

INSPECTION REPORT

HARTSDOWN TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Margate

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118816

Headteacher: Mr Brian Lippitt

Reporting inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi
2447

Dates of inspection: 4th - 8th November 2002

Inspection number: 249790

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary modern (non-selective)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: George V Avenue
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Kent

Postcode: CT9 5RE

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John West

Date of previous inspection: May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2447	Dr Faysal Mikdadi	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? Sixth form co-ordination
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10448	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics Sixth form mathematics	
31685	John Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Sixth form French Citizenship	
30576	Michael Elson	Team inspector	Religious education	
13155	Valerie Girling	Team inspector	Art	
13101	Dr Selwyn Hodge	Team inspector	Science Sixth form science	
15977	Maggie Holling	Team inspector	History	
16786	Mike Kell	Team inspector	SEN	
3982	John l'anson	Team inspector	Physical education	
24142	Sylvia McConville	Team inspector	Sixth form performing arts	
4757	David Morris		Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10807	Paul Quest	Team inspector	Sixth form health and social studies	
27351	Mick Saunders	Team inspector	English Sixth form English	
12844	Mike Stanton	Team inspector	Design and technology	
14573	Hugh Wareing	Team inspector	Geography Sixth form geography	
19983	Haydn Webb	Team inspector	ICT Sixth form ICT	
27407	Bill Stoneham	Team inspector	Sixth form Leisure and Recreation	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hartsdown Technology College is a mixed and oversubscribed 11 to 18 secondary modern school in an area of considerable deprivation. It has a designated hearing impaired unit with 12 places. Students join the college with low prior attainment as over a quarter of the more able students attend the local grammar schools. Almost half of all students in the college have special educational needs and 34 have statements of special educational needs. The college has a mixed population of 1149 students with slightly over 100 more boys than girls. The student population is overwhelmingly white with a very low number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Three students speak English as an additional language. One in five students is eligible for free school meals. The college also has a growing sixth form with 130 students.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The college does a good job with its students. By the end of their Year 11 students achieve exceedingly well compared to other students in similar schools. By the end of the sixth form students' results are in line with the national expectations. The students' good attitudes and equally good learning are the results of the teachers' hard work and commitment to success. The college gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Compared to schools in similar circumstances students attain good results by the end of Key Stage 3, very good results by the end of Key Stage 4 and satisfactory results by the end of the sixth form.
- Good teaching leads to good learning.
- Students make good progress and achieve well.
- Most students have good attitudes to the college.
- Sixth form provision is good.
- Students are well cared for and effectively guided.
- The college is very well led by its principal, the majority of key staff and the governing body.
- Strategies for evaluating and monitoring the college's work are very good.

What could be improved

- Accommodation is unsatisfactory in many areas and often has a negative effect on students' learning.
- Teaching occasionally lacks variety, challenge or interest to enable students of all capabilities to take part in the lesson and to work independently; a significant minority of students disrupt some lessons.
- Religious education is not taught to sixth form students and it is not given sufficient time in the main school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been good improvements since the last inspection of May 1996. Teaching has improved significantly since then with a large number of lessons now being good or better. Assessment strategies are now good. The monitoring of teaching and learning is a strength of the college. Personal and social education provision is good. Year 11 attendance has improved and overall attendance is now satisfactory. The college still does not fulfil the statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of worship and the provision of religious education for all students.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	D	C	C	A
A-levels/AS/GNVQ advanced levels			C	

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

The students' academic performance has been steadily improving since the last inspection. By the end of Year 9 the National Curriculum test results for 2001 were below the national average compared to all schools in English, mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, these results were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. GCSE results have dramatically improved since the last inspection when only a quarter of students attained five or more grades A*-C. The figure is now just under half and rising. Sixth form results for the same year are well in line with national expectations. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are well below the national average on entry to the college and they make good progress to reach satisfactory standards. Students with special educational needs and students who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitude to their work is good. The majority are interested in their studies. A significant minority of students occasionally loses interest and becomes inattentive when the teaching is uninteresting or uninspiring.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and outside the classroom is good. Students are considerate and they enjoy good relationships with each other. A significant minority of students occasionally behave inappropriately and spoil it for others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Students show respect for their teachers and for each other. Students like their teachers. There are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently and to take responsibility for their own work.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Students are punctual. Students respond well to attempts to improve attendance further.

Students enjoy their college life and get on well with each other and with their teachers. They respond well to their teachers' hard work. A few students do not behave well and tend to interfere with the majority's right to do well. Teachers do a good job of encouraging attendance which is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	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.

Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and in the sixth form this subject knowledge is very good. They plan their lessons well, although occasionally they do not set a variety of tasks that are appropriate to the differing capabilities in the class. Most teachers have high expectations, although a few have low expectations of the less able students. Teachers manage pupils well but they do not always challenge chatter that does not relate to the work being done. They assess students' work well and usually tell their students what they need to do to improve. The teachers' hard work, planning and enthusiasm help students learn effectively and make good progress. Teachers do not give students sufficient opportunities to work independently. Very good teaching was seen in almost all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Students get a chance to study a broad range of subjects. The time given for music and religious education is not enough for the teachers to cover the National Curriculum. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Students get many good opportunities to use computers. The short lessons sometimes make it difficult to cover the work required.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for students with special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are only three students who have English as an additional language. They get good support both from the teachers at the college and from the language support service at the Local Education Authority.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	There are good opportunities for enhancing the students' moral, social and cultural development. The lack of time for religious education and the lack of a daily act of worship diminish the opportunities for improving the students' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The college cares well for its students. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The college effectively helps students reach the targets that are set for them. It also provides thorough help and advice to students on how to improve their performance.

The care for students and the monitoring of their progress and academic performance are strengths of the college. Students like being at the college and appreciate what their teachers do for them. The spread and variety of subjects offered are good, although there is not enough time given to music and religious education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The principal and his senior team are seen a lot around the college. Their leadership is very good. Heads of departments and those with key pastoral responsibilities provide good leadership with some very good features. All share a commitment to continued improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors do a very good job of working with the college and of understanding its strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The college is very good at evaluating its own work. Managers know the college's strengths and weaknesses well. Test and examination data are well used to set students realistic and challenging targets for improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is good. New technology is well used. Specific grants are used effectively for their intended purpose.

Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Its condition interferes with the students' learning in most subjects. Teachers are largely well qualified to teach their subject areas and work very hard to help their students learn effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards that the students achieve. • The college cares for their children regardless of their differing capabilities. • The opportunities that the students get to take responsibility. • The reporting system. • The continuous improvement of the college and its capacity to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poor resources. • The unsatisfactory accommodation. • The amount of homework set. • Information about progress.

Inspectors agree with the parents' views that the college is doing a good job helping their children achieve well and that it is an improving college. They also agree with the parents' concerns about the unsatisfactory resources and accommodation. Inspectors do not agree with their concerns about homework, which is sufficient and about the information provided on students' progress, which is good.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

HARTSDOWN TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The college sixth form has 130 students and is steadily growing. Students have a choice of following AS, A2 and advanced vocational qualifications. They can also follow courses in the successful consortium formed with St George's sixth form at a short travelling distance from Hartsdown.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an effective sixth form where the teaching and learning are good. The examination results are in line with the national averages. The leadership of the sixth form is good and it provides students with a good learning environment. Students receive good support. Despite the poor accommodation, the sixth form is cost effective because of the quality of provision, including the local consortium arrangements, the extra-curricular and enrichment activities, the out of hours lessons, the effective monitoring and evaluation of students' progress.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students make good progress and achieve well.
- Students' attitudes are good. They like their college and appreciate their teachers' hard work.
- Curriculum provision is good with the consortium opening up further opportunities.
- Strategies for assessing students' work, monitoring their progress and helping them to improve further are very good.
- Teachers' development is well supported.
- Students receive good advice and support.

What could be improved

- Accommodation is unsatisfactory in many areas and adversely affects learning.
- The statutory requirement to provide religious education is not fulfilled.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. In 2001 neither of the two students entered for the GCE advanced level examination attained a pass grade. The small number entered for the AS level attained a pass grade E. Those sitting their GCSE again improved on their previous grade. Teaching is good.
Science	Good. The AVCE results in 2001 were below the national average. These results improved in 2002. Teaching is good.
Information and communication technology	Good. The number of students passing the highest grades is in line with the national average. Teaching is good.
Health and social care	Good. Examination results at the intermediate level have been consistently good. The advanced level results have been good. Teaching is good.

Art and design	Very good. The 2001 results were high, continuing a trend of good results. Teaching is good.
Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Performing arts	Very good. Results in 2001 were well above the national average. Teaching is very good.
Geography	Good. The GCE advanced level results for 2001 were well below the national average. Teaching is good.
English	Very good. The AS and A2 results in 2001 were well below the national averages. Students taking the GCSE achieve above expectations. Teaching is good.

The quality of teaching is good and helps students learn well. Teaching was good in all subjects inspected except in leisure and recreation. Here it was sound because teachers did not help students to progress from a purely descriptive to an analytical level of response. Students spoke well of the consortium arrangements that allow them further subject choices. They also spoke well of the film studies course successfully offered through video conferencing facilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students appreciate the guidance and support that they receive. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating students' work. The atmosphere within the sixth form is friendly and students can readily get help from their teachers.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good and approachable leadership helps create a good atmosphere in the sixth form wherein students feel comfortable. The unsatisfactory accommodation is made the best of. Sixth formers get good support and provision.

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"> • Students genuinely appreciate their teachers' extreme hard work. • Students feel that information and communication technology is good. • The good subject choices within the college and through the consortium. • The provision of film studies through the use of video conferencing. • Students like being in the college. • The good enrichment programme. • Teachers' assessment of, and support for, students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students are not happy about the new dress code. • Year 12 students are not happy about not being able to sign out so that they can go home during the day or so that they may work where they choose rather than in the sixth form study area. • Some unsatisfactory accommodation.

Inspectors agree with the students' largely positive views of the sixth form. They also agree with their concerns about the unsatisfactory accommodation. The new dress code was introduced in order to comply with the agreements made when the local consortium was set up. The common study area is small and occasionally becomes very cramped. The college has a serious shortage of study space within its overall unsatisfactory accommodation.

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 school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Students' attainment on entry to the college is well below the national average. As was the case with the last inspection, the college is under-represented in terms of the more able students who attend grammar schools. Cognitive ability test (CATs) results show students to be well below the national average for their age on entry. A significant number of students start college with considerable literacy problems which have the potential to limit their progress in Key Stage 3.
2. Overall, the college's general academic performance has been improving steadily since the last inspection in May 1996. Since becoming a technology specialist college, improvements have been significant. Indeed, a letter from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) states that ministers recognise the improvements made by Hartsdown Technology College since joining the Specialist Schools Programme.
3. In 2001 the results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were below the national average for all schools in English, mathematics and science. They were above the national average in science and well above in English and mathematics for similar schools. The proportion of students attaining the higher Level 6 or above was well above the national average for English and in line with the national average in mathematics and science. The average points score achieved in English were above the national average and in line with the national averages in mathematics and science. The English results by the end of Key Stage 3 show how effective educational provision has been for students whose literacy skills were very low when they joined the college three years previously. These results dipped slightly in the summer of 2002. Boys do significantly better than girls in mathematics and science at the end of Year 9.
4. In the teacher assessment element of the tests the core subject results were in line with the national averages for similar schools in mathematics and below in English and science. There is considerable evidence that teachers had been over cautious in assessing their students' performance hence the discrepancies between the test and teacher assessment results especially in English. Results in the teacher assessment were in line with the national averages in art, information and communication technology and music and below in geography, history and modern foreign languages and well below in design and technology.
5. The proportion of students attaining five or more grades A*-C in their GCSE examinations is below the national average for all schools in the country but well above the national average for schools in similar circumstances. The proportion has increased by over 40 per cent since the last inspection. The number of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G is in line with the national average for similar schools but below the overall national average. There were more boys than girls in the year, with no significant difference in performance between the two.
6. GCSE results were above the national averages in design and technology and physical education, in line with the national averages in science, art and design, information and communication technology and below in English, mathematics, geography, history and modern foreign languages. These results represent considerable value added given the poor prior attainment of the majority of students on entry to the college. There were no GCSE entries for religious education in 2001. The college has set ambitious targets for its future GCSE results which, if achieved, as is likely from

the present evidence, would put it for the first time in line with the national average for all schools. Considerable mentoring and extra help is being offered to help students achieve these better results.

7. Students' literacy skills are sound, though some achieve higher standards. An element in this is the college literacy plan. Many subjects make strong contributions to enhancing students' literacy skills. For example they understand key words in modern foreign languages and can use them within carefully structured writing frames; they make very good progress by Key Stage 4 in writing in history and English; and develop good technical vocabulary in science, art and design, design and technology and music. The literacy skills of students with English as an Additional Language are at least sound and improve fast with the support of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant service. Students with special educational needs are able to use subject specific vocabulary successfully. Year 7 students coming in with low literacy skills are soon able to read and spell successfully and to join in lessons. Many students use Successmaker independently to improve their reading and spelling.
8. Students' numeracy skills are sound overall. Their graphicacy skills are satisfactory. Students can use spreadsheets for formulae and for graph drawing. By the end of their Year 11 many students are able to manipulate data reliably and to work on tables competently. Younger students can weigh and measure in design and technology and time activities well in physical education. Students can draw and interpret graphs. Year 7 students' numeracy skills improve very quickly from a low base on entry.
9. Students achieve well in both Key Stages 3 and 4 in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music and sound in physical education and religious education. Achievement was good in Key Stage 3 art and design and satisfactory in Key Stage 4 art and design. Achievement in lessons is good overall.
10. Students who speak English as an additional language as well as gifted and talented students make good progress. Students with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress compared with prior levels of achievement. They make especially good progress against individual learning targets which support their academic, social and personal development. Overall their levels of attainment remain below national expectations at the end of years 9 and 11, but some succeed well in GCSE examinations. These results reflect well the additional support students receive when they are withdrawn for individual and small group work.

Sixth form

11. The GCE advanced level (A2) and vocational (GNVQ/VCE) examination results for 2001 were well above the national average in art and performing arts and in line with the national averages for science, business studies, information and communication technology and health and social care. They were below the national averages in English, mathematics and geography. The interpretative grade given to the college in the Performance and Assessment Report (PANDA) issued by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) is misleading. Due to an administrative oversight by the external verifier, the advanced GNVQ results in business were not included. There was also an error in the performing arts average point score which was higher at 18 rather than the 14.4 quoted. The inclusion of business studies results means that the average points score per candidate for candidates entered for the GNVQ advanced should be 11.5 and not 10.7. The average point score for candidates entered for the GCSE A/S and A2 as well as the GNVQ advanced is 12.2. Adding the results for the single award GNVQ information and communication technology would give an overall score of 13.6 which would put the college end of sixth form results in line with the national average overall.
12. Evidence from the work seen showed that achievement was very good in information and communication technology and good in English, mathematics, science, art, health and social care and performing arts. Achievement was sound in geography. These levels of achievement show the improvement that the college is continuing to make with its sixth form students.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Students have a good attitude to their work. In the majority of classes students are interested and keen to learn. Most students develop a sense of personal discipline. However, the thoughtless behaviour of a significant minority of students does upset the flow of learning in a small minority of lessons. There are good relationships between teachers and students.
14. Students are keen to learn and are attentive, whether listening, discussing or working through questions. There is fun in the learning in both key stages but students become serious when it is necessary. In the best lessons, students concentrate throughout but this is not always the case. Students work well in groups and in both key stages. They talk with interest and enthusiasm about their work. Some students, particularly boys, are very dependent on their teacher for motivation. Attitudes and attention can be quite variable even in Years 10 and 11, particularly when teaching is not challenging. Here students become easily unsettled, their concentration wanders and they make little intellectual effort.
15. In most classes and about the college behaviour is good. Students move about the rooms without fuss as they get on with their work. They are considerate of each other in the narrow corridors and on the playgrounds. There is a significant minority of students in both key stages who regularly upset the learning process by their disruptive behaviour.
16. There is very little bullying and behaviour rarely becomes oppressive. Boys and girls mix well and there were no reports of racism in the college. Most sanctions are given for unacceptable behaviour. Last year the four permanent exclusions resulted from a list of instances of disruptive and often violent behaviour against staff and students.
17. Students are considerate of the views of others as they discuss world events. Boys make better contributions in group discussions than girls. Students listen well but even older students can be reluctant to express their own views and often there is not a high level of participation. They are polite and considerate of each other and to their teachers as well as visitors to the college. Despite the efforts of staff, a significant minority of students do not realise the effect their behaviour has on others.
18. As they mature, students are well prepared to take responsibilities for the wellbeing of others and for the college routines. With the agreement of the senior management, the college prefects have redefined their duties to become more specialist and cover a wider scope. They are always keen to help at college events. When given the challenge, students respond well, working independently and becoming more responsible for their own learning as they mature.
19. Relationships in the college are good. Students enjoy the humour and enthusiasm of their teachers. They smile and greet them as they meet them about the college. Older students look after the younger ones when they first join the college as they find their feet.
20. The rate of attendance is satisfactory. Together with the rate of unauthorised absence, this is broadly in line with the national average. Students arrive in college on time in the morning and there are only a few habitual latecomers. Attendance has slightly deteriorated since the last report but levels of attendance now are more similar throughout the key stages. Students are responding in a more responsible way to the efforts taken by staff to encourage full attendance.

