse and evaluate investigative work in science lessons.
- Good marking practice is not shared.

125. Overall, the attainment of students in science when they enter the college is well below average. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 show standards consistently well below average. Attainment at the expected Level 5 and above, in 2002, was below that of schools in a similar context, but there was no significant difference compared to students' attainment in English and mathematics. The proportion of students gaining the higher Level 6 or better was

also below that in similar schools. Boys' test results were higher than those of the girls in 2002. Nevertheless, for most students, given their starting points, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.

126. In the 2002 GCSE science results, the proportion of the college's students achieving grades A\* to C was below the national average but showed considerable improvement on the 2001 results. Based on the students' attainment at the end of Year 9, the results were well above those found in similar schools. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

127. In the work seen in lessons, and from the analysis of students' notebooks, standards in Year 9 and Year 11 are better than the test and examination results of 2002. In Year 9, standards in lessons and written work, although variable, are overall below national expectations. In Year 11, standards of the current work seen are, overall, in line with expectations nationally.

128. Students' overall achievement in science by the end of Year 11 is good. They enter the college with attainment that is well below the national average. By the end of Year 11, they gain GCSE results that are below the national average. These are better GCSE results than might be expected in relation to students' attainment on entry to the college. Teachers add value to the education of these students through good teaching, high expectations and appropriately demanding work. For the lowest attaining students and students with special educational needs, the key to their achievement is the constant encouragement that they receive. In addition, learning activities are planned that enable them to work in ways which help them concentrate and provide them with opportunities to reinforce, in different ways, what they have learnt. The college implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, with its emphasis on literacy through science teaching, is contributing to such improvements in approach. However, opportunities for using ICT in science are insufficient and contribute only slightly to overall standards.

129. The quality of teaching, overall, is good. Teachers have a good level of expertise in their subjects and plan lessons well to give variety of task and clear progression from previous work. For example, in a mixed ability Year 11 class, the teacher employed 'mind-mapping' techniques, relevant video footage and a differentiated<sup>16</sup> worksheet to address the key learning objectives in her detailed lesson plan on rock formation. In a Year 8 lesson on energy transfer with higher attaining students, the teacher challenged the students' thinking by posing the question, 'How could you use the idea of a bimetallic strip to make a circuit for controlling temperature in a car radiator system or an oven?' The students rose to this challenge and designed some good

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<sup>16</sup> Differentiated work is work that is carefully constructed and pitched at the various ability groupings within a class. Differentiated worksheets essentially cover the same topic of work but are pitched to provide the necessary support or challenge to suit the needs of a specific group of students.

circuits on paper. Good support is given to lower attaining students and to students with special educational needs, so that these groups can work easily alongside other students. Students respond well to teacher input, relationships are good and learning is productive. In some lessons, there is the lack of good quality visual material to stimulate and sustain the interest of all learners.

130. Students are managed well to ensure good behaviour and the atmosphere is conducive to purposeful work. In some classes, however, students are not sufficiently engaged in discussion and opportunities to assess learning are not taken. Opportunities for students to reflect critically on the results of scientific investigations are not created in these lessons. Marking is regular and gives encouragement through targets for improvement. However, in some cases there is insufficient guidance for students on how they can improve their level of work.
131. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear focus on improvement and strategies to raise standards, which are proving to be effective by the end of Year 11. Good schemes of work are evolving, with clear reference to tasks that stretch the students of higher capability. The department handbook provides very good support for teachers, and an appropriate development plan is in place. Assessment data are gathered well and being increasingly used in course planning and to look for underachievement of students. Test result data for students aged 14 to 16 are used well to relate to predicted targets and progress. Monitoring of teachers' work is good, and used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses. Accommodation is no more than satisfactory, but used well with effective display. Resources are well managed except for the lack of ICT equipment, notwithstanding the single interactive whiteboard used by some teachers. Members of staff contribute well to development, work effectively as a team and are supported well by able technicians.
132. Since the last inspection, progress within the science department is good. The department now uses entry data, and test and examination information well to monitor the students' progress over time. The students' standards of attainment in GCSE science are rising. A comprehensive curriculum is now offered in Years 10 and 11 that caters very well for the learning needs of a diversity of students. The department is encouraging innovative approaches to learning, having developed its own interactive CD-ROM with web links for study and revision in Years 7 to 9. Raising attainment levels in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and creating more opportunities for students to analyse and evaluate investigative work in science are areas for further improvement.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Teachers have a good understanding of students' individual needs.
- Students make good progress in practical work.
- The department is well managed.

### Areas for improvement

- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 lacks pace and challenge.
- Students are weak at developing their ideas in sketchbooks and in appraising their work.
- Students do not always understand Day to day assessment.
- Opportunities for students to use ICT in art are insufficient.

133. Standards of students' art and design work at the age of 14 are below average. Students enter the college with weak standards in art but achieve well across the key stage in practical work, because of the sensitive and encouraging style of teaching they receive. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are better than those found in Year 9 because prior to September 2001 many students lost interest in the subject as a result of severe fluctuations in staffing. In work inspected on Cubism, students demonstrated modest drawing skills, but evidenced some imagination in developing their initial ideas into paintings in which they made competent use of colour. Students show some flair for design, as in the 'Life in a Box' project, but, as in other aspects of practical work, end products

are often marred by insufficient attention to detail. This is often as the result of erratic attendance. Sketchbooks are weak: few students use them effectively to record images and develop their ideas. Students are rarely able to recall the work of artists and styles studied, or evaluate their own efforts with confidence and understanding, partly because of their weak levels of general literacy.

134. The standards of students' work at the age of 16 are below average. Students enter the GCSE course with extremely varied standards in art, some arriving from other schools in both Years 10 and 11. In the 2002 GCSE examination, the proportion of students gaining grades A\* to C was well below the national average, but the number gaining a pass in the A\* to G range was in line with the average. The decline in results in the past few years has been caused by discontinuity of staffing. The 2002 results suffered because students' coursework was not completed.
135. The work seen during inspection indicates standards to be improving, with the majority of students showing at least good achievement in their acquisition of practical skills. Work seen in Year 10 is often more assured than in Year 11. Students working in ceramics produce good work, either in pots or imaginative figures. In work seen on 'Natural Forms', students often produce attractive final painted pieces built on keen observational drawing and refining of ideas in a variety of media. However, many students lack security in drawing, designing and appraisal skills. Weak research skills, presentation of sketchbooks and general low literacy skills impede the progress of the majority of students. Erratic attendance of some students further compounds these problems.
136. Across the age range there are no significant differences in standards and achievement between students of different gender, students with special educational needs or those speaking English as an additional language. Students identified as talented in art achieve well and produce good practical work.
137. Students display satisfactory attitudes and behaviour in the majority of lessons. They form constructive relationships and relate well to teachers, but often show limited initiative. A small minority of students in Year 11 show limited commitment to their work and need much individual encouragement.
138. Students' learn effectively in art because teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers are highly sensitive to each individual's needs and provide an ethos of positive encouragement and skilled guidance in order to build students' self-esteem and provide a secure foundation for learning. Lessons are orderly and well disciplined, providing a framework on which students can build the consistent working habits essential to consolidate practical skills in art, as evidenced in Years 8 and 10. All teachers are art specialists who are able to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for art by devising good visual resources, imaginative topics, and by providing skilled demonstrations, as in Year 11 ceramic work. Students develop their art skills well because teachers provide maximum time for individual practical work, and circulate in their classes, efficiently ensuring all make some progress in each lesson. Students achieve well because teachers keep detailed individual students' records in their planning and are alert to likely needs. Homework to consolidate learning is set appropriately but in Years 10 and 11 does not make sufficient demands on students. With older students, lessons often lack a sense of challenge and teachers accept rather a slow pace of learning. Day-to-day assessment is inconsistent, especially in Years 10 and 11: students are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. They lack sufficient guidance expressed in a way that they will understand. There is some inconsistency in marking. Teachers do not enable students to improve their standards of literacy where weaknesses in spelling, grammar and presentation in sketchbooks go uncorrected.
139. Students' learning in art is significantly enhanced by the good quality of leadership and management provided by the head of department. There is a clear vision for art reflected in the strong commitment of the new team of art staff. The department is well aware of the problems they have inherited and have made a sensible decision to build students' confidence by concentrating on practical skills and displaying their achievements well in class and about the college. The department's developmental strategy recognises the range of current weaknesses, and plans are in place to address the paucity of ICT in art lessons, refine assessment strategies

and review approaches to developing students' evaluative and research skills. Provision for art to consolidate students' learning in literacy and numeracy is not formally embedded in schemes of work. The provision of lunchtime art clubs and gallery visits contributes positively to students' experience of art.

140. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, considering the intervening period of radical change the college has experienced.

## CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is basic, but developing, and is **satisfactory overall**.

### Strengths

- The college ethos built on respect for others, and the overall good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, underpin the provision for citizenship, as does the college's commitment to equal opportunities.
- English, geography and religious education provide good support for citizenship.
- The opportunities students have to take responsibility within the college and the work of the college council.

