

INSPECTION REPORT

COLERIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110866

Headteacher: Mr C Meddle

Reporting inspector: Mr Philip Mason
3691

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th January 2003

Inspection number: 251681

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

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Glossary of terms used in the report

EAL	English as an additional language.
GCSE	General Certificate of Education.
Key Stage 3	Years 7 to 9 (Students between ages 11 and 14).
Key Stage 4	Years 10 and 11 (Students between ages 14 and 16).
Key Stage 3 National Strategy	A programme of support for teachers implementing the curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
ICT	Information and communication technology.
IEP	Individual education plan.
Inclusion department	College provision for students with special educational needs, except for students with English as an alternative language.
LEA	Local Education Authority.
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification.
PE	Physical education.
PSHE	Personal, social and health education.
Religious studies	An alternative term to religious education.
SEN	Special educational needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of college: Comprehensive

College category: Community

Age range of students: 11 - 16

Gender of students: Mixed

College address: Radegund Road
Cambridge

Postcode: CB1 3RJ

Telephone number: 01223 712300

Fax number: 01223 712301

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Harold Bodmer

Date of previous inspection: 5th - 9th November 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3691	Mr Philip Mason	Registered inspector		What sort of college is it? The college's results and achievements How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well is the college led and managed? What should the college do to improve further? Equal opportunities
19436	Mr Michael O'Malley	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the college care for its students? How well does college work in partnership with parents?
10170	Mr Anthony Drane	Team inspector	English	
15640	Mr David Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3773	Mrs Linda Ellis	Team inspector	Science	
17132	Mrs Julie Copas	Team inspector	Art and design	
8119	Mr David Milham	Team inspector	Design and Technology Information and communication technology	
7202	Ms Elizabeth Hale	Team inspector	Citizenship History	
15479	Mr Christopher Land	Team inspector	Geography	
7431	Mr Michael Lewis	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18834	Ms Sharon Green	Team inspector	Music	
1111	Ms Gillian Harrison	Team inspector	Physical education	
11684	Mrs Frances le Pla	Team inspector	Religious studies	How well are students taught?
19533	Mrs Janice Martin	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service (NIAS)
Inspection Division
Cliftonville Centre
Cliftonville Middle School
Cliftonville Road
Northampton
NN1 5BW

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Coleridge is a mixed community college serving the 11 to 16 age range. It has 433 students on roll, making it much smaller than the average secondary school. There is almost an equal number of girls and boys. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs (21 per cent) is above the national average. A larger proportion than average (7 per cent) have statements of special educational needs. Of students receiving targeted support, just over one half have learning difficulties and one quarter have emotional and behaviour difficulties. Others have communication difficulties or physical impairments. Slightly less than three-quarters of students are of white British heritage. Students from Bangladesh form the largest minority community group. English is not the mother tongue of 14 per cent of students; this is higher than in most schools. Attainment on entry is well below average.

The college serves part of an urban community in the south of Cambridge. Many students come from homes where income levels are low. A large number live in a ward that has the highest levels of social disadvantage in Cambridgeshire. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals (23 per cent) is above average. There is a high rate of student mobility, with 14 per cent joining and 10 per cent leaving the college during the last academic year. The local education authority reviewed provision of secondary education in Cambridge City in the late 1990s and published statutory proposals to close Coleridge Community College. However, in 2000 the Secretary of State rejected these proposals and determined that the college should remain open. Recruitment of older students was adversely affected during the period of uncertainty about the college's future.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

The college is effective in creating a community where students from different backgrounds get on well with each other. However, it has been insufficiently effective in promoting high standards. Progress for many students is too slow, especially in Years 7 to 9. This is due to an above-average proportion of teaching that is unsatisfactory. Procedures for promoting students' personal development are good. College management has been insufficiently effective in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. Financial resources are very effectively managed but because the college does not provide an acceptable standard of education it gives unsatisfactory value for money.

What the college does well

- Students work and mix well together, whatever their social background or cultural heritage.
- At age 16, GCSE results are above average in art and design, drama and design and technology (textiles).
- Good teaching in art and design, drama, English, geography and textiles promotes learning well.
- Strong links have been established with educational support services, youth workers, other secondary schools and employers.

What could be improved

- Strategic management of the college, particularly by prioritising developments to raise students' performance.
- Standards, especially in mathematics and science.
- Unsatisfactory and poor teaching, which occurs in a much higher proportion of lessons than is acceptable.
- Assessment, that enables teachers to track students' progress and plan effective learning.
- Attendance, so that continuity in learning is improved.

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

The college is currently failing to provide an acceptable standard of education. In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this college.

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in November 2000. Results in national tests taken at age 14 have declined, but at age 16 GCSE results are broadly the same. The amount of effective teaching has fallen slightly since 2000, but the proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching has doubled. Attendance has improved but remains well below the national average. Attitudes of the large majority of students remain positive, but the attitude and behaviour of a sizeable minority are still a matter for concern. There is an improved curriculum, with more vocational provision for older students. Progress has been too slow on the key issues for improvement arising from the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 based on the average point score per student in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	E

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

At age 14, results in national tests for English, mathematics and science were well below average in 2002. Girls outperformed boys in English, but results in mathematics and science were similar for girls and boys. This matches the national pattern. Results had been falling, but rose slightly in 2002. Nationally, results have been rising.

At age 16, GCSE results were well below average in 2002 when taking into account all students' results and those of students who gained 5 or more A* to C grades. This is similar to recent years. Over five years, the trend has been slightly downward but results have been rising nationally. The proportion of students passing at higher grades in 2002 was well above average in drama and photography, and above average in art and design and in design and technology (textiles). Results were close to average in geography. In other subjects results were well below average.

Compared with similar schools, based on the proportion of students eligible for free school meals, results at Coleridge were below average at age 14 and well below at age 16. However, there is a better picture when results at age 14 and 16 are compared with schools where students had similar prior attainment. At age 14, Coleridge results were above average in mathematics and average in English and science. GCSE results were average.