Sixth form

21. Attitudes and values are good. Students like their college and are enthusiastic about learning. They understand fully their own responsibility for their progress. The majority are ambitious and wish to get on to higher education and they are grateful for the good support that they receive from their teachers. A few have concerns about what they see as a lack of freedom. For example, Year 12 students felt that they should be able to study anywhere during their non-contact time instead

of having to use the small and cramped sixth form area for private study. This is being resolved.

22. During the lessons seen students invariably appreciated the teaching provided and enjoyed their work. They were keen to be involved and develop their skills. As a result, most students have reliable, independent learning skills, although some need support in managing their time. When students work in the study area they help each other and show a keen desire to work collaboratively on difficult problems. Relationships are good and there is a warm atmosphere within which sixth form students work productively. Attendance is satisfactory.
23. Students' views on the survey returns and notes submitted to the inspection team are that provision is satisfactory overall. Several interviews with students showed that their views were stronger than that. However, judgements are coloured by some students' annoyance at having to comply with a dress code and the annoyance of Year 12 students at not being able to sign out when they wish to. The college has felt it necessary to introduce these two new rules in order to provide a better service and in order to fit in with the successful sixth form consortium arrangements. Overall, students feel that the strengths of the school outweigh these two instances of annoyances: strengths such as the extreme hard work of their teachers and the good enrichment programme.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The proportion of lessons where the quality of teaching was sound or better has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is now good or better in six out of ten lessons. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been halved since the last inspection and is now low at less than five per cent. No poor or very poor teaching was observed. Outstanding lessons were seen in mathematics, science, drama, design and technology, French, Spanish and music. Very good lessons were seen in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. In the very small number of unsatisfactory teaching seen the weaknesses were to do with the following: a lack of challenge; some poor behaviour which was not always well managed; a lack of a variety of tasks to suit the differing student capabilities in the class; and a lack of opportunities for students to learn and think on their own.
25. A significant minority of teachers spend too much energy on controlling and managing the perceived threat of bad behaviour and, occasionally, the actual bad behaviour. This is done largely successfully, but students respond well to being challenged and enthused which in itself would mean that the significant minority of incidents of off-task behaviour would be diminished through a wider variety of learning experiences and through differentiated tasks. In the lower sets some teachers set work that is too easy on the basis that students are low attaining. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy and occasionally means that the work set can be mechanistic and uninspiring.
26. Where teaching was at least good or better students were consistently challenged with work that matched their needs which enabled them to make good progress. For example, in one outstanding Year 10 science lesson the teacher had produced a key for students to use in distinguishing different rock samples. He organised the students well. The result was excellent progress with students learning the properties of rock and how to distinguish between them. Other lessons were also conducted at a good pace and used prior learning effectively. For example in an outstanding Year 10 drama lesson the teacher's management and modelling enabled students to concentrate and use their evaluation skills and planning to do brilliant work. They analysed, evaluated and performed in perfect sequence, with the teacher consistently demanding high levels of response.
27. In English, mathematics and science the quality of teaching was good overall. Lessons were carefully planned and effectively structured and work was of an appropriate difficulty. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects was consistently good. Assessment strategies used were sound in getting students to make further progress but they have insufficient encouragement to work independently or self evaluate. Consequently, they do not know the level of their own learning and knowledge. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills across all

subjects is a weakness and teaching methods are not varied enough. Teaching of information and technology skills is good and often better. Students are given a number of opportunities to use computers for a variety of purposes and the college fulfils its aims as a specialist technology college. The teaching and support of students who speak English as an additional language are good.

28. Sessions in the hearing-impaired and learning support units are characterised by high quality relationships. As a result, students have the confidence to express their views and attempt work secure in the knowledge that support and encouragement are at hand. Consequently, students develop a better understanding of their own learning. Therefore they have a good attitude to learning and behaviour is always good.
29. Students achieve well and sometimes very well, when they are withdrawn into the hearing-impaired unit for individual support. This is because of effective and sometimes very good teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge of students' academic, personal and communication needs and have high expectations of them. As a result, students make good progress in consolidating work they have covered in mainstream lessons. They are able to do this so well because a very effective mechanism is used to record information from mainstream lessons for use in tutorials.
30. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills in the learning support unit is satisfactory and students make satisfactory progress. Materials that are appropriate to students' age and interests are used well to develop these basic skills but the activities are not always sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of the higher attaining students. Students following the social skills programme achieve very well when they are withdrawn into the learning support unit. These sessions are extremely effective in promoting students' self-esteem, social awareness and co-operative working.
31. Students with special educational needs in mainstream classes generally make good progress over time. Students achieve well because teachers are aware of their needs and can involve them in the full range of class activities. Lesson planning in subjects such as geography and physical education shows how these needs are to be met, and the presentation of materials appropriate to these students' needs in subjects like English and design and technology further facilitates students' learning. However, subjects such as mathematics do not always present students with these tailored resources. A significant feature of all lessons is the input of learning support assistants. They provide very effective support and enable students with special educational needs to achieve well. The deployment of learning support assistants is a particular strength of the college's provision. They have a very good awareness of their role in encouraging and developing students as independent learners.

Sixth form

32. Teaching in all lessons seen in the sixth form except for one was at least sound and often a great deal better. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their own subject area and their enthusiasm is successfully imparted to their students. Outstanding and very good lessons were seen in English, mathematics, science, business studies, geography, health and social care and information and communication technology. Particularly good teaching overall was seen in all subjects but especially in information and communication technology and performing arts. Relationships were good all through with students receiving good support and expressing their strong approbation of their teachers' hard work. The one unsatisfactory lesson failed in its objective because too much time was spent trying to get the information and communication system to work, students were not fully clear as to what was required of them and many opted out of the lesson.
33. Students receive effective advice on how to improve their performance and respond well to these assessment strategies. Marking is helpful and usually prompt. A relative weakness of the teaching is the lack of opportunities offered to students to think for themselves.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO

PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

34. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. In Key Stage 3 it includes all subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious education and personal, social and health education. However, the breadth and balance of the curriculum could be improved further in religious education and music where the minimum amount of time is allocated, especially in lessons 2 and 3 on the timetable. In Years 10 and 11 all students follow a core curriculum, with further options to provide breadth, including a GNVQ course in information and communication technology. The college is working hard to improve its provision to ensure that it meets the needs of all its students. A small group of students is appropriately disapplied from the full curriculum to enable them to follow alternative, more relevant courses. The length of the teaching week, at 25 hours, is in line with DfES recommendations.
35. Overall, the provision for students with special educational needs is good. The college makes great efforts to be inclusive of all its students and to ensure that all, including hearing impaired students, benefit from the curriculum offered. Provision is enhanced by effective support staff, whose very good relationships with students give them confidence to participate in lessons. There are strong links with external support agencies.
36. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are satisfactory. However, the numeracy strategy which the college appropriately uses for Years 7 to 11 needs approximately 60 minutes for the three part lesson. Because lessons are so short students have little time for individual work. As a result, they are not developing appropriate skills.
37. Strategies for teaching literacy skills are satisfactory in all subjects and good in English, history, modern foreign languages and in the support offered to students with special educational needs and for students who speak English as an additional language. Strategies for teaching information and communication technology skills are good.
38. The college makes good provision for extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum. In performing arts, dance, drama and music, groups are well supported. A modest number of students have instrumental music lessons, though this provision, like that in mathematics, some English and religious education, is restricted by inadequate accommodation. The college is involved in the Canterbury Festival and in 'Creative Partnerships,' an arts council project to encourage students to devise a work to be entitled 'Home, away and journeys'. There are regular theatre visits and in 2001 the college put on a main production of 'Green'. In 2001 the college received the Artsmark Silver award which recognises the high quality curricular and extra-curricular arts provision. Opportunities for sporting activities are good.
39. There is good equality of access and opportunity and good provision for personal, social and health education. Provision for careers and vocational education is satisfactory. It is incorporated in Years 7-9 in the PSHE programme in units of work described as 'the real game' and in Years 10-11 in one period per week of discrete teaching. Also included in this key stage is an opportunity for work experience. The contribution of the community to students' learning is good. Relationships with partner institutions is good which makes the transfer of students effective and allows the college to set up programmes to enhance basic skills as soon as students start in Year 7.
40. The spiritual dimension of the curriculum was recognised in the previous report as requiring further development. While some progress has been made on the 'thought for the day', provision is inconsistent. The requirement for a daily act of collective worship is still not being met. Provision for students' moral development is good. Numbers of excluded students have dropped and the policy of awards and good use of support services has been effective. Provision for students' social development is good. Much thought has been given to this element and a number of interesting initiatives have developed. For example, students have been on interview panels for the appointment of heads of year. Staff and students have worked together on a number of initiatives to improve the environment. Senior prefects are voted on by colleagues and are interviewed. Peer mediators in Year 11 help students in Years 7 and 8. Year groups help their equivalent year group from Foreland (school for disabled students) on a voluntary basis. The Foreland students attend

the college as part of a successful pioneering inclusion project.

41. There is good cultural provision. World arts are well covered in the arts curriculum. The college has had poets in residence. The local culture is explored with trips to and participation in the Canterbury Festival and with the Dickens connection in the area. Trips to London events are a regular feature of the college's calendar.
42. The quality and range of learning opportunities at Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory and at Years 10 to 11 good.
43. The college has a positive philosophy towards social and educational inclusion by ensuring that those with special educational needs have the same learning opportunities as their peers. In theory this means that all students follow the same curriculum, but in practice the current timetabling arrangements for withdrawing groups of Year 7 students into the learning support unit on a daily basis reduces their curriculum entitlement in the main college. However, the college is aware of this and has plans to address it. At the end of Year 9, students with special educational needs have the same choice of options as other students. In addition, some students have the opportunity to attend the local further education college to follow a range of vocational taster courses and this ensures that this group of students follows a curriculum that is particularly relevant to their needs. The college makes good curricular provision for meeting the overall needs of students with special educational needs, including particular needs identified in statements of special educational need. This can include an identified level of learning support in mainstream classes, or withdrawal on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. As many of these students' special needs relate to limited literacy skills, there is a strong focus on developing reading and writing skills when students are withdrawn.

Sixth form

44. The sixth form provides a suitable range of academic and vocational courses for students, including A/S and A2 levels in biology, English, history, mathematics and product design and vocational advanced levels in art, business, health and social care, information and communication technology, leisure and recreation, performing arts, and science (chemistry) and vocational A/S levels in business, health and social care and information and communication technology. However, the college does not effectively meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education in the sixth form. The consortium with St George's School sixth form offers additional opportunities for students to study AVCE in travel and tourism and AS/A2 history, sports science, psychology and physics. Students from St. George's also opt to study courses provided by the college: health and social care, leisure and recreation, information and communication technology, as well as AVCE chemistry. Students are also offered opportunities to follow a computer repairing and building qualification called A+, the CISCO Certified Network Associate (CCNA) qualification, information and communication technology network qualification and a video conferencing course in film studies which is highly regarded by the students. The college's response to local circumstances is good and careers and college guidance is effective.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The college's systems for ensuring that its students are properly cared for are good. Its arrangements for monitoring students' attainment are well developed and are being refined. Systems to promote students' personal development are also well developed. The college uses data to track students' academic progress well. They use it, for instance, in the carefully monitored arrangements that help identify and support students who are not achieving as well as expected. The college provides a very adequate range of support mechanisms for these students. Communications between departments, year heads and tutors are effectively managed and procedures to ensure that these links work well are understood by teachers and students.
46. Consideration for the needs of individual students is good. The health and safety procedures are well monitored by governors and risk assessment is carried out appropriately, for instance in the

science department. Systems to maintain attendance are very good but have not yet had time to make a measurable impact. Issues are efficiently dealt with by senior staff and the college's welfare officer, who works in full co-operation with the education welfare officer. Students can consult with a college counsellor on a one-to-one basis and the learning support unit provides help for those who need special attention. Child protection arrangements are secure and comply with statutory requirements. The college has behaviour and, as necessary, anger management systems, which are well developed. In all instances, including the college's hearing impaired unit, students are reintegrated with their classes whenever practical.

47. The college has elaborate procedures to monitor and improve behaviour. The aim is to stop unacceptable behaviour in the classrooms at an early stage before it upsets the flow of learning. The present systems, which means a member of senior management is constantly on duty, take a considerable amount of time. It is, however, having the effect of reducing the incidents of disruptive behaviour and giving well-directed remedial attention to the regular and occasional offenders. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise, postcards, merit marks and commendation certificates. Students confirm that behaviour, including the occasional incidents of oppressive behaviour, is well managed by staff. Parents confirm the findings of the inspectors that, in the main, behaviour is well managed, though as recorded elsewhere in the report there are exceptions.
48. Provision for personal, health and social education is satisfactory. It has been well revised to include elements of citizenship. Students benefit from a high proportion of outside speakers who contribute to their health and careers education. The college operates a successful peer mentoring scheme to support the younger students as they start life in their new college. Tutors give time to every individual to help them to understand how to define their strengths and weaknesses and to agree targets for improvement. Effective targets cover academic progress as well as aims to improve behaviour and attitudes to work.
49. Procedures for assessing students' academic achievements are good. The 'Peer Band' system of tracking students' progress against their predicted levels of achievement is effective. It is being modified to bring more realism to the prediction bands. Predictions are based on prior attainment. Tests are set by departments to level students. Students understand the present levels well in most subjects although there are a few exceptions. The system is used in setting targets and its use gives encouragement to students as they progress. It is also effective in identifying those students who need support. The system also allows the college to advise students at Year 10 on the options available with more confidence. It also provides tutors with secure information when reviewing students' progress and when counselling or advising their parents. The procedures now in place are a considerable improvement on those in existence at the time of the previous inspection.
50. The use of assessment information is well used to inform curriculum planning. Heads of faculties keep records to measure the degree of success reached for each area of work. The overall trends in standards are monitored and targets agreed with senior managers.
51. The college has good provision for monitoring the academic performance and welfare of students with special educational needs. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need are carried out and individual education plans produced in line with statutory requirements and good practice. The college involves parents well in these processes. Staff working with these students have a good understanding of their diverse educational, audiological and communication needs and the social aspects that may affect their learning.
52. Individual education plans have some strengths but also weaknesses. Annual reviews of students' statements of educational needs set broad target areas for the forthcoming year but these general aims are not consistently translated into clear, unambiguous targets in individual education plans. This is because the plans do not break down these broad objectives into smaller, sharper targets which cross-refer to them. In addition, the subsequent annual review does not systematically evaluate the progress made by students against the previous year's targets.

Sixth form

Assessment

53. Assessment strategies are very good. There are procedures in place which allow students to understand fully what their levels of attainment are and what they need to do to improve them further. Students are, therefore, able to make consistently good progress and, in the case of gifted and talented students, very good progress. Very good procedures are in place for diagnosing individual needs and offering one-to-one support to those who need it. There are good procedures in place for monitoring students' progress. The regular half-termly monitoring exercise ensures that all students are given a clear idea of their progress and that support is offered where it is needed. Students spoke highly of their teachers' hard work to assess and support them.