### Areas for improvement

- There is no overall programme co-ordinator for citizenship.
- Many subjects miss opportunities to enhance students' understanding of citizenship.
- There is no formal procedure for reporting and assessing citizenship.

141. At Feltham, work in citizenship is being developed in three main ways. The first is through the college's ethos. The college is developing as a community that is based on the promotion of respect for others. There is a very strong commitment to equal opportunities. This ethos underpins students' developing awareness of citizenship. This process is supported well by the good overall provision for students' development in spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The college is creating further opportunities for students to take responsibility for others and participate in the life of the college community. The college actively seeks to provide opportunities for success, for participation within the groups and teams that contribute to college life. Co-operation, teamwork, acting as mentors, achieving a 'personal best' within sport - all such opportunities feed into developing citizenship as an active process and not just a subject. To this can also be added events such as college assemblies where the community aims of the college are re-inforced and opportunities are taken to recognise publicly students' contributions to the community.
142. The second way that it is being developed is through the contribution by subjects. Currently, much of this is incidental rather than part of an overall planned provision. Two subjects in particular, geography and religious education, plan their contribution to citizenship. In both subjects this is done well. In the religious education short certificate course students follow the new national citizenship programme, while in geography frequent opportunities arise for students to discuss contemporary issues such as eco-tourism. English also makes a significant contribution. The nature of the work develops skills of enquiry and communication and develops students' skills in participation. Texts that are studied raise fundamental questions about how individuals take action or view their world.
143. The third way the subject is being developed is through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE). A sample of these lessons was seen.
144. The quality of teaching in citizenship is satisfactory. In a Year 8 lesson on the youth justice system, the teacher enabled students to develop their understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their actions across a range of current social issues by choosing material relevant to their own lives. Class discussion was well used to ensure all participated and students were enabled to develop their opinions. In a Year 10 lesson discussing business plans students' learning was less secure because - in spite of some good lesson planning - limited use

was made of questioning, and students became unfocused. In a Year 8 lesson on animal rights learning was restricted because the teacher did not encourage sufficient class discussion.

145. Students' attitudes towards work in citizenship are satisfactory. They behave sensibly in most lessons and are keen participants where required. They form good relationships with teachers and are generally willing to share their ideas in discussion when given the opportunity. Many reflect on the work they complete and often develop some independence of thought.
146. There is currently no overall co-ordinator for citizenship, but the college works hard to address this. The heads of learning in Years 7 to 9 incorporate this programme into PSHCE lessons, but the quality of its delivery by form tutors is not formally monitored. In Years 10 and 11 an assistant head teacher has oversight of the programme and a specific team of teachers teach it effectively. There is currently no formal system for the assessing, recording and reporting of students' standards and achievement in citizenship. The college council provides a good forum for all students to see how decisions are made in a democracy. Good opportunities are provided for selected students to engage in debates with other schools.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- A very detailed scheme of work is in place for Years 7 to 9.
- Assessment across the department in all subject aspects is good.
- Recording of student's progress is very detailed.
- Teachers work hard to ensure students' success, have very good subject knowledge and impart it effectively.
- The department is very well managed

### Areas for improvement

- Some examination subject schemes of work do not include enough detail.
- There are insufficient three-dimensional detail sketches in design folios.
- ICT is not used enough to support learning.
- Further improvement is possible in examination results.

147. Teacher assessments for Year 9 students in 2002 were significantly below national expectations. Students start from a very low baseline of skills, and severe staffing problems in the recent past have not helped matters. In Year 11 in 2000, 30 per cent of students achieved GCSE A\* to C grades. These numbers dropped to 15 per cent in 2001, with girls achieving higher grades than boys. In 2002, results had improved to 26 per cent achieving A\* to C grades, with boys and girls achieving equally. Results in food technology are higher than in graphics and resistant materials. In food technology over half the students achieved good added value this year.
148. Standards in the work seen of students aged 11 to 14 are satisfactory. Starting from a very low base students achieve well and make good progress. They develop a range of basic skills and techniques within food, resistant materials and graphics. For example, in Year 7 students learn how to mark out and saw shapes of their own design, in brass, for their balancing figures. Most are able to use junior hacksaws accurately and safely. In Year 8, in graphics, students continue to develop a range of drawing skills, including scale drawings in third angle. Their work is mostly neat and well laid out. They also develop design skills through sketches of garden layouts.
149. In Year 9 food, most students are able to weigh ingredients carefully, select the correct utensils for mixing, prepare ingredients professionally, work at a fast pace and make maximum use of the available time for cooking and cleaning up. All students, including the physically disabled, achieve success in making, for example, a Victoria sandwich sponge cake. They all display mature, sensible attitudes. Students also learn how to draw star diagrams and use them to evaluate different varieties of crisps using a tasting word bank, which helps to develop literacy skills. Students with additional learning needs work very well and all produce very neat diagrams. By the end of Year 9 all students have experienced all elements of the design process of

analysing, researching, specifying, developing ideas, making and evaluating, within different contexts. The standard of work seen in workbooks and folios represents a positive picture with good marking, assessment and feedback comments.

150. Standards of work in the current Years 10 and 11 are good. Students select from a range of courses, which cater for the very wide ability range. With the staffing becoming more stable, more students are making rapid progress and developing their true potential. They are keen to succeed and are incorporating a wide range of skills and processes in their coursework. For example, in a Year 10 graphics lesson students developed their radio design. They gained an understanding of the differences between analogue and digital volume adjusters and considered a range of movements for volume control. They produced good freehand sketches of their ideas using a variety of graphical techniques. In a product design lesson, students measured, marked out and cut lap and housing joints to produce carcass constructions that were square and fitted together by dowel joints. Students use these skills later in more open-ended design work.
151. Students concentrate well and work safely and independently. In a built environment lesson in Year 11 students learned how to fit hinges to wood. They worked very carefully to ensure the hinges fitted flush and opened correctly. They all made good progress, had mature attitudes and their behaviour was excellent. In a GNVQ engineering lesson, students learned how to measure and mark out accurate centre points for holes to be drilled in aluminium, using correct engineering tools and procedures. Many students also file shapes and bend metal accurately. The quality of their practical work is good and, as with the work in the built environment project they are enthused by the practical nature of the course. In a resistant materials lesson, students learned how to use a computer aided design software package. They quickly mastered aspects of the software, could navigate it confidently and used tools to build up a buggy design. They were challenged by the task and concentrated well. ICT is being used effectively to replace traditional drawing skills. In food technology students are prepared well for examinations. They are all given background material and checklists to ensure design process coverage. Students work at a good pace as they develop their folios and they present their work well including the use of word processing skills. They enjoy the course and achieve well. Scrutiny of folios shows work of a high standard is being produced. Dramatic improvements are being made in the quality of graphics and resistant materials folios.
152. Teaching and learning are good overall. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better, with several very good and some excellent. All teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. Lessons are prepared well with the correct equipment available, structured with clear aims, and task-sheets to help students achieve success. Good exemplar material is on wall displays and key technical words are introduced and used effectively. Good demonstrations help students learn quickly. For example, in a built environment lesson students were shown how to use a sharp chisel safely and correctly to take off fine slivers of material in order that hinges should fit exactly. At a later stage they were shown how to select the correct size of woodscrew and use a bradawl for starting off the screw in the material. Teachers have good sketching skills and use these to communicate effectively. Students are monitored well in lessons and are given much individual help and advice. There is good assessment practice throughout the subject with work marked regularly. Common examination criteria sheets are used to identify problem areas and wall progress charts are used. These could be more effective if dated targets were given, to make students aware of time constraints.
153. In all the lessons seen the majority of students were attentive and keen to learn. The behaviour of a minority of students tended to slow down the pace of some lessons. Students with special educational needs and students with physical difficulties are integrated fully into all lessons. There is a high proportion of students with special educational needs in some lessons, but all make progress. Relationships between teachers and students are friendly. The overall good quality of the teaching enables students to work in a calm atmosphere. They listen well during skills-based demonstrations, have responsible attitudes and enjoy the subject.
154. The department is very well managed by a recently appointed very enthusiastic head of faculty who has inherited problems of a severe nature. Even so, many of these have been dealt with effectively in a short period of time. There has been a significant recent investment in the department, which has brought significant change to some areas. New schemes of work are in

place and these are transforming learning and are raising standards. Teachers work very well together as a team and are keen to move the subject forward. The head of department monitors the quality of teaching effectively. Contacts with external agencies are being developed. The department is supported well by technicians.

155. There has been progress since the last inspection. The issue of learning resources has been addressed. More design work is being taught, but essential craft-based courses remain appropriately in place. New schemes of work and a new recording system are in place and continue to be developed. Control technology is now in the curriculum. However more ICT facilities are still needed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

### Strengths

- Standards are rising.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good at GCSE.
- Leadership and management are very good and teachers are an effective, stable and dedicated team.
- Review, reflection and joint action are driving a constant development of teaching and learning at all levels.

### Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient time for the subject in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support teaching in the subject.
- There are weaknesses in the way the course is organised in Year 7.

156. Attainment by the age of 14 is well below average as measured by teacher assessments. However, achievement over time is satisfactory given the fact that attainment on entry is well below average. Attainment at GCSE has improved and in 2002 was just above the national average in the proportion of students gaining grades A\* to C. All students entered for the examination gained a grade and achieved well in relation to their scores in National Curriculum assessments on entry to the GCSE course.
157. Inspection evidence confirms that in class students are now achieving better standards by the age of fourteen, but are not yet reaching the national average overall. The way that the course is organised in Year 7, along with the fact that teaching is undertaken by non-specialist geography teachers, means that there is a lack of continuity that slows progress. That said, standards are rising and progress is accelerating in Years 8 and 9. Those students identified as having higher prior attainment are provided with extension tasks, such as longer projects for homework, in which they make good progress. Girls achieve better than boys. There is no evidence of differing achievement between students of different ethnic groups. Students with special educational needs are provided with appropriate work so that they make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers work hard to help those students catch up whose attendance is irregular or who are admitted to the college after the beginning of the year. However, this tends to take valuable teachers' time from the rest of the class. Overall, those who attend regularly are now making good progress in class in Years 7 to 9.
158. In GCSE classes, students have chosen to study the subject and most make good progress in lessons. The course they are following is suitable for their interests. The college has correctly identified improving coursework as the main factor in raising standards. All but a very few students go to Dorset for a week of fieldwork to support their coursework. This experience is valuable in building students' self-confidence; it sharpens their enthusiasm and interest and raises achievement. This strategy is supported well by regular additional coursework clinics after college.
159. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In just under half of lessons seen teaching was very good or excellent and it was good in the rest. Teaching was very good or excellent in the GCSE lessons seen. Time is well used in geography, though there is sometimes slippage at the beginning of lessons as a result of students' late arrival. Lessons are packed with varied activity and materials. Students become very efficient in organising their desktops and manage well a number of printed sheets and textbooks. Learning is driven strongly at a fast pace from the front: teachers have high expectations that students will work hard, and generally they do. Students expend much intellectual energy; learning is productive and students are often tired at the end of a lesson. Planning is very good and preparation for lessons very thorough. Teachers use a standard lesson format so that students know exactly what they are to do at the beginning of every lesson. Students work well in geography because there has been stability of staffing; relationships have developed and clear consistent routines and expectations established. There is some misbehaviour, but this is managed well through good positive behaviour management. There is a strong focus in lessons on learning, rather than student management or control.
160. Four teachers work in the subject from Year 8 to Year 13. All carry other major responsibilities outside the department. All are good subject specialists whose teaching helps students increase their knowledge and understanding and to develop their own ideas. However, the quality of work is hampered because the department cannot gain sufficient access to a computer.
161. Numeracy is used well as an every day tool in lessons. In the GCSE courses students make good use of skills in statistical representation to enhance their coursework but do not use more advanced techniques of statistical analysis. The teaching of literacy in geography is very well planned. Listening skills are a particular target because many students, especially in the lower sets before the age of fourteen, lack listening skills and find concentration difficult. For them the one-hour lesson is too long. Good open questions require students to use what they know to answer questions and solve problems. Writing frames in great variety are used to develop students' writing skills. There is clear evidence of a requirement to write in different styles and this is linked well with the development of thinking skills. 'Mind maps' help them organise their thoughts and see the links between different strands of knowledge. This in turn supports their

extended writing. These developments are beginning to raise the standards of students particularly in the average sets before the age of fourteen.

162. Teachers make very good use of visual stimulus in a visual subject. Students gain well from the strong visual impact of video. One girl could tell a teacher exactly where the video clip on factory farming had finished in the last lesson. The interactive white board provides an exciting window on the world and is being increasingly well used by an advanced skills teacher as a base for lesson development. Praise is used well and students are given constant approval and encouragement for what they do successfully. Marking is thorough and sets targets for improvement. Students at GCSE know their target grades but do not always know how to reach them. Assessment is accurate and strongly based on well-collected, appropriate information. Predictions are therefore secure; though data are sometimes difficult to retrieve quickly because of the way they are stored.
163. Leadership and management of the department are very good: there is a sustained focus on developing teaching and learning, and reflection on how to improve. There is a strong team identity, which is enhanced by classrooms being close together and by very good working relationships where problems are shared. Materials are prepared in the department. They are usually photocopied: this process is unusually expensive, which leaves little funding for development.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- The successful leadership and management of a strong department.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students' ability to achieve.
- Students are enthusiastic about history and work with interest.

### Areas for improvement

- Students are not making enough use of ICT.

164. In 2001, GCSE results were above the national average for all maintained schools. Seventy-six per cent of students achieved grades A\* to C. Girls did better than boys. In terms of relative performance, history was the strongest subject in the college. Students reached higher standards in history than they did in all other subjects in the college. In 2002, the GCSE results were again above the national average as 64 per cent of students gained grades A\*-C.
165. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Year 9 many students have not yet reached nationally expected levels of attainment. However, they are achieving well in terms of their attainment levels on entry. Overall, students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying. They appreciate that history is based on evidence. All, including those with special educational needs, can extract information from a variety of written and pictorial sources. The more able students recognise bias and can interpret sources accurately. They are aware that ideas and attitudes are often related to circumstances, and can explain the importance of different causes and consequences. The majority of students have satisfactory oral and listening skills, but their writing skills are less assured. Lower attaining students can write in simple sentences to describe historical events but their work is frequently flawed by poor sentence construction and spelling errors. Higher attaining students write more extensively and with greater fluency. Their work is generally well presented. Most students show a developing sense of chronology and can use historical terms appropriately.
166. At the end of Year 11, overall attainment is above the nationally expected level. Students' historical knowledge and understanding have deepened. Higher attaining students show independence in following lines of enquiry. They analyse evidence critically to produce reasoned arguments. Lower attaining students use sources to support their narratives and can draw simple

unstructured conclusions. Students listen attentively and participate with significant interest in class discussions, demonstrating good levels of recall.

167. Students arrive at the college with well below average levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. They make good progress over time due to the highly focused teaching of basic skills and their enthusiasm for the subject, which is engendered by their teachers. Lower attaining students, and those with special educational needs, make progress at similar rates to their peers because of the individual support that they receive from their teachers. As a result of the careful planning on the part of teachers, the very good quality of materials, which are carefully matched to the needs of the students, and the skilful interventions, all lessons are accessible to all students. The provision for able students, specifically extension activities in lessons and extension homework, contributes to the good achievement of higher attaining students. A history 'surgery' helps slow or less efficient learners to improve their performance. There is no significant variation in the standards of work produced by students of different ethnic backgrounds.
168. The quality of teaching is the key strength of the department. Across the range, very good teaching leads to clear gains in learning. Without exception, lessons are very well planned, paced and structured. Learning outcomes are clearly outlined and shared with the students at the start of every lesson. Knowledge and skills are systematically consolidated. Substantial effort goes into the reinforcement of literacy skills, specifically by means of language building. Numeracy skills are also incorporated into history teaching. Teachers are confident in their possession of subject knowledge, and exposition is always clear and precise. By challenging students appropriately, for example through skilful questioning, teachers are able to encourage full and meaningful participation in class. Much is done to develop critical thinking skills and to help students to articulate their viewpoint. Effective use is made of plenary sessions to allow students to consolidate their understanding and to confirm progress. Teachers have high expectations of their students and follow a carefully structured approach to convey stability and generate confidence. Secure relationships contribute to an excellent level of classroom control. Students know what is required of them and conform to good standards of behaviour. High quality resources, including a wide range of worksheets, are used to stimulate interest and help understanding. History is a very popular subject with students and many show their interest by opting to continue to study the subject at GCSE.
169. The head of department provides highly effective leadership and management. Clear objectives and policies underpin a firm commitment to sustain and raise standards. Levels of co-operation are excellent as teachers work very hard and share good practice openly. New teachers benefit from the highly supportive character of the department. Led by the head of department, cross fertilisation is encouraged, all teachers pass on skills and less experienced colleagues share new ideas with established teachers. The department produces high quality and imaginative teaching materials for classroom use. Lessons incorporate successfully a diversity of learning strategies, styles and activities that promote high expectations of achievement. Good schemes of work are in place and departmental materials are exemplary in terms of organisation and presentation. Record keeping, tracking and monitoring procedures are clearly defined. Assessment procedures and practices are also well developed. The department operates a policy of target setting for all students. Student records and individual educational plans inform the planning of lessons and the curriculum. Homework is both regular and meaningful. Marking and the standard of diagnostic feedback are very good but there are some omissions in respect of correcting errors in literacy. Displays in the history teaching rooms are of a good standard and designed to celebrate student achievement. As yet the department provides few opportunities to develop ICT skills. This is due to the current pressures on a limited number of college computers. Students can borrow a range of history books from the college library.
170. The department maintains a high profile in the college and contributes to cultural and social education. Moral issues are also addressed through the history curriculum; teachers are exemplary in the values they impart to students. Continuous advances are being made in respect of the good quality of teaching, learning and departmental management recorded at the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good** where students are taught ICT as a subject, but it is not used enough in other subjects to support learning.