For students currently in the college, inspectors found that standards are well below average in Years 9 and 11 in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with standards normally seen, by Year 11, standards are well above average in drama; above average in art and design; average in design and technology and geography; below average in citizenship and physical education; and well below average in history, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and religious studies. Overall, students' progress is too slow in Years 7 to 9. In several subjects, progress improves in Years 10 and 11.

In 2002, the college fell well short of reaching its very challenging target for students gaining 5+ GCSEs at grades A* to C. It has set a more realistic target for 2003 but it is still challenging.

Girls make better progress than boys in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. Students with special educational needs for learning or behavioural difficulties make steady progress overall. Insufficient progress is made by students for whom English is not their mother tongue and who are at an early stage of acquiring the English language. Students from different cultural heritages make similar rates of progress. Gifted students develop well in English and talented students reach high standards in art and design and drama.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Unsatisfactory. A significant minority have poor attitudes: their attendance is irregular and they lack interest in learning. However, most students have satisfactory or good attitudes. They work hard and participate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory. Although most students behave well in lessons, some behave poorly. This significant minority of students are slow to settle and disrupt teaching. Behaviour is satisfactory in corridors and around the college overall.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and tutorial lessons provide sound learning experiences. Relationships between students are good and there is respect for differences in cultural heritage.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is almost four per cent lower than in secondary schools nationally. Too many students arrive late in the morning and for lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Poor	Unsatisfactory

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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching observed is approximately five times greater than the national average. One lesson in five has important weaknesses. However, there is a core of teaching that ranges from satisfactory to excellent. The excellent and very good teaching provides a model of practice from which other teachers can learn. Teaching varies considerably across subjects. In art and design, drama, English and geography, much of the teaching is good or better. In mathematics and science, there is an unacceptable amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching.

Many students enter the college with weak literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching of reading and writing is satisfactory. Additional support is effective for those with the greatest learning difficulties. Teaching of numeracy skills is unsatisfactory.

Teaching meets students' needs well in art and design, drama, English and geography, and for most older students in design and technology. In other subjects, teaching is insufficiently well matched to students' learning needs. There are some sound initiatives to extend gifted and talented students. Students with special educational needs for learning difficulties are well taught within the inclusion department and in subjects when they are supported by teaching assistants.

Students learn well when they are given opportunities to think things out for themselves, discuss ideas in groups and engage in varied and practical activities. In Years 10 and 11, they learn well when they can see that work is relevant to their future needs. Learning is slow when teachers talk for lengthy periods, fail to make the learning interesting, use unimaginative resources and set undemanding tasks. Difficulties in recruiting experienced teachers have reduced the effectiveness of learning for students in several subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Curricular experiences are relevant to students' needs. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, but coverage of information and communication technology (ICT) has important gaps. A greater level of co-ordination is required in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Good vocational experiences are offered to groups of older students. Very good links are made with other secondary schools and colleges. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Satisfactory. New management arrangements have greatly improved provision. There is emergent good practice within the inclusion department. Learning in subjects is sound when teaching assistants support students, but less effective when they are not present. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supported.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. Although the great majority of students for whom English is not their mother tongue make similar progress to others, provision is poorly directed for students at the first stages of English acquisition.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory. Assemblies and PSHE lessons promote personal development well. Provision is good for moral development and satisfactory for social development. However, provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory because opportunities are often missed. Although the college is a racially tolerant community, it does not celebrate its cultural diversity widely. Art and design, drama and English make valuable contributions to students' cultural development.
How well the college cares for its students	Satisfactory overall. Students' welfare needs are met well by tutors. They also provide satisfactory personal support and guidance. The monitoring of academic performance is an important area of weakness. There are sound approaches to promoting good behaviour but their impact is not fully effective. Teachers demonstrate a clear concern for supporting students whatever their background. The monitoring of students' personal development is good.

The college works hard to involve parents in its work. It provides regular, informative newsletters and outlines of what will be taught in subjects. Parents are well informed about students' progress through interim reports, certificates and letters home, but annual reports are insufficiently clear about what students have achieved. Despite the college's efforts, a significant proportion of parents do not involve themselves sufficiently in their child's learning.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory overall. Leadership is satisfactory. The principal and the leadership team successfully promote a clear vision that Coleridge values all students as individual learners. Management is unsatisfactory. There has not been a sufficient management focus on those activities that will raise standards and the quality of teaching. Subject management varies from very good to weak. Planning skills of subject managers are often unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. Leadership is unsatisfactory for students for whom English is not their mother tongue.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are now taking a full role in determining the direction of the college and exercising accountability through the Five-Year Plan. The governing body has been strengthened by new appointments from business and higher education. It has been very active in improving facilities. Some statutory duties are not fulfilled.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The leadership team and governors now have a clear view of the college's strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. However, the use of performance data for evaluation is not well developed. There is considerable inconsistency in monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The college has managed a difficult budget well. Accounts are managed effectively. Good value for money is achieved when placing contracts for purchases. Accommodation has been markedly improved. Learning resources are satisfactory. Until recently, ICT resources were very poor: they are now good. Recruitment difficulties have prevented the college from making some appropriate teaching appointments.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students like the college. ▪ Approaching the college is easy if parents have concerns. ▪ Students are expected to work hard. ▪ Good progress is made by students. ▪ The college helps students to become more mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students receiving the right amount of work. ▪ The college providing more interesting activities. ▪ Parents being better informed about students' progress. ▪ Closer working between the college and parents.

The pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire produced a relatively small sample of parents' views. Far more parents expressed positive comments than those wanting to see improvements.