Advice, support and guidance

54. Students spoke well of the advice that they received in making their decisions about which subjects to study and what to do next in terms of higher education or a career. Good strategies are in place to support students in making choices. The most successful procedures are the informal ones which are part of the good relationships between teachers and students within a warm and caring ethos in the sixth form. Teachers are accessible and give a great deal of effort and time to individuals who request support. More reluctant students get similar support through the good mentoring programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The college continues to maintain good links with parents. A wide range of information is provided through college publications, newsletters, consultation evenings, home links and annual reports. Parents have positive views about the high expectations the college has of their children and the help given them to make progress. The college works closely with parents if their children are giving cause for concern. Parents are involved early and this helps tutors, student and parents to resolve any difficulty together to make progress.
56. Annual subject reports to parents are good. They inform parents about potential progress towards learning targets. These include expected academic grades and a commentary on behaviour if appropriate. In a number of curriculum areas expectations and targets are explicit and clear guidance is offered about future direction and action required. In some subjects, comments do not conform to the grades and some targets such as 'to prepare for exams' are not helpful. Form tutor reports issued during the year focus on strengths and achievements and targets for improvement. Reports form part of the academic monitoring and are extensively used at consultation evenings where attainment, progress and behaviour are discussed with students and parents.
57. Most parents make a good contribution to their children's education through comments and discussion with tutors at curriculum, options and consultation evenings. A minority of parents are critical of several areas of the college's work, especially homework, information about students' progress and the closeness of the relationship with the college. Further, the college makes great efforts to foster parental involvement and to forge constructive relationships. The inspection found that levels of homework are appropriate. It also found that contacts with home, particularly the early contact in the event of a concern, are effective and encourage the necessary links with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. Hartsdown Technology College is exactly what its mission statement says: a college that "meets the needs and aspirations of its students and local community [and] provides opportunities for the development of skills, knowledge and values necessary for life and work in the 21st century". This measure of success is a reflection of the consistently good and more often very good, leadership and management of the principal, key staff and the governing body. The principal's and senior leadership group's leadership and management are uniformly very good. Together they have

created an ethos within which teachers work very hard and are genuinely appreciated by their students for their efforts. Since the last inspection, the college has gained a specialist technology status which has significantly improved its provision. The principal has created a clear management structure with a well understood line management hierarchy of which parents spoke highly. Senior managers are effective in managing those in charge of subjects and in giving them appropriate support. College staff share the college's vision and appreciate that the principal and his team lead by example. The college has begun to focus on its long-term priorities with specific reference to enhancing curriculum provision through further consortium links and enabling teachers to contribute further to the college's inclusion ambitions by giving all students opportunities to work independently and to think for themselves as well as by ensuring that work set matches the differing capabilities of all students.

59. Subject leadership largely reflects the college senior leadership. It is very good in mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages, health and social care and performing arts. Leadership is good in English, science, art, geography, history and information and communication technology. It is sound in music, physical education and travel and tourism. Leadership of religious education is unsatisfactory in as far as the person leading the subject does not teach it. Despite the responsible person's best efforts, such an arrangement weakens the department's sense of direction. This lack of specialist leadership means that the subject is left without a clear set of targets either for developing the subject or for raising students' achievement.
60. The principal, senior staff and members of the governing body are constantly seen around the college maintaining a high profile presence. This promotes an atmosphere of hard work, high expectations of good teaching and offers good support to staff. The college is committed to equalising opportunities through a strong inclusion programme. This and other responsibilities are very effectively devolved to staff who feel empowered and respond with hard work. Strategies for monitoring and evaluation are effective and the college makes good use of its rich data to set ambitious but realistic targets for students. Each teacher is observed teaching both by his/her line manager and by senior staff. Departments are regularly reviewed. Such monitoring helps in implementing the college's very good strategies for developing staff and setting further targets for improvement as part of performance management.
61. Governors are effectively involved in the college's life. They have a very good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. They visit regularly and contribute to setting the college's good priorities. Relationships between staff and governors are good and staff feel supported by governors. Governors share a very strong commitment to the college's capacity to succeed. They fulfil their statutory duties exceedingly well.
62. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of special needs' issues and therefore the college's provision for these students is well managed. The new Code of Practice has been implemented well. The hearing-impaired unit is staffed by well qualified teachers and is very well managed and led by a highly organised and effective head of unit. The learning support unit has only recently been established. Its remit is to work with targeted groups of students in Year 7 for literacy, numeracy and social skills and selected groups in Years 8 and 9 for social skills. Both staff are relatively new to this role but they have made a good start in establishing the unit and have sought effective input from the Local Education Authority's attendance and behaviour support service.
63. The college has good provision for meeting the needs of its students with special educational needs and the high quality provision identified in the last inspection has been maintained. This occurs through the strong and effective leadership and management and reflects the college's ethos of being educationally and socially inclusive. Good use is made of the detailed analyses of examination results that are carried out to evaluate the progress made by these students in targeting support in the future.
64. College accommodation overall is somewhat drab and unattractive. Teachers try very hard to improve the appearance of accommodation through attractive displays of students' work. However, there are areas where accommodation has a negative effect on students' learning because of

cramped conditions, a lack of storage space and lack of space suitable for a variety of learning opportunities. Accommodation is particularly unsatisfactory in mathematics, music, physical education, library and resources centre, the sixth form common study area, insufficiency of storage space, insufficiency of the available number of offices, small science preparation areas, some non-specialist English rooms, unattractive and small units for hearing impaired students, learning support unit and some cramped information and communication technology. In one case, one religious education teacher teaches in eight different rooms.

65. The match of staff to the demands of the curriculum is good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Learning resources are adequate, although there is a shortage of books, stationery and equipment in some areas.
66. Educational priorities are well supported by the college's financial planning and expenditure. There is currently a deficit budget set with the sanction of the Local Education Authority. This is set to be cleared within the next two years. The college uses specific grants for the designated purpose. Financial management is good and the college uses its resources effectively in accordance with the principles of best value. The college provides good value for money.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

67. Leadership of the sixth form reflects the good leadership of the college key staff. The sixth form is not seen as an addition to the college but rather as an integral part of the whole. The college community fully understands the mutual benefit accrued by the main school from having the sixth form and vice versa. Younger students look up to the sixth formers who provide good role models. The head of the sixth form and her able deputy have succeeded in creating a special atmosphere in the sixth form despite a severe shortage of space and cramped accommodation. Much of what has already been said about the leadership and the management of the college applies to the sixth form as well. The sixth form now faces the challenge of increasing provision. It intends to do this by linking with local educational institutions and using video links to connect to courses that it cannot offer on its own. The head of the sixth form, her deputy and tutors have successfully established good strategies for monitoring students' work and progress.

Resources

68. Resources and finances are well managed. Expenditure remains within the stated budget. The overall quality of provision, including the local consortium arrangements, extra-curricular activities, enrichment activities, out of hours lessons, the effective monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and, despite the poor accommodation, the sixth form, is cost effective. Access to information technology is good, although some students did complain about the lack of ready access when private study is needed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The college should:

- (i) ensure that strategies are in place to continue to raise the students' standards of attainment especially at Key Stage 3;

(Paragraphs: 1, 3-12, 43, 49-52, 58, 68-74, 80-82, 89, 92-97, 102-104, 114-117, 122-124, 127-130, 136, 137, 147-152, 156-160, 163, 164, 168-170, 175-180, 183-186, 192, 193, 199, 200, 204-206, 211, 212, 216-228, 223, 224, 228, 229)

- (ii) Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is enhanced further by:

- increasing the variety of learning opportunities in order to ensure that all students of all capabilities participate in the lesson;
- encouraging students to learn and think independently;
- introduce measures to ensure that the significant minority of pupils responsible for disruptive behaviour develop a more positive attitude to their studies; and
- ensuring that expectations are consistently high for all students regardless of individual capabilities;

(paragraphs: 13-18, 22, 24-33, 47, 58, 75, 78, 85, 86, 95, 97, 98, 105, 106, 116, 118, 125, 128-130, 132, 138, 140, 152, 163, 165, 169, 171, 176-178, 181, 184-186, 200, 201, 208, 225, 229, 233)

- (iii) work with the Local Education Authority to improve accommodation in; mathematics, design and technology, geography, music, physical education, storage of equipment in religious education, the library and resources centre, sixth form art and design and leisure and recreation, the sixth form common study area, storage spaces, office space, science preparation areas, some non specialist English rooms, the hearing impaired unit, the learning support unit and the occasionally cramped information and communication technology areas;

(paragraphs: 21, 38, 64, 67, 68, 78, 85, 87, 101, 121, 126, 161, 162, 167, 173, 202, 214, 220, 226, 232)

- (iv) ensure that religious education has a specialist head of subject and that the statutory requirements for religious education are fully met;

(paragraphs: 34, 59, 172, 173)

- (v) ensure that the physical education schemes of work are linked to the National Curriculum and reflect the programmes of study and levels of attainment targets.

(Paragraph: 167)

Sixth form

- (i) Improve accommodation in the sixth form common study area, library and resources centre, art and design, leisure and recreation, storage spaces, office spaces, science preparation areas and the occasionally cramped information and communication technology areas;

(Paragraphs: 21, 64, 67, 68, 202, 214, 220, 226, 232)

- (ii) Ensure that the statutory requirements for religious education are fully met.

(Paragraphs: 44, 59, 172)

The college also needs to consider further action on the following areas:

- review the time allocated to music and religious education in Key Stages 3 and 4;
(paragraphs: 34, 159, 162, 171, 172)
- review timetable arrangements with a view to increasing the time especially for periods 2 and 3 on the timetable;
(paragraphs: 34, 36, 74, 86, 98, 133, 159, 171, 233)
- enhance the provision of books, stationery and equipment in some curriculum areas;
(paragraphs: 65, 173, 191, 205, 220, 226)
- ensure that the science department has more technician time;
(paragraph: 101)
- ensure that the provision for teaching citizenship in subjects is formally recorded in schemes of work, as happens in history now;
(paragraphs: 108, 110, 133)
- introduce a daily act of worship as is required by statute.
(paragraph: 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	164
	Sixth form	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		208

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	10	35	57	53	9	0	0
Percentage	6	21	35	32	5	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	2	12	16	14	1	0	0
Percentage	5	27	36	32	2	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 percentage point represents more than one lesson.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1019	130
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	199	None

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	34	None
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	345	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	110	78	188

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	67	65
	Girls	55	48	41
	Total	105	115	106
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (42)	61 (57)	56 (50)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 (2)	27 (29)	16 (12)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	68	60
	Girls	58	50	38
	Total	102	118	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (57)	63 (59)	53 (52)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (16)	27 (27)	18 (16)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	100	84

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	45	88	95
	Girls	37	77	79
	Total	82	165	174
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	45 (44)	90 (92)	95 (98)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37.4 (36.7)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	13	5	18	29	16	45
	Average point score per candidate	1.5	2	1.8	10.8	12.8	11.5
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A/AS/VCE/Advanced GNVQ examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	29	16	45
	Average point score per candidate	13.5	13.9	13.6
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	754	91	3
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	1
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	259	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	77.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	806

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25.24
Key Stage 4	21.22
Sixth Form	13.41

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	3,706,105
Total expenditure	3,794,009
Expenditure per pupil	3,302
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,420
Balance carried forward to next year	40,484

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	19
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	30
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1149
Number of questionnaires returned	89

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	53	9	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	55	2	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	51	12	2	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	39	18	10	2
The teaching is good.	31	53	4	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	42	13	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	42	6	6	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	35	4	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	42	21	4	7
The school is well led and managed.	36	39	8	6	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	48	11	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	40	11	1	15

Other issues raised by parents

Parents' comments at the parents' meeting were entirely positive. In response to the three statements where over 15 per cent of parents did not agree, inspectors found that the amount of homework set was appropriate; the college works well with parents and it keeps them well informed of their children's progress.

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 in English is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of schemes of work and lesson planning.
- The positive impact of the literacy strategy on the content and conduct of lessons.
- Students achieve above average results in external examination compared to those of similar schools.
- The overall good teaching, which leads to students' clear progress.
- Teaching and learning in drama are outstanding.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation has some shortcomings with some teaching taking place in non-specialist rooms.
- Strategies to promote students' use of talk to help their learning.
- The constraints imposed on teaching and learning by lessons which are too short.
- Staff collaboration to share and develop innovative practice.

69. Key Stage 3 English results in the 2001 National Curriculum Standard Attainment Tests were below the national average but close to the average for similar schools. Results for students achieving level 6 and above were in line with the national average. Both boys and girls fall below the national average for their gender to a similar extent. Compared to prior attainment progress is good. The trend of results is erratic. This relates partly to the variation in capability of groups from year to year and also to difficulties of staffing. Results in 2001 showed a significant improvement on the results of the previous two years.
70. In the 2001 GCSE examinations in English Language results overall were well below the national average for A*-C grades, but in line for A*-G. Girls were further below the national average for A*-C grades than were the boys. However, compared to prior attainment boys and girls make similar good progress. Boys and girls do worse in English than in the average of their other examination subjects, although girls only marginally so.
71. In English Literature, A*-C grades were well below the national average for both boys and girls. Girls do better than boys, but are below the national average for their gender to the same degree.
72. Standards of achievement observed during the inspection were generally good. Strategies overseen by the Faculty's new head to take account of students' low attainment are beginning to have an impact. This shows in students' writing. By the age of 14 higher-attaining students write stories, poems and autobiography confidently and well. The current emphasis on developing non-fiction writing is paying dividends. Students write to inform and argue with reasonable success. Mid- and low-attaining students are helped by writing frames to organize and develop their writing. By the age of 16 further progress is evident. High-attaining students produce well-presented pieces in a range of styles. For example, they show real engagement in interpreting scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* from play and film versions. Mid-attaining students do well with narrative and personal writing. Their analysis and commentary on texts is less well developed. Low-attaining students are enabled by the demands of the Entry Level course to produce simple writing through highly structured and well-supported tasks. A satisfactory proportion of writing is word processed: a motivating feature of writing for students of all abilities.
73. A similar pattern of good achievement is seen in standards of reading. By the age of 14 students are able to interpret a range of fiction and media texts. Most read aloud with good intonation and expression. By the age of 16 students have a developing command of technical vocabulary which they apply in close analyses of stories, plays, poems and films. High attaining students, as in a

lesson on the conventions of the horror genre, commented on intention and effect in quite sophisticated ways. Low-attaining students responded well to teaching, through the teacher's careful choice of texts and teaching approaches, for example, the teacher helped readers to make progress by using tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, showing how differently the various papers used words.

74. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory. Teachers use questions well to get and keep students' attention. However, whereas there are clear procedures to help students extend their writing, there is not a corresponding emphasis on using talk for learning. Students rarely have the opportunity to discuss and present ideas in a variety of situations in order to develop their confidence, understanding and independence. Current timetabling arrangements constrain opportunities for work of this kind because lessons are too short.
75. Standards of teaching are good overall and lead to correspondingly good progress. In Years 7-9 over half the lessons observed were good or very good. One was judged to be unsatisfactory. In Years 10-11 the same pattern was repeated. The majority of lessons have clear objectives and procedures. They demonstrably advance students' skills and understanding and show the planned impact of the National Literacy Strategy. A lesson on *The Granny Project*, for example, helped students very effectively to talk about family histories through using key words, carefully managed discussion and writing, and a whole-class discussion to review what had been learned. Homework is sometimes used well to consolidate and develop learning, though this good practice is not sufficiently general. The same is true of marking. Many teachers mark students' writing and give clear feedback and set helpful targets for development. Not all do. The generally good teaching, however, is reflected in students' learning. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and organize lessons well, encouraging students' interest and learning. In the two instances where teaching was unsatisfactory the teachers' expectations were too low. Although students were well controlled, they were insufficiently challenged to learn with pace and purpose.
76. Teaching and learning in drama are outstanding. Of three lessons observed they were good in one and excellent in two. Teachers have complete command of the theory and practice of their subject. Their expectations are extremely high. Because they model for students' enjoyment, commitment and the discipline required to be an effective performer, those expectations are met by work of a very high standard.
77. Curricular provision in English is satisfactory. Schemes of work cover the requirements of the National Curriculum clearly and in detail. Information and communication technology is well provided for (though access can be problematic) and some teachers use it in innovative and highly motivating ways. Literacy development is central to the English curriculum and is embedded in the planning and conduct of lessons. The commitment of the librarian to the development of literacy and wide reading is an important feature of the college's provision and much appreciated by students. Teaching in other departments contributes satisfactorily to literacy. All departments have explicit policies. Particularly effective use of writing frames and strategies to support subject-specific reading were noted in modern foreign languages, history and special needs.
78. The leadership and management of the faculty are good. In post a year, the head of faculty has revised schemes of work with an eye to detail and progression. They support effective lesson planning and reflect the priorities of the college development plan very clearly. Specialist English rooms are well set up to encourage and motivate students. A significant amount of accommodation is unsatisfactory. Students taught in non-specialist and cramped circumstances (sometimes in as many as four different rooms) are disadvantaged. There is a clear vision for the development of the faculty shared by the head and second in the faculty. They are working towards a team ethos through which the best practice in the faculty might be shared and made general. This is particularly important because of the proportion of English taught by non-specialists. The requirement for staff development and the capacity of the head of faculty to oversee it, is therefore a priority for the further improvement of teaching and learning.
79. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Assessment now securely informs planning. Homework is more consistently set, though not by all teachers. The same is true of work

to appropriately challenge students by setting high expectations. It is there in many lessons, but not yet evident in all.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Students make good progress.
- Results in 2001 were clearly above those of schools with similar intakes.
- The quality of teaching is usually good or better.
- There is very effective tracking of students' learning and individual target setting.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The mathematics faculty works as a cohesive unit.