### Strengths

- Examination coursework assessment is very detailed with good comments provided for student feedback.
- Students make good progress.
- Good schemes of work are in place for all aspects of the subject.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, work hard and plan lessons well.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT needs developing in the majority of subjects.
- All subjects need to record and report students' capability in ICT.
- The National Strategy needs to be incorporated into schemes of work.
- Raise the higher than average number of GCSE D grades to C grade.
- Monitor examination coursework coverage more rigorously.

171. Year 9 teacher assessments for the last three years have been consistently above national averages. In 2002, boys achieved slightly higher results than girls. In the GNVQ Intermediate, 23 per cent of students entered achieved a pass grade in 2001, whilst in 2002 62 per cent achieved a pass grade and 23 per cent a merit grade, a significant rise in standards. GNVQ foundation pass rate was 50 per cent for both years. In the GCSE short course, 46 per cent of students achieved A\* to C passes in 2000, 26 per cent in 2001 and 23 per cent in 2002. Recent staffing problems have resulted in the drop in standards.
172. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are good. From a low starting point students make good progress and achieve well, to arrive at above average standards by the end of Year 9, within the taught modules. In a Year 7 lesson, students developed their basic word processing skills. Students worked independently and at a good pace. In a Year 8 lesson, students created a spreadsheet for products sold in a tuck shop. They wrote and used formulae correctly to calculate profit per item and product profit from the sale of a number of items and transferred this information into column graphs. Students concentrate well and work confidently. In a Year 9 lesson students undertook their spreadsheet assessment. They navigated through the software confidently to analyse a spreadsheet in order to calculate wages, average food costs and total expenses. Using formulae, total expenses for the hotel were calculated and information converted into bar graphs. Students were challenged by the tasks and worked well. Students with special and additional needs are integrated fully into all lessons. Structured task sheets support students of all abilities well.
173. In current work seen in Years 10 and 11, standards are above average. In the GNVQ course students work on their pre-release examination material enthusiastically. They are challenged by the tasks, based on an adventure theme park event. Their entry tickets are carefully designed with good use of attractive fonts, imported Internet images and good use of colour. Similarly their advertising flyers have interesting and attractive layouts. Meeting agendas, invoices and information leaflets are well presented with an audience being addressed on all occasions. Students use their creative abilities and work independently on their designs. They also create football league databases as part of examination preparation for intermediate level exams. They understand the use of primary and foreign keys within related tables. Evidence in folios shows work of a good standard with considerable effort being put into coursework. Students have already passed their first examination and portfolio assessment with a range of grades from distinction to pass. Students with EAL are supported well with specialist language material and a teacher who guides them very effectively in GNVQ Foundation lessons. Students work well on designing a spreadsheet and entering information. Using a spreadsheet template they are able to calculate the run time for Adventure Park rides holding different numbers of passengers. All students are challenged by the tasks, work very well and sometimes help each other. In a GCSE short course lesson, students worked on their data handling coursework. They gained an understanding of the terms *validation* and *verification* and understood *digit*, *range*, *presence* and

*picture checks.* Students have chosen their own topics

for their databases reflecting their own personal interests. Their work is well collated, monitored and marked effectively with detailed individual feedback given to all students who again put considerable effort into coursework tasks.

174. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory with several good and some very good lessons seen across the age range. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan the majority of lessons well. They are able to manage large classes, usually with a high proportion of special needs students, very well. Lessons begin with clear aims that students understand. Good wall displays show key technical words and these are reinforced in lessons. Lessons move at a good pace and students work independently, helped by well written task sheets. These allow for differentiation and help students of all abilities. Students with special needs, physical disabilities and EAL are integrated well into all lessons, achieve equally well and all make progress. Higher attaining students achieve well. Teachers spend a lot of time marking work and recording student's progress. Good individual feedback is provided to all students. In lessons, students are able to consult records, monitor their progress and measure their attainment using charts based on examination criteria.
175. Behaviour was good or very good in all the lessons seen. Attitudes also are positive. Students enjoy their lessons and are challenged by the tasks. Relationships in all lessons are good. Students are attentive, polite and friendly. They enjoy talking about what they are doing. Students are keen and use computers in the library and in lunchtime clubs.
176. An assistant head teacher is leading the department temporarily, who is also the line manager and who has a good understanding of the department. The permanent head of department manages the subject well. All documentation is of a very good quality. Data systems are in place and are effective. Although the subject is constrained by a leasing agreement new equipment is being gradually purchased. Interactive whiteboards are being used in some subjects. The subject continues to develop through the college development plan. A city learning centre is being built which will provide excellent future resources for the subject. The IBM wired learning initiative is providing more external links. The planned development of the Intranet will help raise student achievement and further develop independent learning skills. Senior management have a clear vision for the future direction of the department. The subject is well supported by a knowledgeable network manager and an enthusiastic technician.
177. The subject has made progress since the last inspection. ICT is now taught discretely to all students across the age range. The Internet is being used for research. An ICT suite has been sponsored to support literacy development. Control technology is now in the scheme of work. However, all students still need access to high-level facilities in all subjects. Equipment access is still a limiting factor.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching by the permanent members of staff.
- Good relationships between teachers and students.
- Good leadership and management.

### Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Problems with the curriculum are affecting progress.
- Schemes of work are not detailed enough to ensure consistency in teaching.

178. Standards at the end of Year 9 in Spanish and French are well below average but are improving. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that attainment was well below average. Students' work seen during the inspection show that standards are below average. Students enter the college with a level of attainment in language-based subjects that is well below average so most students make satisfactory progress up to the end of Year 9. However, progress for some high attaining students and for students with special needs is unsatisfactory.
179. Writing skills are below average in Year 9. High attaining students begin well in Year 7. They produce good accurate work, written in paragraphs, often using relatively complex grammar. Year 9 attainment is variable although some high attaining students achieve standards that are in line with expectations. Year 9 Spanish students demonstrate a good understanding of the simple future tense; some Year 9 French students show that they have mastered the past tense. However, other high attaining students write at a very basic level and there is little evidence of extended writing. Average and lower attaining students perform in line with expectations. Many write accurately. Once again performance varies from one teaching group to another.
180. Standards of oral work by Year 9 are well below average. Most students lack oral confidence. Some develop good pronunciation and fluency but progress is not consistent. High attaining students do not have enough opportunities to produce extended oral work. Listening skills are well developed and are close to the national average particularly in those lessons in which teachers use the target language effectively, in other words, by conducting much of the lesson in the language that is being taught.
181. Students with special needs make satisfactory, often good, progress in lessons during Years 7 to 9. They make particularly good progress in those lessons in which teachers know and support them well. In some lessons, for example, students, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties achieve well because teachers go out of their way to involve them in oral work. Overall achievement of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because most students with special needs have a reduced time allocation by comparison with other students.
182. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below average in Spanish. In GCSE, results in 2002 were well below average for students achieving grades in the range of A\* to C but close to the national average for those achieving A\* to G grades. The performance of boys was better than that of girls in both 2001 and 2002. This goes against the national trend. Students' performance in Spanish was well below their performance in other subjects. In work seen during the inspection standards in Spanish were below average but all students, including those from differing ethnic backgrounds, made satisfactory progress in lessons.
183. In writing, high attaining students in Spanish perform at an average level. They write accurately, often using tenses with confidence but they do not have the variety of expression or the mastery of structure that they need to achieve the higher grades. Most speak fluently and with confidence. The best students are able to extend their oral responses with the support of the teacher.
184. Standards in French at the end of Year 11 are well below average. In GCSE results in 2002 attainment were well below average for students achieving A\* to C grades but were in line with national averages for those achieving grades A\* to G. Performance in French was well below performance in other subjects and results have not improved since the last inspection. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well below average and students' achievement was unsatisfactory. However, students in French have suffered from the college's difficulties in recruiting permanent staff. Writing skills are well below average. High attaining students lack the knowledge of basic grammar to communicate effectively and have few opportunities to produce extended writing. Students lack oral confidence and find it difficult to go beyond basic responses. Low attaining students do not have enough basic vocabulary to cope with listening and reading texts successfully.
185. Learning and teaching are satisfactory overall. In some lessons taught by permanent members of staff learning is very good but, in general, learning is inconsistent. Students learn well in most lessons because relationships between teachers and students are good. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with calmly and effectively. This creates a good working atmosphere in which

students feel secure and are prepared to learn. Middle and low attaining students make good progress in many lessons because teachers are very supportive and use praise effectively so that students respond well even when the work is challenging. In a minority of lessons, classroom management is less effective and in two lessons seen teaching was unsatisfactory because teachers who are new to the college have not had time to form positive relationships with students.