The inspection broadly confirms parents' positive views, with the exception of their response on progress: this is insufficiently rapid, especially that of younger students. Regarding the negative views; the inspection agrees that for many students work should be matched better to their individual needs. The college does provide appropriate activities, but often learning could be more varied and interesting. The inspection findings disagree with the opinion expressed that the college works insufficiently closely with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and students' achievements

Standards on entry

- 1 Standards on entry to Year 7 have been well below average in recent years. Although results of national tests taken in the final term of primary schools have improved considerably over the last three years, entry standards are low. In 2002, students entering the college had slightly better results in English than in mathematics and science. The proportion of students who have special educational needs (SEN) for learning difficulties is above average. This includes a well above average proportion who have a statement of learning difficulties. The proportion of students for whom English is not their mother tongue is higher than in most schools.
- 2 Students who enter Coleridge take a nationally recognised ability test during their first term at the college. The results of this test show a picture of well below average standards. Results for students currently in Years 8 and 11 were particularly low. In all years there are students who have test results in the top quarter of this test, but the proportion is about one half of the average for schools nationally.
- 3 The college has a high rate of student mobility, and it takes students whom the local education authority (LEA) finds it hard to place in other local schools.

Performance in tests and examinations

- 4 In 2002, standards in national tests taken by Year 9 students in English and mathematics were well below the national average. In science, test results were very low. However, results improved slightly in all three subjects following the downward trend of the previous years. Girls outperformed boys in English, but test results in mathematics and science were similar for girls and boys. The gender difference matches the national picture. Taken across a five-year period, there has been a downward trend in the college while results have been rising nationally.
- 5 General Certificate of Education (GCSE) results of Year 11 students in 2002 were well below average for those obtaining 5 or more passes at grades A* to C. This was also the picture when results of all students are taken into account. Girls' results were better than boys'. The gender difference was similar to the pattern of results nationally. In recent years, boys' results have improved a little and girls' results have declined by a similar amount. The gender difference is now far less marked. Apart from a small rise in 2001, the average points score in GCSE results has fallen annually over a five-year period at a time when standards have been rising nationally.
- 6 In 2002, GCSE results were well above the national average in drama, above average in art and design, and in design and technology (textiles). They were close to average in geography. A small group of students gained a one hundred percent pass rate in photography. Boys' results were particularly good in art and design and drama. Girls performed well in drama, geography and design and technology (textiles). Results were well below average in business studies, design and technology (food and resistant materials), English and English literature, French, history, mathematics, physical education (PE), science (double award) and Spanish.

Test and examination performance compared with other schools

- 7 Results taken at the end of Years 9 and 11 in 2002 were well below average when compared with those in schools taking students from similar backgrounds (based on the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals).

Value added by the college in the 2002 tests and examination

- 8 Analysis of last year's results shows that students in Year 9 made average progress during their first three years at the college overall. High attaining students gained above average results in mathematics. This is measured by comparing the results of Coleridge students with those in other English schools where test scores at entry had been similar in 1999. This is the first year that information has been published for progress between ages 11 and 14.
- 9 At age 16, students gaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, and those gaining all GCSE grades, made average progress in 2002. This is measured by comparing the performance of students at Coleridge with those in schools where students had a similar attainment profile in national tests taken two years earlier. This was an improvement because in 2001 the progress of students between Years 9 to 11 was very low.

Standards of students who are currently at the college

- 10 Standards are well below average in Year 9. Students make insufficient progress in a number of subjects during their early years at the college, particularly mathematics and science. The standards of older students improve in some subjects, but in Year 11 they are well below standards normally seen when taken overall and the same important weaknesses remain.
- 11 The summary below sets out the standards of students' work observed in lessons during the inspection and from an examination of students' work produced over recent terms. Standards are reported for attainment in Years 9 and 11 (towards the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4). Standards in subjects are recorded in greater detail in Part D of this report.
- 12 In **English**, standards are well below average when taken overall. In Years 9 and 11, higher-attaining students reach average standards and some above average. However, a significant number of students enter the college with severe literacy problems. For some, these are carried through into Years 10 and 11. The most problematic aspect is writing. These students have difficulties setting out ideas and their compositions lack structure, accuracy and length. Many middle- and lower-attaining students lack fluency in reading, especially when they read fiction aloud or take the parts of characters in readings of plays. High attaining students have good listening skills: they concentrate very well when the teaching is interesting. Lower-attaining students often find it difficult to sustain listening skills. Overall, students of all levels are making steady progress in learning.
- 13 In **mathematics**, standards are well below average in Years 9 and 11. Students enter the college with poor mathematical understanding and this does not improve sufficiently across Years 7 to 11. The performance of the highest attaining students is only average. Middle- and low-attaining students often struggle with mathematical ideas normally mastered several years earlier. Poor numeracy skills are holding students back across all years. The lack of confidence of older students in investigating and presenting mathematical problems stems from insufficient practice in basic skills in Years 7 to 9. Higher-attaining students form hypotheses for exploring problems, but are unable to apply basic numerical processes to express ideas and present solutions. Students make poor progress over five years.

- 14 In **science**, standards are well below average in Years 9 and 11. Students enter the college with low levels of understanding. Across years, students' knowledge and understanding of scientific principles are weak. They have a low level of capability when devising investigations to confirm principles, often through lack of practice over previous years. Many have poor skills in handling apparatus when undertaking practical investigations. Because numeracy levels are well below average, many students find difficulty in evaluating evidence. However, when higher-attaining students are effectively taught they comprehend scientific principles soundly and some develop good quality, extended written answers. Students' use and understanding of scientific vocabulary is generally weak. Progress in the subject is poor.
- 15 In other subjects, standards are well above those normally seen in **drama** by Year 11. Students make very good progress during their time in the college. In **art and design**, standards are above average in Year 11 and students make good progress. In both subjects, this represents a significant achievement given the low standards of the entry.
- 16 Standards are comparable with those normally seen in Years 9 and 11 in **geography**, in which students have a good grasp of important ideas and apply their understanding well when discussing places and evidence of world events. This is also the case in **design and technology** in Year 11, where students' coursework folios are well prepared. In **business studies**, standards in Year 11 are close to average, as seen when students' collect, use and present information from different sources.
- 17 Standards are below to those normally seen in Year 9 in **design and technology** (although above average in the textiles element) and **religious studies**, and in Years 9 and 11 in **citizenship** and **physical education (PE)**.
- 18 Standards are well below those normally seen in Years 9 and 11 in **history, information and communication technology (ICT)** and **modern foreign languages**, and **religious studies** in Year 11.