Areas for improvement

- The most able students often do not gain the GCSE results that prior attainment in Year 9 predicts.
- The short lesson often restricts teaching reaching an even higher quality.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

80. Results in 2001 attained by students in national tests at the end of Year 9 were below the national average. However, they were well above those for schools with a similar proportion of students on free school meals. This continued a gradually improving trend over recent years. Results in 2002 showed a marked dip because of a much weaker cohort on entry.

81. In 2001, overall results in GCSE, in terms of average points scores and the proportion of students gaining grades A*-C, were below the national average. Boys, however, performed as well as boys nationally, whilst girls were well below. In 2002, there was a slight overall improvement with boys achieving the provisional national average and girls showing marked improvement. No student has attained grade A* or A in the last two years. This is explained largely by the creaming of students to other schools through 11+ tests. However, the prior attainment by the end of Year 9, as a result of good progress throughout Years 7 to 9, suggests that the most able students are not making the same good progress in Years 10 and 11. Students in mathematics attain higher than those in English and lower than those in science. Their performance is in line with most other subjects in the college.

82. The standards of attainment are below average. However, students are making good progress throughout Years 7 to 9. Top set students discuss confidently and learn effectively about the rigour of a proof with types of angles in diagrams containing parallel sides and triangles. The teacher used an effective PowerPoint presentation to show clear diagrams to capture students' imagination. Then, working in pairs, students were required to explain to each other, in an imaginary telephone conversation, why angles vertically opposite each other when two lines intersect must be equal. Currently, the most striking feature of the work in Years 7 to 9, is the challenge provided for students new to the college in Year 7. The outstanding assessment systems are used very well to ensure that students are not repeating work, but aiming to progress at a rate consistently faster than the national trend.

83. In one lesson students made good progress in understanding concepts related to equal angles. They worked in pairs to match geometric diagrams to words. The teacher provided good advice and asked searching questions, stimulating high quality discussion. The teacher then helped students understand how equal angles are formed by parallel lines.

84. The good use of relevant resources, paired and group work are features of many lessons in Years 7 to 9. They promote good quality learning and enable students to achieve standards above what could be expected in light of prior attainment. In Year 9, a well below average ability set of students used different coloured card to learn effectively about interior angles in a polygon and the weakest set used computer software to do the same. Both of these groups of students were

helped by enthusiastic teachers and an able learning support assistant who targeted students with special educational needs well.

85. Students in Year 10 make good progress. Whilst students in Year 11 make at least satisfactory progress, a greater focus on assimilating factual knowledge, sometimes slows the pace of lessons and does not motivate students well. Also, as a consequence of the policy to enter the most able students for the intermediate tier GCSE examination at the end of Year 10, some Year 11 students, having already attained a grade B or C, lack motivation. Year 11 students in middle and lower sets do well in terms of their prior attainment. Students in a low set learned about the relationship between the circumference of a circle and its diameter. They did this in a practical way, measuring different objects with string and pooling results. However, despite the efforts of the teacher and the supporting teacher, better progress was hindered because the accommodation in an old science laboratory is not conducive to learning. Also, because despite the use of a practical activity, the timing and sharpness of the activities lacked the better quality seen with the younger students.
86. Teaching is good overall. It is often very good and occasionally excellent, such as in a lesson with middle ability students in Year 7. Here, students investigated in a genuinely open fashion, using very high quality resources and literacy skills, the relationship between the number of faces, edges and vertices for different three-dimensional shapes. Whilst the teaching of students in Years 10 and 11 attempts to embrace the pattern of the new framework for Years 7-9, it sometimes lacks the sharpness of planning, use of resources and timing seen in the vast majority of lessons with younger students. Overall, teachers work hard. They usually plan as well, enabling students to consolidate their learning by individual, paired and group work. However, the short lesson length means that teachers are understandably tempted to rush as they want each lesson to be a self-contained learning experience. Even the possibility of grade A* or A, did not inspire all of the top set to spot that the numeric values in simple equations decide the gradient of a line and its position on the graph. This was despite the teacher's imaginative use of paired and group work to promote this learning. Two boys showed challenging behaviour and disinterest at intervals throughout the lesson. Some students seemed not to realise that straight line graphs do not only exist for positive values. This standard represents only satisfactory progress from attainment at the end of Year 9.
87. The head of faculty has been in post for only a term and a half and has demonstrated very good leadership and management already. In this time, morale, schemes of work and teaching standards have improved significantly, despite accommodation overall being unsatisfactory. An outstanding feature of leadership is the way in which assessment data and target setting are being used to raise standards for all students. Resources have been centralised and made more accessible to all teachers. Information and communication technology is used well, despite the faculty's own computer room being extremely cramped and restricting teacher movement.
88. The faculty works as a cohesive unit. This teamwork has been vital in ensuring a high degree of uniformity in teaching. The head of faculty is an outstanding teacher who leads by example. All teachers are supported very well. Learning support assistants offer good quality provision for students with special educational needs. The faculty has shown good improvement since the last inspection and is currently making significant strides forward.
89. Standards of numeracy in the college are broadly in line with the national average. They are best in Year 7, because many of the weaker students have benefited from the summer school run by the numeracy co-ordinator and because the teaching of mathematics uses the three-part lesson most skilfully to promote standards.
90. Numeracy across the curriculum is developing satisfactorily. A very good document has been put together in September 2002 following a whole-school training day in Spring term 2002. It details uniform methodology for work involving all aspects of data handling and types of calculation. Departments have their own policies, but as yet there has not been time to review the impact of these policies. The art department scheme of work pays particular attention to proportion, measuring and scaling in Year 7 and rotational symmetry in Year 8.

91. Satisfactory interpretation and drawing of graphs is undertaken in science and geography in most year groups. In modern foreign languages, students understand conversions from Sterling to the Euro and in information and communication technology, students use formulae in spreadsheets and plot graphs from data. In design and technology, students weigh and measure satisfactorily, whilst in physical education students use timing and measuring devices accurately. The use of numeracy, however, is less well developed in history and religious education.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Students' achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students' have positive attitudes.
- The management and leadership of the science faculty are very good.
- The assessment of students' progress is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Raise the level of challenge provided for students of all capabilities.
- Enhance the opportunities for students to learn on their own.
- Increase the length of lessons, which are too short at present.

92. The standards achieved by students in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were below average; they were, however, in line with those of similar schools. Boys attained slightly higher standards than girls. Over the previous three years, results improved in line with national trends. The attainment of boys improved faster than that of girls over this period. Initial results from the end of Year 9 tests in 2002 indicate that students' attainment was similar to that in 2001.
93. At the end of Year 11, most students are entered for the GCSE double award science examination. In 2001, the performance of both boys and girls was significantly better than in most other subjects in the college. The percentage of students gaining A*-C grades was slightly above the national average. Nearly all students gained at least grade G. The percentage of students gaining the highest grades (A*/A) was well below the national average; this was lower than for 2000. Boys' results were much better than those of girls. Initial results from the GCSE examinations in 2002 indicate that the performance of students was similar to that in 2001; the difference in attainment between boys and girls was smaller. The few students entered for single award science all gained at least grade G.
94. Students' attainment in science on entry to the college is well below average. Students in Year 7 have considerable weaknesses in their prior knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. For instance, during a lesson on the effects of heating water, students displayed poor practical skills and had little awareness of how to use a thermometer correctly. However, as a result of well-structured and supportive teaching, students make good progress. By the end of Year 9, although attainment remains below national expectations, students are more confident in tackling practical work and demonstrate better recall and use of scientific principles. This was the case in a good lesson on the effects of heating metals, in which students' increasing competence in making observations allowed them to draw appropriate conclusions from their experimental results.
95. By the end of Year 11, attainment overall is close to the national average; it is above average for higher-attaining students, who are encouraged to study the three separate sciences by attending additional classes at the end of the college day. Achievement is good. Many students use their understanding of scientific ideas well to absorb new knowledge. For example, in an excellent lesson on rock types, higher-attaining students used their awareness of geological structures to systematically identify different samples. In most lessons, students are over-reliant on teachers for guidance; as a result they lack confidence in finding out things for themselves. At present,

insufficient opportunities are provided for all students to develop the skills they require to enable them to study on their own.

96. Students make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Their written work is carefully produced and well presented. Teachers focus on improving students' scientific vocabulary and provide appropriate support for mathematical activities. Boys and girls make similar progress in lessons throughout the college. Teachers are very aware of the higher attainment of boys in external examinations and use every opportunity to encourage girls to achieve better. Students with special educational needs make good progress as a result of targeted support and encouragement. This was found in a very good Year 9 lesson on the reactivity of metals. The teacher's clear explanation of the principles involved and the additional individual help from a learning support assistant, resulted in students making good progress. They were able to relate their practical observations successfully to what they had learned about displacement reactions.
97. Throughout the college, behaviour is generally good and students respond positively in lessons. They are usually keen to learn. Relationships are good and students co-operate well when working in groups. While most students concentrate effectively on their work, a few do not listen well and lose interest easily. As a result, the flow of the lesson becomes disrupted. This was particularly the case when lesson content was insufficiently challenging or not well presented. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers actively promote high expectations, and, as a result, students generally make good progress.
98. The quality of teaching is good overall. Many very good and excellent lessons were seen. The very few unsatisfactory lessons observed occurred when teaching failed to engage all students sufficiently in the work; this then allowed some poor behaviour to disrupt the progress of the whole class. In most lessons, students know what is expected of them and the work contains an appropriate balance of challenge and support. In a very good Year 11 lesson, the teacher allowed time for students to reflect on their previous knowledge of the human circulatory system and used questioning and explanation very effectively to develop and consolidate their understanding; as a result, some existing misconceptions were rectified. Where lessons are less effective, teachers fail to assess students' understanding adequately and present work in an inappropriate way. This was observed in a Year 9 lesson on neutralisation. The teacher had good knowledge of the topic, but did not explain the work in sufficient detail. As a result many students were confused about what exactly was required of them and some lost interest. Although teachers usually plan and deliver their lessons effectively, greater consideration needs to be given to what and how well students are learning. At present there is limited time allocated to individual lessons and this sometimes inhibits students' learning opportunities; this is particularly true where the lesson contains a large element of student practical work.
99. Good provision is made for information and communication technology. Students use remote sensing and data logging effectively during investigations and often present this information well using computer software. They are also encouraged to use computer based information and simulation programs to develop understanding and to help with revision. While many teachers make excellent use of computer presentations to help explain complicated topics, the faculty is aware of the need to develop greater use of information and communication technology by students in lessons.
100. The procedures for assessing students' progress are very effective. Teachers have a good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses and use this well when providing support and guidance. The standard of marking has improved since the last inspection and is now effective in helping students to make better progress. Homework provides good opportunities for students to extend their understanding of work in lessons and is used effectively by teachers to assess how well students are coping. Students are generally aware of the progress they are making and most can relate this to National Curriculum levels. Teachers often use this knowledge well to set individual work targets for students.
101. The management and leadership of the science faculty are good. Curriculum provision is well managed and there is clear guidance given to all staff on all aspects of the work of the faculty.

Teachers work very effectively together as a team and there is an evident determination to continue to raise standards. Appropriate developments have been prioritised and a review of teaching schemes, in line with national initiatives, has begun. Although monitoring of work in the subject is generally good, there is too little planned observation of lessons to ensure a reduction in the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and allow the very good practice to be shared more. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection; the few issues identified then have largely been addressed and the many strengths have been maintained. However, a shortage of technician time still leads to teachers sometimes having to organise equipment for themselves; and, although laboratory accommodation has been upgraded, a lack of work and storage space in the preparation area further limits the effectiveness of the technical staff.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Good quality individual attention by teachers enables students to develop their own responses.
- Very good assessment procedures help students to make good progress.

Areas for improvement

- Enrich the curriculum by the further development of spiritual, moral and social aspects and by offering more variety of media.
- Increase the proportion of students attaining A* and A grades at GCSE.

102. In 2001 the proportion of boys and girls gaining A*-C grades in GCSE was above the national average. All students achieved significantly better in art than in any other subject they took. Results in 2002 are broadly on a par with the previous year and all students continue to achieve better in art than most other subjects taken. This has been the trend in recent years.
103. In work seen in the inspection at the age of 14, students are working in line with expectation and achieve well taking into account standards when they entered the college. Students with special educational needs make similarly good progress. Students gain more knowledge and understanding of the work of artists and greater control of materials they use. For example, students in Year 9 show a good understanding of graphics by studying a design brief and preparing designs for a café called "Fly by Night." The higher-attaining students, for instance, have drawn insects sensitively and in great detail in preparation for creating a logo for the café. Most students use shape and tone effectively to create eye-catching designs.
104. By the age of 16, standards are around the national average and students are making satisfactory progress. Students in Year 11 generally draw well and many understand and use tone effectively. Although one higher attaining-student has developed drawings of sunflowers into other media, making skilful use of coloured pencil and paint and a three-dimensional version using copper tubing, few students show the potential to achieve grades A* and A. Students make progress consistently with their classmates due to the good quality of teaching.
105. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. Strengths of teaching when lessons are good or very good included the careful choice of topic to suit the interests of the group; thorough planning; good use of visual material and other resources; and the variety of activities used to maintain interest and enthusiasm throughout the long double lessons. Clear lesson objectives and good quality 1:1 interaction with students ensure that students learn successfully. However, teachers do not identify students with the potential to achieve the highest grades early enough and so do not provide them with an appropriate programme of learning. On occasions when teaching is not so strong lesson objectives are unclear; planning is inadequate and fails to enthuse and inspire students; and the pace of learning slows down in the long lessons, adversely affecting students' learning. Student behaviour often deteriorates as a consequence.
106. Student attitudes are consistent with the standard of teaching. Most students want to do well and are interested in their work. However, when teaching does not sufficiently inspire them or when it lacks focus and pace, talking increases and low-level poor behaviour creeps in. Relationships between students and teachers are cordial.
107. The quality of leadership and management is good. The comprehensive departmental documentation, team spirit and shared commitment to raising standards are strengths. Assessment procedures are well used to aid student progress and to inform learning reviews and reports. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching within the department are well managed. Training needs are identified and opportunities for further training are provided. Schemes of work show consideration of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology

and fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum. Steps have been taken to address points for development from the last inspection report, namely to improve opportunities for drawing and for more oral work. Progress on these issues has been good. The art department makes a good contribution to the cultural development of students through its varied approach to western and non-western art, its annual trips and its cross-curricular involvement, for example through drama productions and Asian Week. There are plans to further enrich the curriculum with the addition of work using clay and fabric. It would also benefit from further enrichment by developing the spiritual, moral and social aspects to the same degree.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The citizenship input into the curriculum has been fully audited.
- There is a well-structured taught programme.
- The college provides good opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in the community.

Areas for improvement

- The recording of students' progress across the curriculum in the lower college.
- The co-ordination and validation of citizenship elements in other subjects and areas of college life.

108. The teaching of citizenship is through the PSHE programme throughout the college. For younger students, there are planned modules of work in each year which contribute to the citizenship programmes of study and which are taught by form tutors. Work is primarily by discussion and debate of issues; there is no formally recorded work completed by students at this stage, although the work has in some cases produced some striking wall displays.