186. Most students learn well because most lessons are well planned. Lesson objectives are clear so that students know exactly what they are expected to achieve. Presentation and revision of vocabulary are usually effective so students understand and can recognize key words. Most lessons plan to develop a variety of language skills effectively. However, students do not develop good oral skills because they are not given enough opportunity for oral practice. Students learn very well in the best lessons because teachers introduce variety and pace into their lessons. In one Year 8 lesson, for example, with students with special needs, the teacher was able to ensure that students made good progress because he introduced the key vocabulary at a brisk pace and followed this with oral work in pairs and individual written tasks. Students appreciated the variety of task and maintained concentration throughout. Learning is less successful in those few lessons that do not have active student involvement.
187. Attitudes are generally positive and behaviour, good. Students respond well to good teaching and, in these lessons, answer with enthusiasm and contribute well. Where teaching is satisfactory they often lack commitment, though they listen well to the teacher. Most students are mature in their relationships with others and show mutual respect. A small minority of students have negative attitudes and exhibit unacceptable behaviour.
188. All permanent members of staff have at least good subject knowledge and most use French and Spanish extensively in the lesson so that students develop good listening skills. Most teachers have good knowledge of National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grade criteria and assess and record students' progress regularly so that they know how well students are doing and are able to cater for their needs. In the best lessons, teachers use this information to challenge students of all abilities and set high expectations. In one Year 7 lesson, for example, the teacher was able to target questions effectively to challenge high attaining students. At the same time she ensured that lower attaining students felt supported and were involved in the lesson. Learning is very good when students not only know the level at which they are working but also what they have to do to improve. Students in one Year 9 Spanish lesson, for example, were trying hard to master the simple future tense because they knew that it was important in helping them move to the next National Curriculum level. In lessons where students make only satisfactory progress teachers do not use information about students to set challenging work particularly for high attaining students. The marking of students' work is thorough, follows college policy and encourages students to raise their achievement. However teachers rarely use marking to point out to students the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Targets set for students tend to relate to improving attitudes rather than achievement. However, there are examples of effective target setting in reports to parents. The faculty is not yet making an effective contribution to developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
189. The time allocation for Modern Foreign Languages is below average and affects the progress that students make, in particular the students with special needs in Years 7 to 9. Students' learning in Years 10 and 11 is affected because students are taught in wide ability groups that make it difficult for teachers to address all their needs successfully.
190. Leadership and management in the faculty are good. The acting head of faculty receives strong support from senior managers. There is a clear educational direction that reflects the colleges' aims. The faculty is working well together as a team. The evaluation of the faculty's performance is good and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are beginning to show results. The induction of new staff is effective. However, schemes of work are not yet effective in achieving consistency in teaching and ensuring continuity and progression. Learning resources are not yet adequate. Although the college has done its best to recruit qualified staff the present situation is unsatisfactory and inadequacy of staffing is the major reason why standards have been, and remain, low and achievement in French in Years 10 and 11 unsatisfactory.

191. Since the last inspection progress was unsatisfactory until August 2002. However, the acting head of faculty who has been in post since September, has already achieved considerable improvements.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Major developments in music since the arrival of the new head of department.
- Good leadership of the department.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students.
- The development of instrumental teaching and extra curricular work.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT.
- The development of a full range of policies and practices in music.

192. Recent GCSE results at grades A\* to C and the average points score were well below the national averages; results at grades A\* to G were at the national average. The standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are at the national average, but the range of work is narrow; work by students in Years 10 and 11 is well below the national average, with evidence of very weak prior knowledge and experience leading to unsatisfactory achievement. Students with special educational needs make good progress, and often achieve as well as their peers. Work to challenge the most able is less well developed apart from extra curricular music and instrumental work.
193. Musical activities outside the main curriculum are developing well, involving a significant number of students. The college choir sang with great success at the senior citizens' Christmas party during the inspection week, and the Christmas concert. A very good rehearsal was seen, and student excitement was almost tangible. Instrumental tuition is also growing rapidly; there is local education authority financial support as well as major subsidy from the college to support students. The focus on keyboard-based practical music making since September has successfully changed the students' view of music, and many students are already experiencing the sweet taste of success.
194. Teaching and learning are both good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The difference is because of the very low ability and experience levels in the GCSE classes. Consequently students lack self-confidence and are very aware of their own low skill levels. They are thus very reluctant to play an active part in the lesson and teacher questions are greeted with almost total silence. The teacher has to work very hard to attain any learning. The good teaching in the earlier years is characterised by very good relationships, where students feel secure as learners, and are confident enough to take risks in their responses. Planning and preparation are very good; clear targets in all lessons are set and shared, and often linked to attainment target success criteria. There is very good teacher feedback and informal assessment inside lessons. Organisation and student management are very good, especially with more difficult classes. Teachers develop students' learning by working at students' listening skills and aural analysis. Learning is also being developed by the teacher giving opportunities for students to practise, and by developing the awareness that students need to refine progressively their compositions rather than just accept their first attempt.
195. Students' response is good, even in the GCSE classes. They understand that a positive attitude to work in lessons is the best way to improve. There is, however, a casual attitude to punctuality in all years. Students respond very well to the calmness of staff. They often listen intently and concentrate deeply. There is a sense of common purpose, but the low self-image of some students gets in the way of their learning.
196. Ensuring that the subject is accessible to all students is a basic principle on which the curriculum, brand new since September, is being intensively developed. It is broad and balanced overall, and includes appropriate world music. Currently the subject does not make use of ICT, as at the last inspection, and as such is in breach of statutory requirements. The ability grouping is not always appropriate for music.

197. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department is inspiring in a quiet but firm way. He has a clear vision of where music should go, and is refining this to take account of local circumstances. The assessment system is good, and being further improved. It is clearly linked to GCSE criteria and National Curriculum Levels but expressed in 'student friendly' terms. There is a significant element of self-assessment.
198. The current head of department took over last September and has had to do a total rebuild of the department. Progress in tackling issues identified in the previous inspection since his appointment has been very good. The assessment scheme is in place and being further refined. The department is still not using ICT although it is a high priority in the department's development plan.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good in the majority of lessons.
- Relationships are very good and as a consequence students are managed well in the majority of lessons.
- Extra-curricular provision is good and many individuals and teams achieve high levels of success.

### Areas for improvement

- Students' levels of attainment throughout the college.
- Complete the revision of the schemes of work.
- Changing and showering facilities in the gymnasium areas.

199. Students who enter the college in Year 7 show good individual skills in some activities but the general standards are well below expectations for students of that age. Assessments made by teachers show that standards by the end of Year 9 are just below the national average. During the inspection the attainment and learning of students in three quarters of lessons was satisfactory, representing current good progress and achievement. This relates directly to the greater stability of staffing within the department and the significant developments that have taken place in the last two years that are helping to raise standards. The impact of these developments has yet to filter throughout the college, however.
200. Standards in Year 9 gymnastics are varied but the majority of students perform vaults at the expected level. The higher attaining students are able to do handsprings over the high box with reasonable techniques and control. They learn the principles of vaulting and acquire new technical vocabulary. The majority of boys can handle a ball at a satisfactory standard in introductory rugby activities in Year 7. In Year 9 hockey and Year 8 basketball, the majority of students are not working at the level expected nationally. Although the majority of students perform basic skills in isolation they are unable to apply the skills with control in more demanding circumstances. Throughout the college students who have special educational needs and those with EAL make progress in line with other students.
201. The college has offered short course GCSE physical education for the past four years. In the 2002 examination, 72 per cent of the students gained a grade in the A\* to C range compared to less than 40 per cent in previous years. During the inspection, the standards students reached in the low ability Year 11 short course group were well below those needed to achieve a grade C. At the moment a group of students in Year 10 is following a full GCSE course whilst another, less able group, is following the short course. Overall, achievement in examination is satisfactory.
202. Whilst overall standards observed during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 are below those expected for students of this age, within lessons students make good progress. In weight training, students make very good progress and use apparatus safely with reasonable techniques. They understand the principles of training and evaluate their progress using good recording sheets

produced by the teacher. Some boys in Year 11 football, especially those who attend centres of excellence, show good skills in shooting and apply their skills well in small-sided games. Girls in Year 10 create dance phrases in small groups and make good progress in compositional skills. Standards of performance are satisfactory overall, although the majority of the small group perform with good variety. The small group of girls in Year 10 make good progress in football but attainment is below average. Only in Year 11 boys' badminton were standards poor, with the majority of boys unable to perform basic shots with control.