Standards in literacy

- 19 Standards in literacy are well below average. Written work for a significant number of low- and middle-attaining students shows an inability to spell correctly, structure sentences and use grammar appropriately. In Years 7 to 9, many students have difficulties with technical accuracy and presentation. Higher-attaining students develop average writing skills and a relatively small minority in top sets work at above average levels. Reading skills are well below average. In the top sets, particularly in Years 10 and 11, reading standards are at least average and often above. In lower sets, many students lack fluency and this is seen especially when students read aloud. The use of the SuccessMaker ICT program in Years 7 and 8 is reinforcing reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are developed soundly in many areas where collaborative and group work are promoted, especially in drama, but also in art and design, English, geography and top-set science. Girls make better progress than boys in literacy across subjects, but there is no difference between students from different cultural heritages. Inclusion department teachers are developing literacy practices well when students who have specific literacy learning difficulties are withdrawn for support, and in classes when students are supported by teaching assistants.

Standards in numeracy

- 20 Standards of numeracy are well below average. In a number of subjects low standards when adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, and when using fractions and decimals, depress subject performance. Poor numeracy skills in mathematics prevent students from developing higher skills of which they are capable, especially higher-attaining students. The

presentation and interpretation of data, such as in pie charts and bar charts, are close to a satisfactory standard in geography and design and technology. There is little difference in the numeracy skills of girls and boys, or those from different cultural backgrounds. Overall, there are too few opportunities for students to develop their numeracy skills. The application of numeracy within subjects is currently very limited. The college has adopted the 'Numeracy Across the Curriculum' initiative of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy in its improvement plan. As yet, there are few examples of well-developed applications.

Progress of students with special educational needs (SEN)

- 21 Overall, progress is satisfactory for students with learning difficulties overall. Since September 2002, the introduction of well-planned programmes of work linked to individual education plans (IEPs) is leading to good progress in basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills. With good support from teaching assistants these students now make progress that is commensurate with other students when working in subjects. In Year 8, students with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) make good progress in spelling using an in-house phoneme programme, and are able to transfer their learning of phonemes to less frequently used words. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties make steady progress, such as when they are taught group sharing skills through the playing of numeracy games. Many make good progress against their IEP targets.
- 22 Students for whom English is not their mother tongue make sound progress, except for those who are at the early stages of language acquisition, for whom progress is unsatisfactory.
- 23 In Year 11, most students with special educational needs gain GCSE qualifications, including higher grades in art and design and drama. Many achieve NVQ qualifications in communication skills and the Certificate of Education qualification in subjects. They make very good progress in developing skills for living through a series of planned visits to industry, business and the local community as part of the vocational course programme.

Performance of boys and girls

- 24 In recent years, girls have achieved higher results than boys in examinations at age 16 but the gap has been closing. In lessons observed during the inspection, girls were making more rapid progress than boys in several subjects. The greatest difference was seen in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. In art and design and drama, where girls and boys are working at above average standards, some older girls demonstrate higher levels of understanding and application than boys. However, in PE, younger boys' standards are higher than girls', but this is not evident in Years 10 and 11. There is no significant difference in the progress of girls and boys with special educational needs, or for those for whom English is not their mother tongue.
- 25 In lessons where the teaching is satisfactory or better, gifted and talented students make the progress expected, with talented girls making particularly rapid progress in art and design and drama, as stated above. However, progress is insufficiently rapid for talented girls and boys in the top sets in mathematics and science. Overall, gifted, older students achieve better than younger students, as in coursework for art and design, design and technology and geography. Talented students progress very well in drama.

Performance targets

- 26 In 2002, college GCSE results fell well short of the very challenging targets that had been set. Targets for 2003 and 2004 GCSE results are within the ranges set by the LEA. The target for 2003 is suitably challenging and realistic, but that for 2004 is too modest. Targets for 14 year olds are realistic.

Parents' comments

- 27 The great majority of the small sample of parents who expressed an opinion in the questionnaire indicated that they believe that their children are making good progress at the college. Inspectors found that this is the case in art and design, drama, English, and geography but progress is insufficiently rapid in ICT, mathematics, religious studies and science. In a number of subjects students' progress depends crucially on who teaches them.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 28 In 2000, the intake was judged to be below average. It is now well below. The latest results at age 14 were slightly lower in English, mathematics and science than in 2000. At age 16, the results of all students taking GCSE examinations are broadly similar to 2000. There has been a marked fall in the results of those attaining 5 or more grade A* to C passes. However, results in 2000 were high compared with previous years.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Attitudes

- 29 Overall, students' attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory. In about one in five lessons observed, a notable minority of students were inattentive, lacked concentration or were disruptive. In these, the learning of the great majority who wished to succeed was impeded. This was especially notable in Years 7 to 9. Students' attitudes are closely linked to the quality of the teaching. In some classes their attitudes are excellent. For example, in a Year 11 geography lesson, students were observed developing thinking and communication skills very well as part of their studies about deserts in the Sahel region of Africa. Working in groups, they were thoroughly engaged, keen to do well and enjoyed developing listening and questioning skills. Similarly, in art and design and drama, many students are thoroughly absorbed, determined and very interested. Most students with special educational needs have good attitudes in lessons taught by specialist SEN teachers and approach learning activities confidently. They expect to learn and commence tasks quickly when they understand them.
- 30 In order to ensure that all students' are concentrating and listening throughout the lesson, teachers have to be skilled in maintaining good order. In a far higher proportion of lessons than is usually seen, students were insufficiently interested, easily distracted and misbehaved, which slowed progress. Some students are keen to take part in what the college has to offer outside lessons. For example, the chess club is well attended and others are keen to take part in after-college art and design and drama activities. Many participate in fund-raising. However, a smaller proportion than normally seen take part in organised activities outside lessons.