109. In Key Stage 4, the modules of work in citizenship alternate with modules on careers and are taught by specialists. The course followed leads to the possibility of students' taking the GCSE short course examination in citizenship, although the college has not yet made the decision that students will be entered for the examination. In the lessons seen, students were given good opportunities to begin their thinking on the economy by deciding what constituted the private, public and voluntary sectors and there was some lively discussion as to the relative contributions of each.

110. There is a clear awareness as to what a citizenship course needs to contain and this is reflected in the subject planning. In addition other subjects and activities within them make a valuable contribution to citizenship. However, the cross-curricular elements are not planned and students' attainment in these subjects is not recorded. In history, for example, the scheme of work refers to opportunities for citizenship. There are also some good examples of students gaining knowledge about what it means. For example, the visit of a Polish national and the presence in college of a Spanish assistant from Peru have produced informative displays; the policy of the modern foreign languages department to produce reading passages which break away from the Euro-centric concept of French and Spanish teaching and learning; and the well-developed oral history project, where local people talked about their experiences and a discussion of local environmental issues in a Year 8 geography lesson.

111. The college provides opportunities for students to take responsibility and to become aware of the democratic process. Elections are held to the active college council, which debates a range of issues of interest and concern to students in the college. The college consults students and listens to what they have to say on a range of issues, including staff appointments. A recent college council debate on litter resulted in the installation of attractive new litter bins about the college which have been very effective in improving the litter problem. A meeting attended by inspectors showed that students are beginning to understand the democratic process, but that they lack confidence as yet in speaking and interacting at a formal level. The college is likely to

send a number of representatives to the Kent Youth Assembly, for which elections were held recently with Hartsdown as a polling station.

112. The citizenship curriculum is enhanced by a range of other opportunities which enable students to experience aspects of public life and the democratic and legal systems. They visit the Magistrates' Courts and attend conferences on a range of relevant topics. The college itself organises enrichment days, inviting speakers on a range of topics and giving its students the opportunity to listen to their views and to debate topics of interest. Through the performing arts programme, students demonstrate their dramatic skills by performing in the local community and contributing to charities such as Children in Need.
113. Students' attainment in citizenship at age 14 will be reported to parents through the form tutor's report. This will contain an indication of their strengths and what they need to improve and a statement of the level which they have reached. In Key Stage 4, reporting will reflect the students' performance alongside the other subjects of the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The management of the department is very good.
- The teachers' command of their specialist subject is very good.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very effective.

Areas for improvement

- To provide more opportunities for group work in Key Stage 3.
- To reduce the amount of paper based designing by increasing the amount of hands-on product analysis in Key Stage 3.

114. In 2001 teacher assessment of Year 9 students indicates that standards were well below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. Boys' performance was particularly low. The situation improved significantly in 2002 with 67 per cent of Year 9 students attaining National Curriculum Level 5 and above. In addition, the wide gap between girls' and boys' performance is now nearer the one that exists nationally.
115. In 2001 standards in GCSE were above the national average. In comparison with other college subjects, GCSE grades were over half a grade higher and very good in comparison to similar schools. In 2002, results dipped below those of the previous year in electronics, food technology and resistant materials, although food technology and resistant materials still performed better than other subjects. Results in textile technology were again very good, comparing favourably with last year's results.
116. By the end of Year 9 most students are able to draw independently upon a wide range of sources of information. They can make preliminary models to explore and test their design ideas; for example, Year 9 students use the 'Scantek' modular system to model the operation of gears, pulleys and pneumatic cylinders. However, Key Stage 3 students do not yet have enough opportunities to evaluate every day objects in college during research and design activities.
117. By the end of Year 11 the most capable students research their own design projects extensively and produce some excellent work. This included some exceptional design folios in food technology, resistant materials and textiles technology. The quality of making is also of a good standard. For example, Year 11 students produce high quality 3D card models prior to making storage units. Students are confident users of computers and use these effectively to aid design, manufacture and graphic representation. For example, they make widespread use of spreadsheets and charts to analyse survey results in food and textile technology projects.

118. The quality of teaching is good. The significant majority of lessons seen were satisfactory or good for students aged 11 to 14 and mostly very good or excellent for students aged 14 to 16. The very good and excellent lessons have clear learning objectives, are very well managed and organised, are stimulating and have a brisk pace. This is evident when Year 11 students are developing their GCSE project work in food textiles and resistant materials. Where teaching is good rather than very good lessons are well planned and managed but tend to be less well paced. Satisfactory lessons tend to be rather uninspiring and too mechanistic in their approach to designing. Teachers give Year 11 students very good support in coursework and closely monitor their individual progress, providing them with constructive comments and targets on a weekly basis. However, teaching of design skills at Key Stage 3 is mostly paper based at present. Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge and this has a positive impact on learning. Very good provision is made for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the department.
119. Teachers use homework effectively to help students consolidate class work, to prepare for lessons and to develop their technical vocabulary. It has a positive impact on standards. Much has been done to support the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills by way of high quality classroom displays containing technical vocabulary and the provision of well-structured worksheets to support students' designing. Students with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress and in GCSE last year two students with specific learning needs achieved high grades in food technology.
120. Students' attitudes are generally very good and have a positive impact on standards. Attitudes are very good in GCSE lessons. They enjoy design and technology and take pride in their work. They are willing to participate fully in lessons and readily offer answers to questions from their teachers. They share tools and equipment fairly and handle them safely. They are eager to do well and take responsibility to clear and tidy up working areas at the end of every lesson. Design folders and written work are kept neat, tidy and properly organised.
121. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader is particularly enthusiastic and sets high standards for his colleagues. There are very good systems in place that enable him to monitor standards in teaching and learning. Departmental meetings focus on action to improve standards after the evaluation of the curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment data. Students' reports meet statutory requirements and provide targets for students' improvement. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The scheme of work is well balanced and provides students with a broad experience in all aspects of designing and making and in a wide range of materials. The departmental development plan makes clear links with the college development plan and sets out clear strategies for the way forward, describing how improvements can be systematically phased in and financed. The accommodation is satisfactory though a food technology room has worn work surfaces and kitchen units and some workshops still have untreated concrete floors. The level and quality of technician support is good.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- The use of spreadsheets to allow students to test hypotheses within mathematical models.
- Use grade descriptors from GCSE as academic targets for student improvement.

122. By the end of Year 9 teacher assessments record girls' attainment as being roughly in line with national expectations. Boys do not reach the same standards. These results represent very good achievement for the girls and good achievement for the boys, as all students entered the college with attainment well below national standards. Students with special educational needs make

equally good progress. Students make good progress through Key Stage 3. They can describe places and patterns and extract data from maps, diagrams and charts satisfactorily. Their presentation of work is good. They use geographical vocabulary to communicate effectively their findings and to explain these in terms of one or more geographical processes. This was well illustrated in a Year 8 lesson where students studying environmental issues could apply what they had learned to local issues and discuss not only the impact of derelict industrial land, but also the likely impact of possible solutions on different aspects of the community.

123. Geography is a popular option, especially among boys. The subject is less popular with girls because of the structure of the option system. There have been at least 80 students following this course to GCSE. Although results for 2002 show a fall from 2001 when 38 per cent of boys and 26 per cent of girls achieved a grade C or above, the overall trend is rising slowly. 98.8 per cent of students achieved grades A-G which is above the national average. Although the percentage achieving at grade C or above is below the national average, when compared to similar schools and to the students' prior attainment the results are in line with expectations. Boys' attainment has been at least equal to or above girls' attainment for the last three years. Achievement during Years 10 and 11 has been satisfactory, but overall in the five years from Year 7 to Year 11 the achievement is good.
124. Standards of attainment observed are satisfactory. The improving trend is continuing. The achievement by all students, including those with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory. The higher-attaining boys answer questions confidently. They show good understanding of geographical processes and how they interact to create patterns. They can also compare and contrast different examples of tourist resorts and explain the impact of eco-tourism. Other students experience problems expressing themselves and their written answers lack detail and depth as well as a lack of precision in their use of geographical vocabulary. Teachers recognise this weakness and work hard to help students to improve. Emphasis is placed on developing literacy skills, particularly the understanding and correct use of geographical vocabulary in all lessons.
125. A few lessons seen were satisfactory and a third were very good. The quality of teaching is good overall. Students respond well to the expectations of their teachers. Behaviour is at least good in the majority of lessons. Relationships are good and teachers manage their students well. Teachers make good use of the available technology and often use lap top computers and projectors to display 'PowerPoint' presentations to support their exposition. Where teaching is very good, planning and preparation ensure that there is a seamless flow from teacher exposition to student task. Teachers are aware of their students' current performance and progress and plan accordingly so that tasks extend the more capable as well as offering support for those who require it. Careful planning also allows the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 9 lessons, the use of CDs to provide music and video to provide visual images contributed to students' understanding of the actions of an apartheid government in South Africa and to their discussion of the moral issues raised. Year 7 students' gains in understanding of the cultural variations across Britain were clear in a lesson used to introduce the regional study of the United Kingdom. Teachers use their enthusiasm and good subject knowledge well. They often vary tasks in lessons and maintain a good pace. Teachers work well with learning support assistants to ensure the progress made by students with special educational needs. In lessons that were satisfactory either planning did not take account of recent changes to lesson times and work was unfinished, or more significantly, there was a combination of poor behaviour, interruptions to the flow of the lesson and lower expectation of levels of attainment.
126. Leadership and management of geography are good. The department makes good use of self-review, considering the department's strengths and weaknesses and measuring its progress against its targets. Teaching is monitored regularly. Students are now aware of how well they are doing as their work is reviewed regularly and targets are set. This is better in Years 7 to 9 where academic targets are linked to National Curriculum level descriptors. Years 10 and 11 targets are not yet linked to GCSE grade descriptors. Results at GCSE are improving slowly and recruitment to the GCSE course is strong. The number of girls who follow the subject to GCSE is low and is related to the alternative offered within the option system. Resources have improved and there is a

suitable supply of textbooks and maps that support students' individual research. The purchase of appropriate atlases has been supported by the PTFA. Teachers also produce additional resources. Information and communication technology resources are available in the humanities computer room, but there are not enough for a whole class to use, nor is the Internet access reliable. The department makes insufficient use of spreadsheets to build and test hypotheses within mathematical models. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The location of classrooms in different buildings means that shared resources have to be transferred between buildings at the change of each lesson. Rooms do not all lead directly from corridors and lessons are interrupted by students passing through. When blackout is used, as is necessary for OHP and 'PowerPoint' projection, rooms are dark and uninviting. Teachers make best use of what is available and produce good, relevant wall display using their own and student generated materials.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are improving.
- Achievement is good and many students make good progress.
- The department is well led. There is clear educational direction and a shared commitment to improvement.
- The curriculum is well planned.

Areas for improvement

- Many students, especially the younger ones, are unclear about what level they are working at and how they can improve their work.
- The planning for lessons is sometimes not rigorous enough. Insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that all students are stretched and challenged and that work is well matched to the students' differing abilities.
- Though there is a good range of policy documentation to support teachers in planning for lessons, agreed policies are not uniformly implemented.

127. Standards of attainment amongst 14 year olds are improving. The most recent statutory assessments show that standards are satisfactory. Standards of attainment for 16 year olds are below national averages overall, though they have improved over the past four years. The most recent GCSE results represented a significant improvement in the percentage of students gaining an A*-C grade compared with previous years but the percentage of students gaining a pass grade was low when compared to other subjects in the college. The history department has been successful in raising the attainment of boys in the GCSE examinations and this year there was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls at the higher levels. However, the college's data indicate that some lower-attaining girls do not do as well as they should. Girls did better than boys in last summer's statutory assessments of 14 year olds, though in lessons there was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

128. Achievement is good by the age of 14. The majority of students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress by this stage. Students who speak English as an additional language make sound progress. Higher-attaining students and those who are gifted and talented do not receive sufficiently difficult work and make unsatisfactory progress. Overall, the majority of students are gaining a good grounding in knowledge, understanding and skills. In the early years, this is most often demonstrated by oral responses in lessons. Progress in written work is usually more varied because a significant number of students have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly, confidently and at length. Handwriting and presentation of work are generally unsatisfactory. However, many students make steady progress in literacy as they move through the college.

129. Students' understanding of chronology, causation and change is satisfactory. Their appreciation and understanding of the nature, value and limitations of evidence are developing well because they are provided with frequent opportunities for historical investigation. For example, in a very

good Year 9 lesson on the new industrial towns of the nineteenth century they used cartoons and picture as sources. Thus, they learned to analyse and evaluate evidence. Older students appreciate the central importance of evidence in the study of history. Key historical words are displayed in each classroom and identified in lesson plans but insufficient attention is paid to these during some lessons. Because of this students' understanding of concepts such as monarchy, autocracy and dictatorship is limited. In some lessons students develop numeracy skills and increasingly practise and develop their skills in information and communication technology. Students who have problems with handwriting find this especially helpful in the presentation of work.

130. Students continue to achieve by the age of 16 and the majority make good progress. Some are still hindered by limited literacy skills but many students produce well-structured essays in which they make connections across different topics, construct good argument and arrive at independent conclusions. For example, they wrote effectively about the comparative importance of Lenin and Stalin in Russian history. Though students make good progress overall few students attain the higher grades in the GCSE examination. Occasionally, the progress of students is impeded by their poor listening skills and the inability of a few to maintain concentration. At times, disruptive behaviour affects the learning and progress of others. This happens where work is too easy or the learning materials are not appropriate.
131. Teaching is satisfactory, but has some good features. All teachers are well qualified specialists who have good subject knowledge and understanding. They are reflective and keep abreast with, and are willing to experiment with, new ideas. All have developed sound class management strategies and students usually respond well and are able to learn. Most teachers are creative and inventive and include a variety of learning activities in lessons. Lessons often include opportunities for students to work in pairs or groups which they are able to do productively by the age of 14. This way of working is especially appreciated by older students who value the discussion of ideas and exchange of views with their peers. Much good work is underway in helping students develop good literacy skills but insufficient attention is paid to handwriting and presentation, which are poor for a significant number of students.
132. The shortcomings in teaching are few but significant. Planning for lessons is frequently insufficiently rigorous in that not enough emphasis is placed on the setting, sharing and reviewing of learning objectives. This means that neither the teacher nor the student has a clear view of what learning is expected in each lesson, making it difficult to gauge progress. Planning to meet the needs of all students lacks rigour. In practice, work is usually well matched to the needs of lower-attaining students. However, not enough attention is paid to higher-attaining students who mark time in many lessons. In day to day marking students in both key stages are not given enough feedback on how to improve their work. Learning targets, especially for younger students, are often undemanding. The grades given to younger students in the marking of work do not equate with National Curriculum levels and consequently students are unclear what level they are working at. Overall, students are not given enough opportunities to exercise initiative and responsibility in their learning and there is too much dependence on the teacher.
133. The curriculum is well planned, broad and balanced. It fosters moral and cultural development. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of relevant visits to places of historical interest and significance. It is further enhanced by students' participation in long established oral history days, where members of the community give their perspectives on life during the world war and their testimonies of, for example, the Holocaust. There are some good cross-curricular links with other subjects, notably in English. The curriculum offers many opportunities to contribute to students' spiritual development but this is currently under-developed. The new requirements for citizenship have been well documented in the curriculum plans for history but are not yet being implemented. The recently revised timetable makes it difficult for teachers in the shorter lessons available to address the full range and extent of the planned curriculum effectively.
134. Leadership and management are good. There is clear educational direction and a shared commitment among teachers to improvement and high standards. A range of good quality documentation is provided in the history handbook. However, due to the pace and development of

initiatives and change in the department, these policies are not yet implemented.

135. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The department is well placed to bring about further improvements in standards and teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is full entitlement for all students.
- The curriculum is good.
- The subject is well led.

Area for improvement

- Strategies to engage some students purposefully to keep them on task.

136. In Year 9 the standard of students' work is in line with national expectations. At the end of Year 11 students achieve standards of work that are also broadly in line with the national average. This is shown in the pass rate of those taking GCSE information and communication technology and those who have completed the intermediate GNVQ course in information and communication technology through coursework and examinations. These standards are confirmed from the work seen during the inspection. Since the last OFSTED inspection there has been a good improvement in the standard of students' work in this subject throughout the age range 11 –16.