203. Teachers have a good range of skills and this enables students in the majority of lessons to make good progress. Lessons throughout the college which are taught by experienced and qualified teachers are mainly good and, occasionally, very good. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are always at least satisfactory and, in half of the lessons, are good. Teaching in the majority of lessons in Years 10 and 11 was good or better. Only in one Year 11 lesson was poor teaching observed. In this lesson disruptive behaviour was not managed and students did not listen, follow instructions or show any intention of performing the skills introduced. This situation is not the norm as the inexperienced teacher was with a difficult group that is taught mainly by a more experienced teacher who was not available because of a college trip.
204. Lessons are usually planned with clear objectives that are often shared with students so that they know what they are about to learn. Occasionally, however, objectives are not clear and identify tasks rather than intentions. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations and instructions so that students know what to do and how to improve. Relationships are very good and teachers and students show mutual respect. Students are given good opportunities to work individually and in groups. Teachers manage students well in the majority of lessons and ensure that they stay on task, work with good physical effort and behave well. Teachers enable students to acquire new skills and challenge them to improve through planned, progressive activities and appropriate intervention in most lessons. However, occasionally, students have insufficient opportunities to apply their skills in appropriate game situations.
205. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles and interact well when supporting individuals and groups. In some lessons tasks and apparatus are adapted to enable students of all abilities to achieve at an appropriate standard. Appropriate use is made of technical vocabulary and key words in some lessons, which enables students to explain more accurately what it is they are doing. Numeracy skills are not used frequently in lessons, but college fantasy football and basketball leagues enable students to use percentages and number operations. In GCSE lessons good use is made of CD-ROM's and Internet research in order to gain knowledge of anatomy and physiology and to analyse performance. Good use of video in dance enables students to improve their vocabulary of movement and to gain awareness of good quality. Students warm up in lessons but there are insufficient opportunities for them to gain knowledge and understanding of fitness and health. Within lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to evaluate their own performance and that of others in order to develop their analytical skills.
206. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, students behave well and show good attitudes in most lessons. They respond well to questions, are keen to answer and do so politely and sensibly in the main. Students have good sporting attitudes and abide by the rules of the particular activity that they are playing. Attitudes are particularly good in dance because the teacher provides good opportunities for the girls to work effectively together in small groups. Students are very well supported, encouraged and challenged when they work together in small groups to refine and improve their dance motifs. Similar good interaction keeps individuals working hard in weight training. The teacher provides very good individual support as students work hard on their own programmes. Even when weather conditions are difficult boys and girls display very good attitudes to outdoor lessons. In a Year 10 girls' football class, students were keen and well behaved and tried to improve their limited skills. They responded very well to the positive encouragement given by the teacher who ensured that students were kept interested and on task. The group is very small and the department is considering strategies to encourage better participation in girls' activities in Years 10 and 11. Relationships, attitudes and behaviour are very good in the Year 11 boys' football group. Students listen well and they play games in a very good sporting manner. Only one theory lesson was seen and that was in a Year 11 low attaining group. Behaviour in this class is good and the attitudes of half of the class are very

good. They are keen to answer questions and are interested in learning. However, the other half of the class is not confident in their knowledge, has missed many lessons and is disinclined to participate at all.

207. At the moment the department has a head of boys' and joint heads of girls' physical education. An overall head of department would facilitate further development of the department. The departmental staff work well together and are sharing responsibilities to revise schemes of work within their own areas of strength. This scheme needs completing as soon as possible. Assessment procedures to track students' progress are good, with Levels and effort grades being recorded for each block of work. Students are involved in self-evaluation and identification of areas for improvement.
208. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and many individuals and teams achieve highly at local and regional level. Some individuals achieve very highly in rugby league and are in national squads. Accommodation and resources are very good overall but the gymnasium changing and showering facilities need refurbishing. The college has very good links with the community and local professional soccer, rugby, basketball and ice hockey clubs.
209. Since the last inspection the personnel in the department has changed entirely. Progress since the inspection is satisfactory overall, but in the last two years substantial and significant positive changes have been made. Learning is at the heart of all lessons and teaching is good in the majority of lessons.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The department is very well led and managed.
- Standards in the Short Course GCSE are above national averages.
- Some students in Years 9 and 10 are entered for the Short Course GCSE early.
- The department makes a significant general contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Areas for improvement

- The scheme of work for the non-GCSE course does not yet fully and explicitly reflect the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.
- Not all the teaching of religious education is monitored.

210. Standards of attainment in the GCSE short course are above the national average. Standards of work seen during the inspection on the examination course were also above average. Overall, students have a good knowledge and understanding of the main elements of the syllabus and many can talk confidently about aspects of Christianity and other world religions. They can recall and select information from these religions and use this information to show how religions can have an effect on the lifestyles of individuals and communities. Many also understand and can talk about how religions seek to offer answers to many of the questions brought up by the complexities of existence, such as the meaning and purpose of life and the issues of evil and suffering. Although students find writing under pressure of time, as in examinations, difficult, they can nevertheless produce convincing pieces of extended writing. The students are also good at answering questions.
211. Only a limited number of non-GCSE lessons were observed during the inspection so it not easy to make accurate statements about the standards of attainment of this group of students. Nevertheless, the limited evidence available suggests that standards of attainment are just about in line with the standards required by the Agreed Syllabus. Written work, however, does not show strong evidence of students' ability to make meaningful connections between the topics they study and religious values and beliefs.

212. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are in line with the standards required by the Agreed Syllabus. Most students have a sound general knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions including Islam and Judaism. Many can understand and use religious language in a meaningful way and they can recognise many of the signs and symbols which religions use in their everyday practice. Many students also have a good understanding of how religious belief works itself out in the lives of its followers as well as in the community. Consequently, students can talk meaningfully about things like rites of passage and other events such as festivals and religious ceremonies. Their knowledge and understanding of how some religions have beliefs in common and others have beliefs that are different is much weaker, however. Many students can see and explain how their learning might have relevance to their own lives and experiences.
213. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good and in the examination classes in Years 10 and 11 is very good, because the expectation of the teachers is high and the students are challenged to do their best. Achievement in the non-GCSE classes is less good but is at least satisfactory. Students with special educational needs make good progress, as do students who have EAL, because specially prepared work and materials, as well as some support in class, enable them to make the most of the time available. The gifted and talented students and more able students generally also make good progress because they have the opportunity to sit the GCSE examinations early. Overall, there is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls.
214. Overall, the behaviour and attitudes of the students are good, though often very good and sometimes unsatisfactory. Where they are unsatisfactory this is largely a reflection of uncertainty in the teaching and control of classes not as strong as it could be. Otherwise and in the main, the students are well behaved and concentrate on their tasks. They show an interest in their work and willingly participate in the activities of the lessons. Their level of interest is indicated in the increasing number of students who are following the GCSE course and the number of students in Years 9 and 10 who are sitting the examination a year early. The students are respectful of the teacher and of each other and they respect one another's viewpoints and opinions.
215. Overall, the teaching is good but is variable. Very good or better teaching was seen in about half of the sample of lessons. It is sometimes satisfactory and two unsatisfactory lessons were seen. An example of excellent teaching was also seen. Where the teaching is very good or excellent, lessons are characterised by an unambiguous religious content and it is this that leads the learning. The objectives of the lessons are clear both to the teacher and to the students themselves, and these objectives are written down as well as stated so that students can refer to them constantly as the lesson progresses. The objectives contain not only knowledge and understanding but also evaluation and, more specifically, an opportunity for students to give personal responses to the religious and other issues raised in the lesson. There is a good balance in these lessons between learning from religions and learning about religions. The very good and excellent teaching is also characterised by high expectations and a fast pace and this keeps the students engaged in their work. Subject expertise is strong. Most lessons are also calm and pleasant and relationships are good. The unsatisfactory teaching, is characterised by uncertain and unclear objectives and some uncertainty in the subject matter. These lessons are also characterised by inadequate control and so learning is limited. Generally, homework is set and the department has an effective marking and assessment system. The use of information technology is restricted by problems of access. The effective teaching makes a significant contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in its reflection on many life-issues and in its study of moral and social issues in world religions. The effective teaching also makes a significant contribution to citizenship.
216. The department is very well led and managed. Normally the staffing is very good but at the time of the inspection several permanent members of staff were not in the college and so the staffing was only satisfactory. The head of department is unable to monitor all the teaching of religious education due to restrictions of time. The accommodation is good and the resources are very good. The department has very detailed and extensive documentation, which includes policies on differentiation and provision for students with special educational needs. No significant issues were raised at the last inspection other than the need for statutory provision in the sixth form.

Good GCSE results have been maintained and the students have improved in their skills of independent learning. Overall, progress since the last inspection is good.

## DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **satisfactory** in Years 10 and 11.

### Strengths

- Work done to improve standards at GCSE in drama.

### Areas for improvement

- Provision for drama in Years 7 to 9.

217. Drama through role-play and some text work forms part of the Year 7 to 9 English provision. At the moment it does not exist as a separate subject at this level. This is because of staffing issues over the last two years. The time allocation is currently being used for the 'You can do it' course. It is hoped to return Drama to the Year 7 to 9 curriculum, when the college has been able to appoint a head of department.