Behaviour

- 31 Overall, behaviour is unsatisfactory. Behaviour in class varies from very good to poor. In many lessons behaviour is at least satisfactory and often better. However, in around one-fifth of lessons a small minority of students are persistently disruptive, and depending on the skills of the teacher, others follow. This minority are slow to settle, frequently call out and generally obstruct the progress of those students who wish to learn.
- 32 Behaviour around the college is generally satisfactory. Although some students are boisterous and loud, the great majority are good-natured and have an awareness of others as they move through corridors.
- 33 Many students who have special educational needs for emotional and behavioural difficulties, use strategies they have been taught soundly to manage their behaviour in class.

For many this contributes to the achievement of their behaviour targets. Where teaching is less strong, the behaviour of some students with significant behavioural needs deteriorates rapidly. The college takes good action to help students with behaviour problems by using individual behaviour plans, mentoring, and support programmes. The number of fixed period exclusions for poor behaviour is high. Fixed period exclusions are used as a part of the college policy to remedy poor behaviour and maintain continued attendance. There were no permanent exclusions last year.

- 34 There is very little bullying and no racism. Any incidents are quickly and effectively addressed.

Personal Development

- 35 The personal development of students is satisfactory, on balance. A large majority are friendly and helpful to each other and tutors. They respect and support each other. Students from a wide range of backgrounds mix well together. However, a significant minority of students have insufficient regard for others. For example, they are late to lessons and disrupt the learning of others. Some students lack confidence. For example, in Year 11 personal social and health education (PSHE) lessons, students learning about parenting skills were thoroughly involved in small group discussions and keen to listen to the visiting young mothers. However, they were less confident when encouraged to take part in whole-class discussions. In some classes, there are few opportunities for students to develop skills in listening to each other and developing points of view because there is a risk of disruption.
- 36 There are opportunities for students to take responsibility, such as through the college council and work experience. Older students help in the college shop and Year 8 students assist with office duties. The youngest students are involved in introducing new students to the college and many take part in the evening for parents' of prospective students. A substantial majority of students take responsibility for their own learning, such as researching for information or presenting coursework, but a significant minority lack initiative and independent learning skills.
- 37 Students' relationships with each other, and individually with teachers and other adults in the college are good. The majority work effectively in pairs and small groups such as organising role-plays in drama, and collaborative activities in design and technology, geography and mathematics. For example in drama, Year 10 students were developing their understanding of roles and characters in 'An Inspector Calls'. They worked very effectively in small groups rehearsing, performing, and exchanging ideas. Their commitment was mature, and they genuinely appreciated each others' contributions. However, a notable minority of students are unable to discuss work in pairs or groups without the direct support of an adult. Staff, particularly those with more experience at the college, maintain amicable relationships with students, even when some are difficult.

Attendance

- 38 Attendance is poor. Last year it was 87 per cent which was well below the average rate for comprehensive schools (90.8 per cent). Unauthorised absence was very high at 3.3 per cent compared with 1.2 per cent nationally. Attendance during the autumn term this college year was 86.8 per cent and unauthorised absence increased to 6.2 per cent. A significant minority of students have extremely poor attendance records; approximately half the students in the college attend for less than 90 per cent of the time. This has a serious impact on the continuity of their learning and the standards they achieve. Although the college discourages holidays during term time, too many parents ignore this. Last year just over one per cent of absence was for holidays. A small number of students miss classes instead of going to

lessons. The college has acted positively to address this situation and has ordered a computerised registration system.

- 39 Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Too many students arrive late to registration and class, and this disturbs the learning of others. During the inspection, an average of 15 students daily were late to college after the close of registration.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 40 Standards in attitudes, behaviour and personal development are similar to those recorded in the previous inspection report. There has been 1.5 per cent improvement in attendance, but the absence level is still too high.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 41 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and it is poor in Years 7 to 9. This is because a larger-than-normal proportion of lessons have important weaknesses.
- 42 There is a core of satisfactory or better teaching. During the inspection, almost four-fifths of teaching reached this standard. Nearly two-fifths of lessons in Years 7 to 9 and just over half in Years 10 and 11 were of good or better quality. However, the proportion of good or better lessons is well below that recorded in the latest report on national standards and quality in schools.
- 43 There is an unusually wide range in the quality of teaching, varying from very good to unsatisfactory or poor within the same subject.
- 44 In one in five lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. There was a much greater proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. These lessons accounted for almost three in ten across Years 7 to 9, and one in eight across Years 10 and 11. In one in twelve lessons the quality of teaching was poor. The greatest concentration of poor lessons was in Years 8 and 9. Most of these lessons were taught by temporary or overseas teachers, although a few were taught by experienced teachers.
- 45 Almost one in five lessons exhibited very good or excellent teaching. Very good or excellent teaching was seen individual lessons in art and design, drama, design and technology (textiles), English, geography, French and science. The largest proportion of good or better teaching was seen in art and design, drama, English, and geography. A significant proportion of good teaching was also seen in design and technology (resistant materials) and PE in Years 10 to 11. The largest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in science, mathematics, religious studies and design and technology (food technology) in Years 7 to 9.
- 46 A number of temporary and supply teachers have had to be employed this academic year because of difficulties in filling vacancies. During the inspection the quality of teaching of such teachers ranged from good to very poor.

Good teaching

- 47 Where the teaching observed was at least good, it exhibited a combination of many of the strengths listed below.
- 48 Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and share it in interesting ways with students.

Teachers know the content of the National Curriculum programmes of study well and demonstrate that they are specialists in their subject, for example in art and design, drama, modern foreign languages and PE. A good example of this was seen in a Year 8 PE lesson where the high level of individual skill demonstrated by the teacher provided a good role model for the students as they worked on improving their passing and shooting techniques in hockey.