137. In Year 9, for example, students use a spreadsheet to produce a Gantt chart to display the time, sequence and interrelationship of tasks to be completed in producing the college play. In Year 11, for example, students can confidently use all the standard home and business productivity applications including a word processor, spreadsheet, desktop publisher, database, Internet Explorer and PowerPoint. They can select the right application for the task and move work from one application to another with ease.

138. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is good during practical sessions when technical skills are explained well. Some lessons are of a lower quality when the teacher does not keep all the class on task during individual work on the computers. Often the teachers set high expectations to which many of the students readily respond. Teachers have good subject knowledge relevant to the age range of their students. Their expectations of students are clear and appropriate. The students are given a clear understanding of what they are to do and what is expected of them. Teachers set appropriate and challenging work in most lessons and they teach at a satisfactory pace. Teachers plan their lessons to a good standard. Students with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language receive good support through customised study guides and help when it is required.

139. Many students enjoy this subject and work for long periods of time sustaining their concentration on the tasks set for them. They are confident in their skills and some are prepared to explore new ideas and work creatively. Many complete their work with care and attention to accuracy and detail. Students often extend their learning through additional individual research.

140. The quality of learning is good. Often it is the synergy between the teachers' skills and enthusiasm and the students' interest that leads to good learning and progress in this subject. However, at times some of the students are not fully attentive or do not complete the task required. Very good learning was seen in a Year 9 class. In a Year 9 lesson where students were asked to use a chart to help them plan a school production, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher set high expectations for learning. This as well as very good individual support resulted in interested and well-motivated students who made very good progress throughout the lesson.

141. All students have equal opportunity to study information and communication technology throughout the college. All are able to achieve a formal qualification in information and

communication technology at the end of Year 11. The scheme of work is very good at Key Stage 3. It is well thought out and taught in an imaginative way. Teachers provide interesting practical work. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Computer control technology is taught in design and technology to a good standard. Information and communication technology is used to enhance the quality of learning in the majority of the other subjects of the curriculum.

142. The college has produced a very useful information network (intranet). This adds to the quality of learning because it allows teachers and students to get access to learning materials outside of lesson time. They also use this for independent research as it cites many multimedia sources of information.
143. In studying modern foreign languages students research web sites in Spanish or French. They use PowerPoint to design and deliver multimedia presentations in these languages. Digital cameras are used extensively to enhance learning. In science, data are recorded and plotted directly on a computer screen through sensors connected to experiments. Older students effectively use a computer application to write, edit and play back compositions.
144. Information and communication technology is used very effectively as a vital part of the business studies course. The information and communication technology teachers enable the computer rooms to be available out of lesson times. Many students take the opportunity to extend their skills during these times. Project work enables gifted and higher attaining students to extend their work to the limits of their abilities and interests. Younger students, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress in improving their skills in literacy and numeracy through the use of specially designed software.
145. Assessment matched to National Curriculum levels of attainment is carried out very regularly and to a good standard for students in Years 7 to 9. Assessment is equally as thorough for the older students. Their achievement is carefully assessed against examination requirements and the assessment procedures for their GNVQ portfolio are good. Standards are monitored as students progress through the college allowing adjustments to be made to meet their learning needs. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
146. An experienced and knowledgeable head of faculty manages the subject to a good standard. The staff work well as a team. A network manager and technicians make a valued contribution by keeping the network of computers running to maximise their use and also in supporting students with their learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good.
- Teachers have very good language skills and knowledge.
- Very effective use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management of the faculty are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Improve results in the GCSE examinations.

147. At age 14, attainment in modern foreign languages is below national expectations. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that, overall, one-fifth of students achieved level 5 or better in 2002 compared with almost a third in 2001. Both boys and girls did less well in 2002, but the proportion of girls achieving the required level fell by almost a half. The proportion of students achieving at least level 4 rose slightly in 2002 compared with 2001. This pattern is replicated in both languages.

148. In the 2001 GCSE examinations in French, one-third of the students achieved A* to C grades, well below the national average and slightly below the average for similar secondary modern colleges. The average points score was 3.7 compared to 4.3 nationally. No student failed to achieve a grade. Practically all the higher grades in French were at C and there was a substantial proportion of students who achieved only the lowest grades.
149. A slightly higher proportion of those entered for Spanish achieved A* to C grades, well below the national average but above the average for secondary modern schools. The average points score was 3.6 compared with 4.4 nationally. With one exception, all students achieved a grade. As in French, students attaining the higher grades were at C and over a quarter of the students entered gained F and G grades.
150. In both languages, students' performance overall matched their performance in other subjects of the curriculum when national differences are taken into consideration. Girls did markedly better than boys in French and better than boys in Spanish. In each case, performance was in line with their performance in other subjects.
151. The current year's GCSE results fell markedly by comparison with those of 2001, especially in Spanish. Whereas all students in both languages achieved at least a grade G, less than a quarter of those entered gained a grade C in French and no more than one in six in Spanish. There was a marked fall in the attainment of both boys and girls in both languages, but more especially in the performance of boys in Spanish. Nonetheless, the A* to C rates gained in modern foreign languages met the targets which the department had set itself and were in line with the students' prior attainment at age 14.
152. In the work seen during the inspection, most students achieved standards below the national expectations, but which were good relative to their prior attainment. Many students make good progress and some lower-attaining students make very good progress. As in the last inspection, the attainment of the most able students in Key Stage 4, especially in speaking and writing, could be higher. This could be achieved if the expectations of teachers were in some cases more rigorous. Where there is a clear effort on the part of the teacher to encourage the students to respond in greater length, performance improves and students are closer to the national requirement.
153. The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the faculty. It is a major factor in the good progress which the majority of students make. It is clear that teachers share expertise and discuss their strategies and there is a clear 'house style' to which students can relate. The high quality of teaching in the department results in good learning and good attitudes to learning; teachers think carefully about their lessons and plan them well for variety and interest. Tasks are well-matched to the needs of the learners and lower-attainers in particular are very well supported, both by the nature of the work and by dedicated learning support staff. Imaginative teaching and learning strategies are employed and teachers use a range of media, including PowerPoint, computers and authentic audio materials. The assessment and marking of students' work are good and support their progress well.
154. Examples of outstanding teaching were in a Year 7 lesson in Spanish where the teacher made highly effective use of PowerPoint to introduce and to practise the structures of the lesson and where there were high demands on the students, whose response was extremely positive. All made very good progress throughout, irrespective of their prior attainment. Another example was in a class of low-attaining Year 9 students who were recapitulating a theme on favourite television programmes. Again the PowerPoint was used to great effect to recall the topic and to get the lesson going at a great pace. The teacher put pressure on the students to recall the phrases in their entirety, both in question and answer mode. There followed a student survey, which was carried out with efficiency and diligence by the students who then recorded their findings on a database program. In this class, as in a number of others, lower attainers were very well supported by the learning support assistant. The lesson resulted in very good progress being made by all students.

155. The leadership of the modern foreign languages faculty is very good. Relationships are very good: the faculty works very well as a team. The clear vision of the head of faculty results in a shared determination to drive up standards. Clear aims, firmly linked to the whole-college mission statement, permeate the faculty's work and there are very good and regular monitoring processes in place which ensure that teaching quality and standards are maintained. Staff development is good and the experienced teacher responsible for developments in information and communication technology ensures that all teachers are aware of how to support learning through up-to-date technology. Accommodation and the provision of learning resources are good.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers' planning is good.
- Students' attitudes to music are positive.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Time allocation for lessons is insufficient to cover the National Curriculum effectively.

156. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement as most students enter the college with below average attainment. Standards at the end of Year 11 are average, which reflects satisfactory achievement from the end of Year 9.

157. Teacher assessments for the end of Year 9 in 2002 were broadly in line with national standards, with 61 per cent of students achieving level 5 and above. Girls performed better than boys in 2002.

158. The proportion of students achieving GCSE grades within the range A*-C in the last two years has been well below the national average, though it improved between 2001 to 2002. However, results at A*-G have been above average, with all students obtaining passes within this range. The number of candidates opting for music in those years was quite small.

159. Students can locate notes on keyboards from notation and play tunes and simple chords with reasonable dexterity and accuracy, as for example, in a 12 bar blues. They understand and make good use of some of the technical functions of electronic keyboards such as varieties of tone and recording capability. They incorporate such ideas into their own blues compositions which they are able to perform effectively individually or in groups. Students sing with good articulation and phrasing. They listen with good discrimination and show familiarity with a range of musical styles and traditions. About 50 students, a relatively small proportion, enhance their musical attainment with additional instrumental lessons on guitar, keyboards, drums, violin and saxophone. A smaller number have singing lessons. Other opportunities to enhance attainment occur in group activities such as the choir and productions. At the end of Year 11 attainment is average. Students have average instrumental skills which they employ in the performance of their own and others' compositions. They know, understand and make effective use of compositional devices such as ostinati (repeated series of notes to form, for example, a bass part), riffs (a similar idea used in jazz) and elementary harmony, for example chords I, IV and V, which they put to good use in compositions in the style, for example, of Erik Satie. Talented students take their knowledge of harmony further, employing 7th and 9th chords in improvisations on the guitar. Students have a good knowledge of musical vocabulary and a developing knowledge of styles and composers. At all levels limits are imposed on students' attainment by the short lesson times, normally 45 minutes, but in periods 2 and 3 only 40 minutes. One such lesson per week in Years 7 to 9 is insufficient to do full justice to the requirements of the National Curriculum and three such lessons per week to cover the demands of the GCSE syllabus in appropriate depth are inadequate.

160. Students' attitudes to music are positive and the take up for GCSE in the current Year 10 and 11 is good. Extra-curricular musical activities are well supported. Students are mostly well behaved in lessons. Students have many opportunities for personal development in music and independent learning is encouraged at all stages for example in solving musical reading and playing problems, in having the onus placed on them to come up with ideas for compositions and by the use by teachers of problem solving approaches.
161. The quality of teaching and learning in all years is good. Lessons are well planned and timed with an appropriate level of challenge. A Year 7 lesson on the physiology of singing included a problem-solving exercise involving the behaviour of a balloon. The teacher successfully related this to the way our lungs work and the implication for singing and phrasing. Not only was this greatly enjoyed by the students but significant learning took place in an excellent lesson. Teachers have to contend with inadequate accommodation for music. The crowded space adds to the difficulties of behaviour management, which they do well and limits what can be done in the short lessons. Optimum use is made of limited space and time with effective teaching methods, for example the use of well thought out work and information sheets. However, group work is very restricted. Students with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory progress in the more demanding environment of the GCSE course. Such students are well supported and inclusion is good. A hearing impaired student, for example, was supported by a learning support teacher, the class teacher speaking into a microphone. Music teachers devote much time and energy to extra curricular groups such as the singing club, guitar club and the Carnival percussion group. Others participate in college and community events throughout the year, for example the Christmas 'Peace' event or the creative partnership project. Such events are well supported and appreciated by the community.
162. The lesson time allocated for music at Key stage 3 and the inadequate accommodation were criticised in the previous report and remain unchanged. However, developing the curriculum to promote more singing and higher levels of skill on instruments at an earlier stage, and improving resources, the key points for action, have been addressed. Overall, therefore, there has been satisfactory improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- GCSE results were well above the national average.
- The contribution of learning support assistants in dance is good.
- Teaching is good.
- The extra curricular programme is very good.
- The development of leadership skills, within the curriculum, for Key Stage 4 students is good.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of assessment is unsatisfactory.
- Schemes of work need updating to meet National Curriculum requirements. This was identified as an area for improvement in the 1996 inspection.
- The monitoring of teaching within the department is unsatisfactory.
- Planning for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

163. Students' standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are below national expectations. They have low skill levels and their understanding of physical education concepts is poor. Given so, they achieve quite well in relation to their capability. Students know how to warm up before their activities and understand the importance of exercise for a healthy lifestyle. Year 8 girls, in netball, developed footwork skills which the more able used to execute good passes to their team. The less able find passing difficult however. Girls' standards in badminton were higher and they soon developed short rallies, during their first lesson, showing good spatial awareness and movement to receive and return. Year 7 boys, in hockey, were able to dribble but they found the use of space

difficult. Skills in basketball in Year 9 were well below average and students had difficulty with simple passing activities in small conditioned games. Standards in co-educational dance are higher. Students in all years showed imaginative work that was exciting to watch. Boys and girls are able to work solo, in pairs, and small groups that require trust and careful planning. They are able to build motifs from skills already learnt and teach, choreograph and comment on their own and others' progress quite accurately, using appropriate technical language. Students with special educational needs are integrated into lessons but teachers do not plan effectively for their special needs. In a badminton and netball lesson adapted equipment was available. In some dance lessons students are supported well by learning support staff. This contributes significantly to student progress.

164. GCSE results are well above average and represent a continually improving trend. Students performed well in relation to their other subjects. The results were the fourth highest in the college. The standard of students' work in Year 11 is average. A small number of above average students have built on the skills they learned in Key Stage 3. Students find it difficult to apply skills learnt previously in conditioned games. They are able to select appropriate skills for tasks set. In basketball they are able to shoot accurately and secure rebounds with skill. Boys and girls worked well together in badminton. They can sustain rallies, using a variety of shots well. Students are developing leadership roles by taking responsibility for some teaching under supervision as well as officiating in games. Students are also beginning to use information and communication technology, through digital video analysis, to improve their understanding and evaluation of their own and others' skill development. Written work shows good progress in the current course.
165. The teaching of physical education and dance is good and occasionally very good. Students learn as a result. Good teaching is well planned with clear objectives. Lessons are well paced. Students are in no doubt of the high expectations of teachers. In badminton students set up their own equipment and are encouraged to lead relevant warm up activities. Teacher demonstration was used effectively to show the importance of accurate feeding for the early development of stroke play and serve. In a very good dance lesson, clear, displayed objectives enabled students to focus on their work. Working at a very good pace students, independently in small supportive groups, developed a dance motif and the teacher provided support to progressively move groups on during the lesson. Teachers prepare tasks that progress logically and give students sufficient time to consolidate skills before moving onto the next stage. A weaker lesson was not planned well enough for the students. Students who are unable to take part in lessons do not remain idle. They evaluate the work of others and present a summary to the class. Students in Years 7 to 9 are unaware of the National Curriculum levels that would assist in developing an understanding of their own learning. Differentiation by outcome is clearly evident but a more varied use of resources, tasks and teaching style is limited.
166. The teachers are good role models for the students and create a firm, caring learning environment. As a result, students generally behave well. Where the mutual respect and shared enthusiasm between the teachers and the students are most evident they make considerable impact on the quality of work. This is especially evident in the netball, badminton and dance lessons. It is also characteristic of the extra-curricular activities such as the netball rally held during the inspection.
167. The department works well together. Accommodation has greatly improved to the benefit of the staff and students. The storage of large portable equipment is a health and safety issue. Schemes of work are not linked to the National Curriculum and do not reflect the programme of study and the levels in the attainment target. This was an issue in the last inspection. There are links to literacy and numeracy. There is a good input into students' moral and social development, which is spiritually and culturally added to in dance. The monitoring of teaching tends to be informal and so does not provide a sharp enough focus on areas that require improvement. The departmental development plan lacks a time scale and any indication of who is responsible for the issues.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory** because the college does not provide enough time to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

Strengths

- Students make satisfactory progress in their learning.
- Teachers make very good use of resources for learning including information technology.

Areas for improvement

- In all years students do not have enough lesson time to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
- Teachers do not use assessment as a tool for learning.
- Instruction predominates over reflective learning, therefore students' knowledge of their own learning is poor.
- Homework is not an integral part of learning.