218. Attainment in drama dropped to a standard well below the national average in 2001, having previously been close to the national average. Results improved in 2002, and work seen by the current Year 10 and 11 groups indicates that this improvement will continue. The college has taken effective steps during the staffing difficulties to provide appropriate teaching to raise standards. Senior management view the subject as being very important to the college and, in the past drama has been one of the college's most successful subjects.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

### **GCE AS level courses\***

*At the time of publication 2002 post 16 figures are not available -comparisons are made to national figures for 2001*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Art	1	0	96	0	46	0	6.57
Business	3	100	92	0	32	1	5.5
Media Studies	3	100	93	33	31	2.8	5.53
Science	2	50	N/a	0	N/a	2	N/a

### **GCE A level and AVCE courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Business	6	50	92	0	32	2.3	5.5
Chemistry	2	100	90	0	43	4.0	5.9
Drama	4	50	99	0	38	3.0	6.6
English	8	100	95	37.5	37	6.0	5.9
Geography	6	66.6	92	16.6	38	3.3	5.7
History	4	75	88	25	35	3.5	5.4
IT	9	77.7	86	50	23	4.4	4.62
Mathematics	4	75	87	50	43	6.5	5.8
Physics	7	85.7	88	28.5	40	4.3	5.6

### **Intermediate vocational qualifications**

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
ICT	13	84	73	23	N/a	0	N/a

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

219. In mathematics the inspection covered the A2-level and the AS-level courses offered by the college. Students do modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. Opportunities to re-take GCSE mathematics after 16 are offered by the adult education centre rather than the college. This aspect of the provision was not inspected.
220. In science the focus was on physics, but chemistry and biology were also sampled. One lesson each of chemistry and biology was observed. Both were good. Good teaching included good explanation and a well-structured sequence of activities. This led to students gaining a good understanding of the arrangement of bases in DNA (biology), and using the technique of volumetric analysis to determine the concentration of chloride ions in sea-water (chemistry).

### Mathematics

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

#### Strengths

- The students' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory given their starting points.
- Students achieve well in pure mathematics.
- The department provides well for the needs of individual students.
- The relationships between teachers and students are good. Students have confidence in their teachers.
- Teachers give generously of their time to help students outside class time.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students achieve less well in statistics and mechanics modules than in pure mathematics modules because of the limited time allocated to these modules.
- There are insufficient resources for students to support their independent study of mathematics.
- Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to post-16 mathematics lessons.
- Numbers studying AS-level and A2-level mathematics modules are very small.

221. The number of students studying AS-level and A2-level mathematics courses in the sixth form is very small. As a result, it is difficult to make secure judgements about the standards reached in national terms. In 2001 standards were below average, reflecting partly the students' starting points but also the influence of traumatic events in the local community. In the 2002 A2-examination, two of the four students obtained the higher A and B grades. All four students obtained a pass grade. Additionally, two students studied AS mathematics courses. Their results were lower than expected, given their starting points. Only one of the two students achieved a pass grade. For both of these students, results in pure mathematics modules were significantly better than those in mechanics and statistics. Overall students' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory given their starting points.
222. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' notebooks in the current Years 12 and 13 confirms that attainment is, overall, average. Some students are recent arrivals to the college who have a wide range of previous mathematical experiences. While all students in a Year 12 pure mathematics module, for example, were able to substitute values accurately in polynomials, some found difficulty in identifying the associated factors efficiently. In the single weekly statistics lesson, students' successfully tackled tasks involving tree diagrams, a recapitulation of Year 11 work in probability. Some students new to the college have little or no experience of probability in their pre-sixth form mathematics. This, combined with the very limited curriculum time available for the module, contributes significantly to the students' underachievement in statistics. In a Year 12 mechanics lesson, all students were able to build successfully on their Year 11 work on Pythagoras theorem, applying it to some early examples of forces and resultants. However, here too, the timetable allocation for mechanics is insufficient for some students. In a Year 13 pure mathematics lesson, students had good recall of earlier work and were able to use their manipulative algebra skills confidently in finding the limiting values of

sequences. They applied themselves very well to their tasks and made good progress in using their understanding of arithmetic and geometric progressions in this work. Generally, even able students rely heavily on their teachers and show little inclination to pursue topics beyond what is expected by their teachers. Nonetheless, library resources, restricted by budgetary considerations, give little encouragement to the students to widen their reading of mathematics. Given their starting points, most students are making satisfactory progress.

223. Teaching is good overall. All teachers have good subject knowledge and understand clearly the requirements of the examination syllabuses. The best lessons are carefully structured and give thought to the development of the students' thinking skills. Convincing practical situations are used well to further the students' understanding, as in a lesson on forces. In other lessons, however, teaching is unimaginative, relying too heavily on exercises from textbooks. Some marking of the students' work is cursory and infrequent so that processes by which students arrive at solutions go unchecked.
224. Within the constraints of the current timetable, the department's provision for post-16 mathematics is managed well. However, the limited time available for both AS and A2 mathematics modules affects the students' attainment negatively, in spite of the staff giving generously of their time to support the needs of individuals. Further attention needs to be given to monitoring the students' progress in some lessons so that all teachers are clearly aware of what students actually understand. Nevertheless, through its sixth form provision the mathematics department makes a valuable contribution to raising the aspirations of individual students and has contributed well to some notable successes of students undertaking university mathematics.

## Physics

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good. Lessons involved a well planned sequence of activities.
- Results in national examinations are above average.
- The relationship between teacher and students is good.
- The teacher gives generously of his time to help students outside lessons.
- The development of a website by the teacher to support students' independent study of physics.

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to physics.
- Numbers studying AS-level and A2-level physics modules are small.

225. The number of students studying AS-level and A2-level physics courses in the sixth form is small, but is just big enough for it to be possible to make valid judgments about standards in national terms. In 2001, overall standards achieved in AS-level and A2-level were above average, even though the students' starting points at the beginning of Year 12 were broadly average. Achievement for these students was therefore good overall. A similar pattern was repeated in 2002.
226. The work seen in lessons and in students' notebooks in the current Years 12 and 13 revealed a range of attainment that, overall, was in line with national expectations. For example, in a Year 12 lesson students were able to sketch the relationship between volume and temperature and use it to explain the basis of the Kelvin temperature scale. In a Year 13 lesson, students were able to explain the difference between positive and negative coefficients of resistance in connection with materials whose resistance changes with temperature – metals and semiconductors. They were less confident, however, in extending this idea to possible industrial applications.
227. Teaching is very good in physics. The sole teacher has very good subject knowledge and understands clearly the requirements of the examination syllabuses. All lessons are thoroughly planned, offer a variety of activities related to the lesson objective and provide good opportunities for developing higher order thinking skills. The pace of work is brisk and the material chosen is

appropriately challenging. Student attitudes are very good; they are well motivated and display good intellectual effort.

228. Within the constraints of the current timetable, the science department's provision for sixth form physics is well managed. The teacher gives generously of his time to support the needs of individual students. He supports them outside the classroom with a web-based programme of study and makes a valuable contribution to raising the aspirations of individual students.

## BUSINESS STUDIES

229. Business courses are run Years 12 and 13 (AS/A2 levels). There are no vocational courses at present. Most, but not all, AS students have previously taken GCSE examinations in business.
230. Results in the GCSE short course (usually combined with ICT) show A\* to C grades well below national and school averages in 2001 and 2002, but pass grades near the national average and rising from 2001 to 2002. Girls' and boys' achievements from low starting points were satisfactory due to teaching that was at least satisfactory, and the good availability of computers to help students complete coursework successfully. A new work mentoring system is having a good impact on the achievement of students who previously had little interest in lessons. In two lessons observed in Years 10 and 11, students' achievement was satisfactory overall, reflecting satisfactory teaching with some good features. Standards, still below average, showed some improvement from previous very low levels. In an effective Year 11 lesson students developed a good grasp of cash flow principles.

### Business Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in Business Studies is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- Teachers' very good relationship with students.
- Students' very good attitudes to their work.
- Marking that is of good quality.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students' use of ICT in lessons.
- Extra curricular activities and use of local business placements.
- Students' low standards of literacy and evaluation.
- Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to business studies.

231. Standards in business are below average but are improving. In 2001, the 19 students entered for A-2 level attained well below average pass rates but the proportion obtaining top A and B grades was only just below the national average. Male students achieved significantly better than females, because for at least five female students progress was well below teachers' expectations based on their GCSE average points scores on entry to the AS-level course. Overall, students make satisfactory progress. In 2002, results were similar to 2001.
232. Pass rates in the new AS-level examination were well below average, but students' progress over time was satisfactory in relation to their GCSE entry scores and in the light of very difficult circumstances, due to severe staff shortage and students' absence partly as a result of a very tragic incident involving a student. Achievement has also been adversely affected by a 20 per cent cut in lesson time, and further pressure on time because of additional learning activities such as Young Enterprise.
233. In lessons and work seen, students' standards are below national expectations, but show signs of improvement. Students make good progress in lessons due to good teaching. However, students who do not attend regularly make only satisfactory progress. Year 12 students showed a sound knowledge of marketing concepts, and all students, including some with special educational needs, could explain product decline well. Students found it difficult to apply theory

to real examples due to limited knowledge of real businesses, and did not use ICT enough to draft definitions or present research findings to develop key communication skills. Year 13 students, exploring investment appraisal, showed good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the payback method. In a very good lesson, they made rapid progress in their understanding of critical path analysis, drawing their own diagrams and calculating float times effectively. In work seen, their skills of analysis of financial data, and evaluation of concepts, were below average because they did not use ICT enough to research real business examples or to analyse and present data. Students do not generally read widely enough to develop depth in their description and evaluation.