- 49 Lessons are planned well, ensuring that well-defined learning objectives are supported by an appropriate range of activities.

Good planning is detailed: it identifies the knowledge and skills to be taught and links well to the previous learning. For example, a Year 7 art and design class built on previous learning about 'glyphs' (engravings) through planned references made by the teacher to work completed in an earlier lesson as they began to design their own pictograms.

- 50 The expectation for good behaviour is suitably high. This enables students to develop good classroom and learning routines.

In a Year 8 drama lesson, very good use of positive behaviour management strategies by the teacher enabled all students to settle quickly to their work. By the end of the lesson they had worked in different groups and all had made very good progress in developing their performance skills. In a Year 9 Mathematics lesson, the teacher established a disciplined working atmosphere so that students were able to work collaboratively with quiet productive discussion of ideas and approaches to the task.

- 51 Teachers know the students well and establish good working relationships.

In a Year 10 English lesson, good relationships between the teacher and students created a positive working atmosphere where everyone in the class was involved in reading a text. In a Year 11 design and technology (resistant materials) lesson, the teacher used his knowledge of the individual students to carefully guide them as he monitored their coursework progress.

- 52 Teachers organise lessons well using a variety of methods that meet the learning needs of the students.

In a Year 9 French lesson on prepositions, the teacher maintained the concentration and interest of the class through the effective use of different learning activities, including visual examples, a 'mental gymnastics' session and group work. In a Year 8 geography lesson, the teacher used video material with the sound turned off to encourage students to reflect upon what they were seeing. This was very effective in helping them to develop their thinking skills. In a Year 10 mixed ability science lesson, the good range of differentiated support sheets enabled all students to work well on the task and make good progress.

- 53 Good quality teaching enables students to make rapid gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. They apply thinking skills and collaborative learning well to improve the standards of their work. Where the teaching is very good, students at all levels work hard to improve their performance.

Satisfactory teaching

- 54 In just over one third of lessons the teaching was satisfactory. Whilst there were no notable strengths, there were no notable causes for concern. Many of these lessons enabled students to make steady progress. Teachers ensured students knew what they were going to learn, and relevant resources were used to achieve the objectives. A common feature of these lessons

was a single, whole-class activity conducted at a pedestrian pace. This did not always challenge students sufficiently to think or work independently. In some individual cases, the level of teaching skill was only barely acceptable. It was not failing students but the teacher's ability to extend and enthuse students was limited.

Unsatisfactory teaching

- 55 In lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, weaknesses outweighed the positive features and the pace of learning was too slow. This resulted in many students underachieving. Unsatisfactory teaching had the following features.
- 56 Activities were directed at the learning needs of only a proportion of students in the class.
Most teachers plan lessons with clear objectives but weaker teachers are not yet planning for the differing learning needs of students.
- 57 Insufficient challenge was provided, resulting in little progress in building on knowledge and skills for different groups of learners.
Activities often repeat prior learning or they are wholly teacher led. This results in a passive response from students, with little attention being paid to completing the work.
- 58 Insufficient emphasis was given to the teaching of basic skills.
In these lessons teachers did not spend enough time helping students to develop the reading, writing, number and practical skills they need to make progress in the subject.
- 59 A limited range of teaching strategies was used, resulting in students losing interest and concentration.
Less-secure teachers adopt an oral style or lead students through a series of work sheets and written exercises. Because some students understand the work more rapidly than others, concentration and interest are lost while they wait for others to catch up.
- 60 Teachers were unable to manage students who disrupted the learning of others.
Weak teachers fail to maintain control of behaviour in their classes. These lessons take place against a background of disruptive and disrespectful behaviour, so that those students who wish to learn are denied the opportunity to concentrate.
- 61 Insufficient feedback was given to students on their progress in lessons.
In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers give very little spoken feedback to students on how well they are achieving in the tasks set.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

- 62 Teaching of literacy skills has been underdeveloped in the past but is now being more satisfactorily co-ordinated. The 'Literacy Across the Curriculum' initiative of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is being applied across subjects, using some common approaches. Many subjects are now effectively using 'word walls' that set out specialist vocabulary visually in classrooms, and 'writing frames' that provide a structure for students who need assistance when organising their written work. The most effective areas of development are in art and

design, drama, English, geography, history, modern foreign languages and the upper science sets. The college is using Progress Units and Booster Classes to support those with low levels on entry. A literacy summer school provided intensive work for students in transition from primary schools. The SuccessMaker classes in Years 7 and 8 are making a good impact on standards. There are some good foundations, but in teaching there is too much variability across and within subjects.

- 63 Teaching of numeracy skills is unsatisfactory. Students have benefited from their experiences of the Key Stage 2 National Numeracy Strategy in their primary schools and results have risen on entry. However, many students still have weaknesses in numeracy skills. These are not being reinforced systematically across the years. Within mathematics, the teaching of numeracy skills is insufficiently strong: many students have weaknesses that hinder their development in mathematical applications. A few subjects are working hard with students to develop skills such as the use of timelines in history and presentation of data in geography. However, there is not yet a common framework for developing the National Strategy across the college. It is appropriately identified in the college's improvement plan as an aspect for development.

Teaching of gifted and talented students

- 64 The college has developed a number of sound initiatives. It has recently identified groups of high-attaining students in Years 7 to 11 based on results from national tests. There is not a co-ordinated approach in all years and subjects, but there are examples of gifted students are being appropriately extended. For example, in English, students are entered for top-tier examinations and they receive targeted support, and in art and design and in geography, they are challenged to set high expectations in their coursework. Additional activities promote specific talent. The debating society and advanced reader scheme extend those with high literacy skills. In art and design, talented students can take an additional GCSE in photography, and in PE, students attend the regional Sports Talent Camp and participate in the National Junior Athletics Programme. The college is setting high aspirations for gifted students in Years 9 and 11 by exposing them to simulated sixth form experiences at local Beacon Schools.