168. Provision in the sixth form includes a GCSE option in philosophy and ethics. In Years 10 and 11 students follow the GCSE (short course) with a small option group following the full course. These courses began in the last two years and so no candidates have yet been entered for the examination. There are, therefore, no results on which to report. Teacher assessment in Year 9 has not yet begun.
169. When students enter the college their attainment is well below expectation. All students, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in lessons but by the end of Year 9 attainment remains well below expectation. In Year 7, students build up their knowledge and understanding of Christianity but their oral and written skills show a lack of development. In Year 8 students acquire basic information about the mosque but their understanding of its distinctive features lack depth. In Year 9 students learn about Buddhism but their written work is brief and undeveloped. They rarely make use of specialist terms, such as dukkha, to explain what they have learnt. They do not always remember what they have been taught and when they do they are not good at relating it to their own lives. Students do not learn enough about themselves from their study of religion. In their attitudes and behaviour as well as their personal development and relationships most students show the expected degree of maturity. In each year, however, a substantial minority of students show a negative attitude, expressed in inattention to the teacher and interruptions to the lesson.
170. In years 10 and 11 students continue to make satisfactory progress in lessons but standards remain well below expectation at the end of Year 11. In Year 10 students' knowledge of the beliefs and practices of Judaism is at a level that would lead to lower grades at GCSE. They write briefly about what they have learnt but not at sufficient length to explain ideas or evaluate issues. In Year 11, students learn why divorce is an issue to which Christians have more than one response. Students are not secure enough in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Judaism to apply Christian and Jewish ideas to life and then compare them with their own point of view. Whilst a few are heading for grades A* to C, present arrangements mean that although all students have followed the course some are unlikely to be entered for the examination. In some lessons students show a high level of personal maturity but in other lessons there are negative attitudes combined with shortage of time which occasionally impede progress.
171. Teaching is good and learning is satisfactory. The most obvious strength of teaching is very good use of time. In lessons the pace is brisk. Teachers use resources well. In particular, they use information and communication technology as an effective visual medium for presenting facts, images and tasks with simplicity and clarity. Teachers manage students well in the classroom. In some lessons there is a purposeful working atmosphere. When students show negative attitudes in lessons teachers always challenge and never condone inattention and interruptions. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of religion and of the purpose of religious education are good. Planning is thorough and effective especially when based on clear learning objectives. The area in greatest need of improvement is assessment. Teachers do not use the standard scale of attainment from the agreed syllabus. Students do not know what level they are at or what they need to do to progress further. Teachers do not make reference to level descriptions in lessons and students do not know enough about their own process of learning. Homework has recently

become a requirement but is not consistently so in practice. Students have not yet acquired the habit of taking their exercise books home to do a regular weekly homework. A particular strength of students' learning is that most work productively and at a brisk pace in lessons. Even this, however, is not enough to overcome the shortage of teaching time. The shortage of time also leads to an emphasis in lessons on instruction at the expense of learning that follows from reflection. Students do not work in pairs or groups nor do they move from listening to each other to speaking and writing. A further important and related reason why learning is not as good as teaching is that students are aware that they do not have enough time. Provision, therefore, for all students, including those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory.

172. Religious education has only limited curriculum time. This adversely affects students' progress and the range of work that they cover. In Years 7 to 9 the programme of study is broad and relevant but lacks balance and progression. Emphasis is on what students learn about religions and not enough on what they may learn about themselves from their study of religion. The new course in Years 10 and 11 is an improvement in learning opportunities but being taught in groups based on technology has not helped students. In practice, however, most students do not have enough time and many do not have the right attitude to learn enough to be entered for the examination. Since the last inspection the college has improved its provision for students in the sixth form but not done enough to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
173. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The member of staff responsible for religious education does not teach the subject and the two specialist teachers of religious education do not manage the subject. This division of responsibility is anomalous and weakens the department's sense of direction. The college's targets for attainment in religious education are unclear. Weaknesses in provision will not be overcome without a shared commitment to improvement. The major strength is the good match between teaching staff and the demands of the curriculum. The two specialist teachers teach nearly all lessons. One teaches in the specialist room. That the other has to teach in eight different classrooms each week imposes many practical constraints on teaching and learning. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources are generally adequate but the absence of individual textbooks for students on the GCSE (short course) is a disadvantage.
174. The college has introduced improvements but overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Improvements include the introduction of GCSE (short course) and of GCSE (full course) options in Years 10 and 12.

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

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

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

GCE A2 level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English Literature	5	100	95	0	37	3.60	5.91
Mathematics	2	0	87	0	43	0	5.80
Geography	7	14	92	0	38	0.57	5.74

AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16.00	12.24
Information and Communication Technology	14	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.75	9.97
Health and Social Care	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.86	10.79
Leisure and Recreation	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.80	10.06
Performing Arts	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.00	9.14
Science	14	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.14	9.80

In 2001 GNVQ courses were graded at distinction, merit or pass level and not as grades A-E. Of a total 44 results, 19 were distinctions and 12 were merits.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

In this curriculum area, the college provides courses to AS/A2 level in mathematics, biology, product design and AVCE in science, chemistry and information and communication technology. The courses in mathematics, science and information and communication technology were inspected in detail, other courses were sampled.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Achievement is good.
- Overall, teaching is good, especially in pure mathematics where it is often very good and occasionally excellent.
- Students on AS courses in Year 12 and A2 courses in Year 13 are growing in confidence.
- Students are given realistic targets and their individual progress is tracked very effectively.
- Leadership and management of the new head of faculty are very good. The head of faculty has made a significant personal contribution to improving the quality of teaching and is successfully raising the image of the mathematics faculty.

Areas for improvement

- Results in recent years have not reflected satisfactory progress from GCSE.
- Students re-sitting AS courses in Year 13 are making little progress.
- Students studying A2 courses in Year 13 have taken too long to develop confidence and skills in independent learning.

175. Results in GCE advanced level examinations have been well below the national average over recent years. Only two students were entered from 1998 to 2001 and both of these in 2001. Neither passed the examination. However, in 2002, two of the six students attained grade E and the others attained grade U. Whilst these students have GCSE results below those of students in the vast majority of schools, this still represents disappointing progress relative to prior attainment. Results in AS level GCE also show very low entry numbers and a maximum of grade E from 1998 to 2001. In 2002, students in Year 12 attempting AS modules as part of their advanced level performed below their predicted grades. Most students re-sitting GCSE mathematics have achieved satisfactory results compared to their original GCSE performance.

176. Standards seen in lessons are significantly better than examination results in previous years suggest. Students in Year 13, studying A2 mathematics, are gaining confidence in their own capability, particularly in pure mathematics. In a good lesson leading to reducing curved equations to straight line form, they demonstrated a good working knowledge of all the rules of logarithms. They simplified expressions using logarithms and solved equations. Ultimately, because of the teachers' skilful structuring of the activities designed to build students' confidence, they were able to transform difficult equations of curved expressions by using the rules of logarithms to enable them to draw simple more useful straight line graphs. This is good progress considering that GCSE results in mathematics on entry to the course were below those in the majority of schools. However, when interviewed, students on A2 courses realised that they showed insufficient independence in Year 12. They are only now beginning to take more responsibility for their own learning. Their examination results and observations of lessons are testimony to this.

177. Year 13 students make satisfactory progress in studying work at A2 level on toppling and sliding. The teacher's good use of PowerPoint helps these students to visualise the forces acting on bodies. However, they still find some difficulty in solving problems for themselves, because the activities they are required to do are often too slow-paced. The activities involve students spending too much time carefully drawing diagrams. The teacher does not ask them to use sketches to test their knowledge and understanding in a quick and structured way thus enabling students to gradually build on what they learn a step at a time.

178. Students in Year 13 who are re-sitting all three modules attend class with those moving on to A2 examinations. They work at their own pace, with the teacher giving some time checking on their progress whilst the A2 students attempt individual work. This arrangement is unsatisfactory. These students are weak advanced level students and are making little progress.

179. Students in Year 12 are making very good progress in pure mathematics. They demonstrate

remarkable confidence and understanding considering their prior attainment in GCSE. In an excellent lesson on graph plotting, they quickly identified difficult graphs of curves from their algebraic formulae. This was because of the matching activities they were required to attempt, which progressed from making choices between two curves and two equations to nine curves and nine equations. The outstanding structure of the build up allowed these students to grow in confidence sufficiently to be certain that there was one graph left over that did not match the final equation. There was no guesswork here, only logical reasoning at a level well above what could be expected. Progress in mechanics is sound but much less spectacular.

180. Students in Year 12 studying GCSE intermediate level are making satisfactory progress. Both are able to identify and apply the correct techniques to solve simultaneous equations accurately and are on course to improve their previous grades from grade D to their targets of grade C.

181. Teaching, overall, is good. It is often very good and occasionally excellent, particularly in pure mathematics. It is always at least satisfactory in mechanics and examination results in statistics papers suggest that this is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of resources in all areas of mathematics. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good, but students are making the best progress where they are being challenged to be active, rather than listening for too long at a time. They learn extremely well where their learning is structured to build up confidence and where genuine discussion stimulated by skilful teacher questioning takes place. Teachers in the mathematics department make a useful contribution to the teaching of the Key Skills Application of Number course, for students who do not study advanced level mathematics.

182. The new head of faculty provides very good leadership and management. The tracking of students is very good and they have realistic yet challenging targets. The message has been brought home to students that they must keep on top of their learning, work hard to find real understanding and seek help when they do not. Schemes of work set challenging demands on the pace of learning in lessons and students and teachers are all aware that the image of the mathematics faculty is improving. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Students' achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers have very detailed knowledge of the course requirements.
- Students' attitudes towards the subject are good.
- The assessment of students' progress is good.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for independent learning.
- Consolidation of student's knowledge and understanding is underdeveloped.
- There is insufficient specialised equipment for practical work.

183. Standards of attainment in the AVCE examination in science in 2001 were below the national average. Results have declined compared with 2000, when attainment was well above the national average. The number of students taking the subject in 2001 was higher than in most other subjects in the college; no female students were entered for the examination. The preliminary results for 2002 indicate that attainment was higher than in 2001; more females than males took the examination.

184. From work seen during the inspection, the standards attained by students are close to the national average. Achievement is good. Male and female students make similar progress. Most students are adept at grasping new ideas and can build successfully on more fundamental concepts. However, many lack the strategies needed to assist them consolidate their learning

effectively; this results in weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding of earlier work. This was evident in an otherwise good lesson on inheritance, in which students' inability to recall details of genetic processes slowed the pace of the lesson considerably. When the teacher reminded them of how to determine genotypes, they were then able to make good progress. In the same lesson, some students also found problems using the scientific terminology correctly. In another lesson on motion, in which students had to calculate acceleration and velocity, a number of them found difficulties manipulating the formulae and producing appropriate graphs. At present, too few planned opportunities exist in lessons to help students' develop the appropriate literacy and numeracy skills needed for work at this level.

185. In Year 12 students are making good progress and the standards reached in lessons are close to the national average. In a very good lesson on the identification of ions, students learned the theory behind the various methods used to analyse salts effectively and quickly. The teacher provided a clear and precise explanation of the concepts involved and made good links with previous work on the reactions of inorganic chemicals. However, when carrying out the practical work, many of the students showed a lack of confidence and needed considerable assistance from the teacher.
186. Students demonstrate a mature attitude to their studies. They concentrate well and persevere in lessons. They enjoy the work and their response is always positive. Relationships are good. Some students are rather quiet in lessons and are over-reliant on their teachers for information and guidance. Although teachers are aware of this, lessons provide too few opportunities for students to work independently and the approach is largely teacher directed.
187. Teaching is good. Teachers are well organised and effective. They have very good scientific knowledge that they use well to promote students' understanding. As a result all students achieve well. This was the case in the Year 13 lesson on inheritance, where the teacher's carefully constructed description helped students gain a clear appreciation of the principles underlying biological variation. Teachers have a very good working knowledge of the AVCE course requirements. They communicate this information effectively to their students. This enables students to know exactly what they have to do to meet the various assessment criteria.
188. Teachers know their students very well and provide helpful guidance and advice on ways to improve. Students have considerable confidence in their teachers and feel that they can turn to them for help. The monitoring of students' achievement is very effective, with good attention being paid to the setting and marking of homework assignments; as a result students have a very good awareness of how well they are doing.
189. Course requirements are effectively co-ordinated. Teachers manage the assessment processes very efficiently. Although appropriate industrial links are sometimes difficult to find locally, the college has good systems for arranging placements, usually through some very good contacts that it has established. The course is taught by a number of very experienced teachers who work well together. There is some lack of clarity over the responsibilities for managing developments and for evaluating the quality of provision within the subject. Some lessons are adversely affected by a lack of the specialised equipment required for practical work at this level. For instance, more powerful microscopes are needed to cope with detailed examinations of cell structures. An audit should be carried out to fully assess these inadequacies.
190. In the two lessons of biology seen, in one teaching was good and in the other very good. Students achieved well. For instance, in a very good lesson on the cardiac cycle, students learned to link together the processes involved and began to understand the connections between the various physiological mechanisms controlling heart rate. Students demonstrated a very good attitude to their work. Attainment was broadly in line with the national average.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively in their teaching.
- There is good provision of a range of course options to meet the students' individual needs.
- Students of all abilities achieve well.
- Students have a positive attitude to their learning.

Areas for improvement

- Students' access to the computer network when not in formal lessons.

191. This subject has not been previously inspected by OfSTED. No comparisons in standards can be made with any previous inspection findings, but records show that standards of work have improved over the last four years.

192. Standards are in line with the requirements of the courses studied. The number of students passing with the highest grades has varied over the last four years but on average it is in line with the national averages. The current Year 13 standards are at least in line with course requirements and there is a good percentage of students who are working to standards that attract the higher pass grades on their courses. Male and female students do equally well, although there are far more male students.

193. In Year 13 the students understand the types of hyperlink, how they function and their possible applications. They can locate at least two web sites to link to their own web site and justify their selection. They are aware of the possible web site structures. They produce good plans and designs for a web site including a storyboard and flow diagrams and check for broken links before uploading the site.

194. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Very good teaching was seen in a Year 13 group. The teachers' thorough planning and high expectations enabled the students to complete their individual studies to a good standard. They received good support from the teachers, who are experienced and knowledgeable. This style of teaching is consistent and it leads to very good quality learning throughout Years 12 and 13.

195. The students are confident and highly motivated. They are attentive and concerned with the quality and accuracy of their work. They work independently when required to do so to research their studies. The students value the stimulating learning environment where they can interact with the teachers and other students to discuss issues of interest and further develop their understanding and appreciation of the subject.

196. The college does well in providing such a wide range of options to meet all students' needs. The courses range from intermediate GNVQ through to double award advanced level and one or two year courses. These popular courses are organised very effectively. There is a strong emphasis on the vocational elements, particularly for business and applied information technology. Support for continued learning out of formal lessons is good. However, the students' access to the computer network outside lessons is occasionally limited.

197. The students' work is marked regularly. Helpful and supportive comments are given which enable the students to identify their weaknesses and improve further. The students are well informed about the progress they are making with their work.

198. Post-16 provision for this subject is managed to a good standard. The teachers work well as a team to ensure continuity in learning. A network manager and technicians provide good support for learning through the maintenance and management of the more advanced equipment required for these courses.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

In this curriculum area, the college provides courses to AVCE level in leisure and recreation/tourism and health and social care to AVCE level and GNVQ which were inspected in detail.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

Overall, the quality of provision in leisure and recreation is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Formal assessment procedures are good.
- There is good planning for the delivery of the course.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is poor. It limits teaching styles and is adversely affecting standards of work.
- The departmental handbook needs revising to ensure that strategies for covering key skills are clearly identified.
- The range of learning resources, especially those housed in the college library.

199. AVCE leisure and recreation is a comparatively new course. The first examination candidates graduated last summer but, at the time of the inspection, no national comparative data were available. In 2001, five students completed the GNVQ advanced level course in leisure and tourism. National comparisons based on gender are invalid because the numbers involved are too small; overall, however, the results gained were average and achievement was satisfactory. Most students gained better results than predicted by their GCSE performance.

200. Standards of attainment are below average. Students make satisfactory progress, however, as most gained below average results at GCSE. In lessons students work hard and with enthusiasm and they are adept at completing the tasks set but their work tends to be in the E-D grade range. Written work seen is too descriptive and lacks analysis and evaluation; this reflects the below average literacy skills of the students. Some are strong orally, but they are less confident and convincing when they have to provide written accounts. Below average standards also result because students are not confident analysing data and teaching strategies tend to avoid developing this skill. Students make good and appropriate use of information and communication technology and are confident in their use of computers to word process. They present their work attractively, using fonts and graphics appropriately.

201. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers plan well and their formal assessment procedures are good. Each student, for instance, has an individual tracking sheet. Thus, at any time, both teachers and the individual student know what work has been completed and what grades have been awarded. Teachers also provide clear guidelines on how students can improve. However, when students are working on their assignments interventions from staff tend to be too concerned with the presentation of the portfolios rather than about the content of their work, which is often too descriptive. For example, in a project on leisure club membership, a student had reproduced a table showing the growth in membership of leisure clubs nationally over a five-year period. The table used index numbers to indicate the rates of growth, but it was clear that the student did not know what index numbers are, or how they might be analysed. This weakness had not been identified by the student's teachers, so a very good learning opportunity was lost and the standard of the student's work was low. A common weakness of the teaching was that the students had not been challenged to explain the judgements they made in their written work.

202. The leadership and management of this vocational area are satisfactory. The subject is well led by a keen member of staff. Teachers are very committed and enthusiastic about their work, something that is appreciated by the students. Course retention rates are satisfactory. A good course handbook has been written but it does not ensure that adequate provision is made for the development of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication

technology. Two distinct weaknesses exist, both of which are adversely affecting standards. Firstly, the level of resources available is unsatisfactory, especially in the library. This weakness limits the opportunities students have for individual research work. Secondly, the standard of accommodation is poor. The main teaching room is woefully inadequate and severely limits the teaching strategies that can be used.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Overall, the quality of provision in health and social care is **good**.

Strengths

- There is very good leadership of the subject by a person who uses her knowledge of the subject to provide good support for students of all abilities.
- The very good use made of information technology to encourage the development of independent learning skills.
- The progress made by all students is good.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure that all teachers use teaching methods that are suitably structured for the needs of the students.
- Provide more continuity in the teaching staff to ensure consistency in teaching quality.
- Reduce the parallel timetabling of students to ensure that more focused attention is given to each group.

203. Both GNVQ intermediate and the AVCE courses were inspected. The number of students taking the course increased this year.
204. With the exception of last year's intermediate group, examination results have been consistently good at all levels. At advanced level they have been well above the national average. The progress of the intermediate groups has been satisfactory, but for the advanced group it has been good. Most students have completed the course.
205. Year 12 GNVQ intermediate students are making good progress. They have a sound understanding of nutrition and are developing their communication skills. Their use of information and communication technology is very good. For example, they combined their knowledge of child development and desk top publishing to prepare brochures giving advice to teenage mothers on the importance of play for young children. These skills are reflected in the high quality of the display work in the department. The Year 12 students taking the advanced course are making satisfactory progress. The practice of teaching these students in combined classes for some lessons does have an adverse effect upon their progress, especially in those lessons that lack structure.
206. The progress of the Year 13 advanced group is satisfactory. Serious staffing and time-tabling problems last year, coupled with the loss of work when the college computer system collapsed, has meant that this group is not so advanced as it should be at this stage in the course. These problems have now been rectified and they are now on course to achieve grades that are in line with their capability.
207. Although there is significant variation in the quality of teaching, overall it is good. The subject leader uses her excellent knowledge of the subject well. Lessons are very well planned with good use of a variety of teaching methods. Outstanding use is made of information and communication technology. In a Year 12 lesson students were being taught to transfer information from a healthy eating programme into their own personal dietary diary and amend it accordingly. An outstanding lesson taken by the subject co-ordinator showed all the qualities expected from an advanced skills teacher: The lesson was very well planned, question and answer strategies were very well used to recap previous learning, the needs of individual students were clearly identified and their learning was extended and students were successfully encouraged to participate.

208. The subject leader provides very good support for her non-specialist colleagues. However, the turnover in staffing and limited training means that this support is not always reflected in their teaching. Lessons are not always structured well enough to engage students' attention. Consequently students showed a lack of interest and low motivation in several lessons.
209. The self motivation and determination of most students enables them to pursue their studies well, with their high level of commitment being reflected in the work that they produce. The enthusiasm of the subject leader is shared by the students who diligently pursue their studies. Students' work is assessed very well with all units marked with helpful comments. Students are aware of the progress that they are making, and respond well to challenges. They use their work placements well to produce some excellent coursework. Although some find the examinations difficult the time spent by the teachers in preparation for these pays dividends.
210. The leadership of the subject is very good. Verifiers' reports indicate a high level of organisation. The staff meet problems presented by staffing changes and timetable inflexibility are cheerfully. However, these problems have caused some anxiety in the students especially those doing the advanced level course. Although the department was not directly referred to in the last report, it has made good progress in the last few years.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

In this curriculum area, the college provides courses to AVCE level in art and design and performing arts both of which were inspected in detail.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good assessment procedures help students to progress.
- Students experience working on real commissions on Art in the Community projects.
- Students' high standard of presentation using information and communication technology.
- Good attitudes of students towards independent learning.

Areas for improvement

- Make better use of available space to create sixth form area and more storage for work.
- Students need to further develop and refine ideas and present them more clearly.

211. In 2001 external examination results were very high, continuing the trend of the last few years, though the small group sizes distorted percentages and made comparisons with national results difficult. Students achieved better than their baseline performance would suggest. Retention on the course is excellent with group sizes growing fast every year.
212. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are in line with expectation, taking into account attainment at GCSE and the stage they are at in the AVCE course. Students in Year 12 are making good progress on the unit Art in the Community. They are demonstrating their imagination and diversity when responding to a real commission to design features for Margate railway station. Higher-attaining students discuss their aims and objectives articulately and have represented their intentions sufficiently well to have them accepted by clients Connex SE. Higher-attaining students in Year 13 exhibit very high standards of presentation and extensive expertise in the use of information and communication technology in the projects on art history. They also show flair and ingenuity when creating three dimensional models of architectural cakes inspired by the works of Gaudi, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier. Students in both Years 12 and 13 generally research their ideas well, though they do not pay sufficient attention to the quality of the final outcome.
213. Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. Teachers have good subject knowledge, make good use of the exam-referenced assessment procedures, use one to one

tuition effectively and use a good range of teaching methods and approaches. Students have good attitudes to learning, are well motivated and independent, and relate well to each other.

214. The newly appointed GNVQ co-ordinator leads and manages work in the sixth form well. He has been instrumental in fine-tuning assessment procedures and increasing the breadth and scale of works. The choice of AVCE course suits the needs of the students very well, and many go on to further education in art. Art in the community and the acquisition of real commissions in the locality are excellent experience for students but the scale of some pieces stretches accommodation to its limits. Some reappraisal of the space available is possible in the short term, but long term solutions will be necessary if recruitment continues to increase. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

PERFORMING ARTS

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

Strengths

- Relationships are outstanding; students collaborate very well and show enthusiasm and commitment in their work.
- Teaching is very good; teachers have very high expectations of students and are readily available to offer extra help.
- There are excellent opportunities for students to take part in performances and attend professional productions.

Area for improvement

- Accommodation for performing arts is inadequate.

215. The college offers Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education in performing arts as a double award, the equivalent of two A-level subjects. The course was introduced as a sixth form option after the last inspection and performing arts has operated as a faculty in its own right for two years. Students complete units in dance, drama and music.

216. Results in external examinations in 2001 were well above the national average though numbers were small. All five students gained a distinction. Over the last four years, results have been high with most students gaining a merit or distinction. However, this year, 2002, the syllabus changed, different assessment criteria were introduced and results were lower.

217. Standards are well above average. In practical performance, students are all confident and committed to do their best. In dance, the more highly skilled students demonstrate a high standard of technique, interpreting mood and emotion through their movement. One male and two female students, rehearsing for a public performance to their chosen music, showed excellent collaboration, lively interpretation and a very good awareness of audience. In sound recording and editing techniques, all students quickly gain experience and a degree of expertise; this is due to very good teaching and exceptional technical support at a professional level. In drama, students are accomplished in characterisation, willing to take risks and careful to avoid stereotyping. They work sensitively but critically with each other in providing feedback. This supportive atmosphere enables them to identify and improve on their shortcomings. They have ample opportunity to reflect on emotional and spiritual issues that are important to them. In research and writing, higher-attaining students show a clear and high level response. With good teacher guidance, all students draft and rework their writing conscientiously and adopt good practices in assembling their case study notes. For example, when investigating the performance arts industry in the local area, students rigorously noted contacts such as tourist offices, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, parks, clubs and pubs and other possible venues of entertainment. In this, they showed very good working methods paying particular attention to each other's individual skills in deciding who should make contact with particular venues.

218. Few students start the course with a GCSE foundation in all areas of the subject. However, they

all show competence in reviewing and analysing their work and an impressive determination to improve their skills. As a result, they learn quickly and their achievement is very good.

219. Students' attitudes to the subject are excellent. Relationships between Years 12, 13 and the teaching team are a strength and a vital feature of the high standards achieved. Students are highly motivated and spend much time out of class working and rehearsing independently. Currently rehearsing for a 12 hour concert in aid of Children-in-Need, performing arts students spend every lunchtime and much time out of college refining their acts and planning the management of the event. In addition to their belief that this is a worthwhile charity to support, students are learning all aspects of a public production from designing and printing tickets to performing, lighting, sound and video recording.
220. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use their varied range of professional experience and subject expertise to very good effect in both practical and theoretical lessons. One anatomy lesson on joints and muscles in the body, aimed at teaching safety in dance and movement, completely captured students' imagination with unsophisticated aids - two rulers, a rubber band and a golf ball. Teachers' lesson plans are detailed and they make clear the objectives of each lesson. As a result, students know what they are learning and seek guidance if they are unsure. Teachers give ongoing assessment in oral and written feedback which students appreciate. This helps students to know how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. Teachers are sensitive to students' individual needs and capability. They keep students on track, monitor their progress and offer challenge appropriate to the individual. Keen attention to basic skills helps students to develop their numeracy and literacy. In spite of the cramped surroundings for rehearsing and difficult facilities for recording, very good teaching enables every student to achieve a high level.
221. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. Students have a wealth of opportunity to enrich their learning and enhance their social and cultural outlook. Regular performances in college involve sixth form students devising and working with younger students. Plays, concerts and musical theatre are performed to a high standard and are well supported by parents and friends. Visits to the professional theatre, involvement in workshops, work with a local Theatre-in-Education group, links with the primary schools and the community at large are just some examples of extra curricular performance arts in the college. The college has a silver Artsmark award for its contribution to the arts.
222. The management and leadership of the faculty are very good. Excellent direction of the subject has enabled it to grow and become a popular option, retaining students who previously sought an arts course elsewhere. A practice of thorough examination analysis each year identified students' weaknesses in the most recent results and this has been immediately addressed. The team of teachers works very hard and is highly committed to improvement. The action plan has precise strategies for future development. Since the last inspection, the new faculty and its sixth form students, have made a very effective contribution to the creative life of the college and the community.

HUMANITIES

In this curriculum area, the college provides courses to AS/A2 level in business studies, geography and history. The course in geography was inspected in detail, other courses were sampled.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- The use of new technology is good.
- There is a shared commitment among staff and students to improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Use of grade descriptors to inform academic targets.
- Use of spreadsheets to allow students to test hypotheses within mathematical models.

223. Geography has been taught as a sixth form subject since 1998. Standards have varied, but are mostly low. The best recent average point score was 3.00 in 2000. This was well below national expectations. Group sizes are rising and students taking up the course have higher levels of attainment than their predecessors. Seven students follow the A2 course in Year 13 and 11 students follow the A/S course in Year 12.
224. Students in Year 12 make good progress. They can extract information from a variety of sources such as text, maps, charts and pictures to use as a basis for comparison of two locations. Their electronic presentation of work is good. They demonstrate ability in using geographical vocabulary in context to communicate their findings and to explain these in terms of geographical processes. However, their written answers lack clarity and precision. They have not yet made the full transition from GCSE styles of working. Year 13 students have made more progress and express themselves well. In one topic, they provided examples of migration between countries at different stages of economic development, which indicated using a range of criteria taught them by the class teacher. The students effectively drew upon their background knowledge as well as their ability to research in this work.
225. The quality of teaching is good overall. Occasionally, teaching is very good. Students respond well to the expectations of their teachers. Relationships are good and teachers manage students well. Teachers make good use of the technology available to them and often use lap top computers and projectors to display 'PowerPoint' presentations to support their exposition. When teaching was very good, planning and preparation ensured there was a seamless flow from teacher exposition to student tasks which were well planned. Teachers are aware of their students' current performance and progress and plan tasks to meet the needs of students with different levels of attainment. They successfully extend the more capable as well as offering support for those who require it. Careful planning also allows the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 13 lessons, for example, the students' understanding of the impact of migration on both migrants and others was developed by discussion of the moral issues raised. Year 12 students responded well to discussion of the impact of tourism and other developments on rural communities. In lessons that were only satisfactory the teacher did not prepare students to write answers to the requirements associated with advanced level courses.
226. Leadership and management of geography are good. The department makes good use of self-review, considering the department's strengths and weaknesses and measuring its progress against given targets. Teaching is monitored regularly. Students are now aware of how well they are doing as their work is reviewed regularly and targets are set for them. As yet, grade descriptors from the A/S and A2 syllabi are not used to inform academic targets however. Results are improving slowly as is recruitment to the sixth form. Resources have improved and there is a suitable supply of textbooks. The purchase of atlases has been supported by the PTFA. There are adequate Ordnance Survey maps available to students. Additional text resources are available in the geography office for students to use for research. Teachers also produce additional resources. Information and communication technology resources are available in the sixth form teaching room, but there are not enough for a whole class to use, nor is the Internet access reliable. The department makes use of information and communication technology to support learning through opportunities to support presentation and research with CD ROM and Internet. It needs to develop the use of spreadsheets to build and test hypotheses within mathematical models. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Rooms do not all lead directly from corridors and lessons are interrupted by students passing through. Curtains or blackout is not available in the main sixth form teaching room. Consequently the effectiveness of PowerPoint and overhead projector acetates is undermined when the weather is bright. Teachers make best use of what is available and produce good, relevant wall display using their own and student generated materials.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

In this curriculum area, the college provides a course to AS/A2 level in English which was inspected in detail.

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The progress and achievement of GCSE candidates are good.
- Teachers' have good subject knowledge which supports students' acquisition of skills and understanding well.
- The focus and detail of teachers' marking are effective.
- The pastoral and academic support of students are good.

Areas for improvement

- The numbers of students who fail to complete their A level studies.
- Students' lack of skills for learning on their own or with limited intervention by the teacher.

227. There are some 36 students following courses in English. Around 20 are retaking GCSE. Around 16 students follow AS/A2 level English literature.

228. Standards achieved in AS/A2 level are well below national expectations. Nonetheless, students do better than might be predicted from their prior attainment. Progress, therefore, is good. That is also the case with GCSE. Though the percentage of students achieving A*-C grades is below the national average, most achieve beyond expectations.

229. The work seen during the inspection was in line with these standards. Though not confident speakers, students are given opportunity to share ideas and over time they become more able to justify their opinions and interpretations. A similar pattern of development is evident in students' writing. Though seldom sharply original, students write in increasingly well organised ways. Comparing standards of reading in Year 12 and 13 improvement over time is also clear. At GCSE and AS level students were fairly reticent and highly dependent upon the encouragement and drive (willingly provided) of the teacher. In A2 sessions, students were more articulate and perceptive. They remained, however, highly dependent upon teacher support and direction. A substantial number of students who start the AS/A2 course drop out. This suggests a mismatch of expectations.

230. The teaching of English is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Three quarters were good or very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and supports students' growing confidence and conceptual grasp. Lessons are well planned. There is variety within them and clearly explained purposes. Expectations are high and appropriately challenging. For example, GCSE students were set to examine, through paired discussion, the social context of poems from other cultures: demanding but well-supported work to which there was a good response. A2 students used PowerPoint to make presentations comparing *1984* to *The Handmaid's Tale*. The approach provided individual challenge which in turn advanced the understanding of the whole group.

231. Teachers' marking is an important feature of good teaching. It is close, detailed and clearly related to the assessment criteria of the examination board. Students know what their current level of achievement is and what to do to improve on it. Individual tutorials offer further opportunities for students to review their progress and agree targets. Students recognise that they are well looked after academically and pastorally. They appreciate teachers' professionalism and availability.

232. Accommodation is satisfactory, though some lessons are conducted in non-specialist rooms.

233. The recently appointed head of faculty provides good leadership. She offers a good model in her own teaching. Schemes of work are detailed and progressive. Approaches to teaching, such as the confident use of information and communication technology, are innovative and motivating. The need progressively to make students more independent in their learning is recognised. The planning and conduct of lessons (though constrained by their short duration) is beginning to take account of that priority.