234. Teaching was good overall in the small sample of lessons seen, and in two lessons was very good. Strong features of teaching were teachers' very good relationships with students, which kept students very well motivated and interested in their case study tasks. Good planning, with clear, comprehensive worksheets, and regular, constructive marking of homework, helped students improve their work. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrated theory clearly and gave students a chance to work in small groups to develop problem solving and team skills. In weaker lessons, teachers focused too much on textbook definitions with too few real examples to develop students' critical thinking, or opportunities for students to use ICT to research and present topics independently.
235. After a period of serious disruption due to staff shortage, the subject is being managed satisfactorily pending the return of the co-ordinator from maternity leave. Temporary unqualified members of staff are well supported, although they lack the knowledge to identify some students' underachievement in lessons. Monitoring of students' overall progress related to predicted grades is good. Despite cuts in lesson time, and a lack of opportunities for out-of-college activities and work placements, the college's inclusion policy provides opportunities for a few students who would be better suited to vocational courses to improve business knowledge and gain better jobs locally. The college is considering running more vocational courses. It is not possible to gauge accurately improvement since the last inspection due to a lack of relevant information, but the subject has very good capacity for further improvement.

## HUMANITIES

236. Geography and history are taught at AS and A2 level. In geography the work was sampled. Teaching in geography was good and students' attitudes to the subject were very good. In 2002, six students took geography at A2-level and achieved grades across the full spectrum. History was looked at in more detail.

### History

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers provide a high level of individual support that enables students to make good progress and achieve well.
- The subject is well led and managed.

#### Areas for improvement

- Greater use of ICT.
- Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to history.

237. In 2001, A-level results were in line with the national average, and the results, particularly those of the girls, compared very well with those in other subjects offered by the college. In 2002, results in history dipped slightly for a small cohort. Given their prior GCSE grades, students achieve well overall.
238. Students make good progress in lessons. Much of this progress is a consequence of the structured teaching style adopted by the department. It also stems from the quality of feedback

that students receive about their work and how to improve it. Careful evaluation of assignments helps students to focus on individual weaknesses. The high level of individual support provided by teachers enables students to acquire confidence in extended writing and to look critically at evidence in order to challenge the assumptions implied in historical analyses. Teachers aim to support the students' development as historians and to encourage them to identify with the discipline. Laying stress on historical sources and their interpretation, teachers aim to engender a sense of historical enquiry. They encourage students to exercise sound judgement when articulating their views and to think historically. As a result, students' contributions in class show

perception and a critical focus. The rapport between teachers and students is positive and influences the approach of students to their work. Teachers have an excellent understanding of the requirements of their students.

239. Overall, teaching is very good. Teachers demonstrate confidence in the presentation of their knowledge and a firm understanding of the topics under study. They select a range of well-structured learning tasks to challenge students appropriately. Learning objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of lessons and assessed in plenary reviews. Teaching is tightly planned so that students confront issues surrounding evidence and the significance of historical issues in a progressive manner. Through skilful questioning and interventions, teachers check on individual learning during lessons and reinforce basic skills. Students respond well to this approach, making good increases in the range of their knowledge and the depth of their understanding. Discussion with students indicates that they appreciate that they are being well taught and feel secure in the requirements of the course. They are aware of their present levels of achievement and their targets for improvement. There is evidence that students are reading to develop their historical understanding.
240. Analysis of written work shows that students are making systematic progress. It is clear that they are using a range of materials and that they are being challenged to develop skills of analysis, interpretation and synthesis. Although standards of written work vary, students show skill in using knowledge both relevantly and effectively. Evaluation of written assignments is regular and meaningful; and marking is both constructive and thorough.
241. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Sixth form teachers work together closely and have a coherent style. Departmental learning resources are good. However, there is limited access to ICT in lesson time, due to pressures on the limited number of computers in the college. Where appropriate, teachers encourage students to use ICT for research purposes, as exemplified by the power point presentations examining post-war Britain, which were produced by Year 12 students. The college library holds a satisfactory stock of books to support A-level study. The department actively encourages students to participate in historical events and activities. The head of department has a clear view of the priorities for the subject and is strongly committed to the further improvement of standards established in recent years. The quality of work seen in Year 12 supports the view that standards should rise in 2004. At the same time, 18 students of good ability from Year 11 have declared their interest in continuing with history in Year 12, leading the department to believe that levels of attainment will continue to rise in 2005.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

242. AS and A2 courses are offered in English literature. The recruitment drive is strong and is leading to an increasing number of students choosing English as a sixth form option.

### English

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

#### Strengths

- Students achieve better results than expected from a modest base.
- The positive attitudes of students.
- The consistently good quality of teaching.

- Leadership and management of good quality.
- Enrichment activities.

Areas for improvement

- The development of writing and analytical skills in Year 12.
- Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to English.

243. The English results in the 2002 A2 examination were an improvement on the previous year. All students gained a pass grade. Altogether 48 per cent gained the highest grades A or B. Over the past five years the average points scores gained by students have varied from average to well below average. The 2001 results were well below average because, the college reports, a traumatic event in the community had a significant impact on students' achievement. More female than male students choose English at A-level and, overall, they achieve better results. In 2001, the AS-level results were broadly average with all students gaining a grade. The 2002 AS-level results show a slight improvement in students' performance score. When they start the A-level courses standards of attainment are quite modest but by the end of Year 13 students achieve well with most exceeding their target grade although attainment is below average. The good teaching and effective induction programme, which begins at the end of Year 11, contribute to their good achievement. Minority ethnic students achieve well and make as much progress as their peers.
244. Inspection evidence confirms these standards. The scrutiny of work shows that over time, good progress is maintained and the positive attitudes of students to their learning contribute to their doing better than expected.
245. Students reach good standards in oral work and use group work well to approach their learning. In oral work, they take control of their learning and confidently give sustained responses when taking part in a debate or presenting their views. At the start of Year 12, students begin to grapple with analysing texts critically. They are encouraged to apply the taught critical skills to their work, as illustrated in their interpretation of Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath* and McEwan's *Enduring Love*. Textual grasp and appreciation develop throughout Year 12 because students are continuously set timed essays to improve their analyses and written expression. By Year 13, students show a secure knowledge of texts and most respond critically and give a well-shaped and relevant answer. This was well illustrated in, for example, the coursework assignments on *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Great Gatsby*. However, quotations are not always used appropriately, and points though relevant are not always developed in detail to move essays to a higher level of competence. Students read around texts and some are aware of alternative interpretations by renowned literary critics. They demonstrate that they can draw on contextual information based on their wide reading when engaging in lively debates as illustrated in the work on, 'Is Othello not easily jealous?'. Their achievement in writing is satisfactory overall, with the higher attaining students reaching above average standards. Essays are generally well structured. However, careless and minor errors adversely affect written work, as does the quality of planning and written expression.
246. The teaching of the A2 courses is consistently good with strong features. Teachers know their subject very well and use their expertise to develop students' analytical and inferential skills. Teachers enable students to develop a critical overview through the detailed exposition in every lesson. Planning is well structured and takes into consideration the assessment objectives, which teachers reinforce, in the sequential activities. In a Year 12 lesson, students were taken through the assessment criteria before working in pairs to assess their own work. This resulted in students joining in a whole class feedback on areas for improvement before planning and re-structuring their essay. The discussion led to students having an increased awareness of writing essays of good quality. The skills of close analysis and annotation are well taught and very good use is made of modelling, questioning and feedback to ensure that students understand the work. Modelling is used effectively to demonstrate skills of close analysis to Year 12 students. Expectations are appropriately high and students rise to the set challenges. This helps them to identify particular features of texts and serves to increase their analytical skills. Teachers use class teaching as well as group and paired work effectively for focused work. Relationships with students are very good.

247. Students work well in lessons and apply themselves to the set work. They recognise the good quality support they receive; the time teachers give to them in and out of lessons, and they value the enrichment activities as well as the solid foundation, which teachers provide as part of the induction process. Students enjoy the subject and believe that there 'is never a dull moment in lessons because teachers have a flair for the subject'!
248. Teachers give good support to students, both individually and in groups. Those with special needs or lower GCSE grades are given full support and good encouragement. Well-qualified and experienced teachers teach the course. The leadership and management of English are very good. Work is well co-ordinated and reviewed with very good procedures for regular monitoring and tracking of students' progress. The retention rate is good. Teachers and students are forced to meet outside the formal timetable, as the curriculum time allocated for the subject is short. The range of library resources to support students' learning is not wide enough.