Teaching of students with special educational needs (SEN)

- 65 Teaching is good in separate lessons when students are withdrawn for learning support. There are some very good models of specialist teaching used to improve learning and behaviour. Well-structured programmes of study are used to cater for the variety of special needs experienced by other students. Teaching assistants support individual education plan (IEP) programmes well, because of the strength of the planning with specialist teachers and good in-house training. Teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory in subjects where there is support from teaching assistants.
- 66 Until recently, subject teachers had too little information on which to plan for the individual needs of these students. Students' IEPs are now available but not yet used systematically to inform planning. There is very little use of additional resources in many classes to aid the learning of these students. Where subject teaching is good, with well structured teaching points and learning activities, these students make good progress in understanding and knowledge. They make notable progress in art and design and geography where levels of interest are high.
- 67 New approaches for teaching SEN students are having a positive impact on learning, but the progress of students overall has been unsatisfactory because teaching has been ineffective until recently.

- 68 The teaching and learning are unsatisfactory for the small number of students for whom English is not their mother tongue and who are at an early stage of language acquisition. Teaching in subjects neither builds upon these students' strengths in learning nor recognises their difficulties. This results in work that often lacks challenge or is too demanding. Students often fail to complete tasks, or demonstrate a lack of understanding in their answers. When tasks are matched to their needs, as in withdrawal lessons, they consolidate learning points well and maintain good levels of learning recall.

Assessment

- 69 The quality and use of assessment information is unsatisfactory. The college's assessment policy has not been revised recently and is not providing sufficient guidance for teachers on all aspects of assessment. This has resulted in too much inconsistency in the approaches of teachers. Across subjects there are some examples of good practice, such as in English where students receive high quality information on their strengths and constructive comments on how to improve. There is good use of GCSE criteria in a few subjects, such as art and design, drama and geography. This good practice informs students on how well they are doing and what they need to do to gain a better grade.
- 70 In most subjects, including history, mathematics, physical education, religious studies and science, students do not receive enough information on the quality of their work or how to improve. For example, in mathematics, there has been the worthwhile introduction of topic-based booklets which provide Year 7 students with a list of key objectives and how well they have been achieved. However, in other years, students are receiving too little information on how well they are achieving course objectives, leading to them being unable to build up a picture of their attainment, or focus their attention on how to improve. In science, there are tests of knowledge at the end of topics, but these provide insufficient assessment of scientific skills. In history, work is assessed regularly but assessments are not linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades, so students do not know whether they are performing well enough. In physical education, knowledge and understanding of fitness and health, and skills in improving performance, are not adequately assessed. In religious studies, there are end-of-unit tests for knowledge but not understanding, and in Year 10, GCSE criteria are not used to help students know what they are aiming to achieve.
- 71 Strategies for developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are beginning to be developed across subjects, but there is no assessment record of an individual student's attainment or progress. This makes it very difficult for teachers to build on current attainment, or for students to become aware of their progress.

Learning

- 72 The quality of learning is unsatisfactory overall. In lessons observed it was poor in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. However, in two-fifths of lessons learning is of good quality across the years.
- 73 Students' capacity to learn mirrors the range of teaching that they experience, as described above. Where learning is good, students concentrate well, engage in a variety of activities and make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Where learning is satisfactory, students sustain sound levels of concentration but are often dependent upon teachers guiding them through the next step of their learning. In unsatisfactory and poor lessons, students make very slow progress and levels of engagement and interest are low.
- 74 As indicated, many students learn well when they are involved in varied and practical activities that are matched closely to their learning needs. This was seen in several subjects,

such as art and design, drama, English and geography. In these subjects, opportunities for group work, peer appraisal and class discussion enabled students to learn very effectively.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 75 The quality of teaching is not as good as that reported in 2000, when only just over one in ten lessons were judged unsatisfactory. The increase in unsatisfactory teaching is one important reason why the college requires special measures. The key weaknesses reported in teaching at the time of the previous inspection remain. Poor behaviour management, insufficient challenge and a narrow range of teaching and learning methods are still key aspects for development. There remains a core of good and very good teaching on which to build future improvements.

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

- 76 The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It has satisfactory breadth and relevance, but in a small number of areas it is not sufficiently well balanced. Appropriate teaching arrangements are made and students are grouped by prior attainment for part of their learning. There is satisfactory specialist provision for the great majority of students who have special educational needs. Difficulties in recruitment have resulted in the employment of a small number of teachers from overseas countries who are inexperienced in the curriculum taught in English schools.

Provision in Years 7 to 9

- 77 In Years 7 to 9, all National Curriculum subjects and religious studies are taught. Students with higher linguistic attainment extend their modern foreign language studies appropriately by learning Spanish in addition to French. All students benefit from separate drama lessons. Students spend a greater amount of curricular time with tutors than is usually seen. This has a positive impact on individual relationships and enables tutors to develop a good understanding of students' personal development needs. Curricular provision for ICT lacks balance because it is insufficiently co-ordinated across subjects. PSHE and citizenship are adequately covered in tutorial time and several subjects, but require a greater level of planning to ensure full coherence. The college has appropriately adopted the Key Stage 3 National Strategies. In recent terms, most efforts have been given to the literacy initiative. The adoption of the numeracy initiative of the Strategy is included in the college's improvement plan for 2002-3. There has been some training, but little time for implementation or curricular impact.

Provision in Years 10 and 11

- 78 In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum has three 'pathways'. These enable the college to make learning relevant to students' needs. Approximately two-thirds of Year 10 and one half of Year 11 students take a full range of GCSE courses. Of the other students, a proportion takes a 'pathway' of reduced examination studies, which retains curricular breadth and enables them to consolidate learning in fewer subjects. A more relevant focus is being developed and this year GCSE applied science has been introduced in Year 10. A third group takes a vocational 'pathway'. This retains an appropriate breadth of essential National Curriculum studies, together with an intensive life skills course and at least one day of off-site learning weekly, either for vocational studies at Cambridge Regional College or as extended work experience. As in earlier years, greater coherence is required in ICT, PSHE and citizenship.
- 79 Homework extends the curriculum across Years 7 to 11. During the inspection, appropriate work was set in accordance with the timetable. Homework Club is held in the library on four evenings each week, and support is available for students. This enables them to have access

to computers. A small group benefits from this facility. The newsletter contains information about web-sites that may be useful to students. The curriculum is extended by a good range of visits, including theatres, museums and art galleries. For example, students in different years have recently visited The Globe Theatre, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum and Tate Modern. Geography fieldwork is developed in the local area and there is a study visit to Heathrow. Activity days include trips to London, Hunstanton, Euro-Disney and Boulogne. A residential experience is arranged for Year 9 at the Kingswood Centre and Year 10 spend a day at the Mepal Outdoor Centre.

Statutory curricular requirements

- 80 All National Curriculum subjects are taught. All students take a religious studies course, apart from the current Year 11, but the Year 10 programme is a two-year examination course. A few students do not study a modern foreign language. This is appropriate as it enables them to concentrate on learning basic literacy and numeracy skills. During the inspection, no music was being taught due to a late staff resignation. Temporary arrangements are now in place.

Curricular provision for students with special educational needs (SEN)

- 81 The curriculum for students with special educational needs is satisfactory. The development of the inclusion department (SEN department) since September 2002 is ensuring good access to the whole curriculum. There are good arrangements for teaching the skills set out in students' IEPs, and a good level of in-class support across subjects. Very good support is provided for students with behavioural difficulties. The college includes well a few students with pronounced special needs, such as visual and physical impairment. Suitable arrangements are made for students to maintain their learning in subjects when they are withdrawn for individual support. Alternative curricular provision for students in Year 10 and 11 is developing satisfactorily, and the vocational studies course is a strength.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

- 82 Provision for PSHE is satisfactory. The tutorial programme for Years 7 to 9 and the PSHE programme in Years 10 and 11 provide sound opportunities to support students' personal development. This programme addresses appropriate sex education components and includes the dangers of drug abuse. Statutory requirements are met well in lessons taught by specialist teachers. There are also good units of study on understanding and developing good relationships, including anti-bullying issues in Year 7 and 8. These have been introduced to meet the new curricular requirements for citizenship. They are followed up further in Years 10 and 11. Students have positive attitudes to PSHE and the tutorial programme, but are unable to articulate a clear understanding of the overall purpose and content of the provision. There is good recording of the tutorial programme using tutorial booklets and the Progress File, but no recording or assessment of students' learning through the PSHE and citizenship programmes.

Extra-curricular provision

- 83 The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory for the size of college. In discussion, students were very positive about opportunities to participate. For those who become involved, these activities have a beneficial impact on their personal and academic development. Provision for art and design and drama is very good. A few students take an additional GCSE in photography, engage in clay workshops and are involved in art in the community, such as painting murals in public places. In drama, there have been large-scale

performances, although studio productions have predominated recently. Students regularly undertake theatre visits. The range of sports offered has been restricted in the past but has widened recently. Girls' rugby is thriving, with three college teams. There are reading classes at lunchtime, a weekly story-telling session, and a three-week literacy summer school. After-college, 'Fast Track' sessions boost able students' numeracy skills. Day and short residential visits to France provide opportunities for students to use language in context. There is a varied programme of Alternative Curriculum Days. Many subjects offer twilight GCSE coursework support sessions in the spring term.

Careers education and guidance

- 84 Provision for careers education is satisfactory. Elements of careers education are included in tutorial lessons and PSHE, as well as in the work undertaken by Cambridgeshire Connexions service and through a range of additional activities and events. There are a number of very effective elements, particularly work experience in Year 10, university visits for Year 8 students and preparation activities for choosing options at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Students can ask for, or be referred to, the Connexions service for an individual interview. However, the fragmented nature of provision through the careers co-ordinator and key stage co-ordinators leads to a lack of overall planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This, in turn, leads to some confusion for the students about the role, purpose and expected outcomes of the various elements. Some aspects of the careers programme are strong but others require further development, particularly those which develop students' decision making skills.
- 85 Careers education forms an important part of the vocational 'pathway' provision in Years 10 and 11 through college link courses and extended work experience. The teaching and organisation of this programme is very good, leading to enthusiasm and commitment from the students.

Community links to the curriculum

- 86 Curricular links with the community are good. The college curriculum policy appropriately promotes the principle of lifelong learning. Because Coleridge is a community college that provides young people and adults with a variety learning programmes during and after the college day, it can demonstrate this principle in action with its students. Provision is managed by the college's assistant principal for community education. He is a member of the leadership team, but his work falls outside the scope of the inspection report.
- 87 Community workers make a significant contribution to students' educational and personal development. For example, there are long-established links with youth workers from Romsey Mill, a Christian community project. They support a number of aspects of college work, such as the PSHE programme, by organising teenage mothers to speak about their experiences. Ministers from local churches speak in assembly. The local environment is used in geography for field studies. Over the years, older students taking art and design have extended their studies in the community, for example by painting a mural at a local underpass. The very good range of links with employers support the work experience programmes.

Curriculum links with educational partners

- 88 Links with partner schools are very good. Effective transfer of information and visits by the head of Year 7 and the SEN co-ordinator to primary schools ensure a smooth transition. This includes a two-day induction for students, a parents meeting and good liaison after transfer. The three-week literacy summer school is very popular and helps the students adjust to secondary education. A media project for students with special educational needs broadens their experience and helps them and their parents to get to know staff at the college. Primary

and secondary school mathematics teachers meet each half term to share expertise and develop curricular continuity. A few subjects make sound links with primary schools through 'bridging' projects, such as that in literacy and the 'Bubbles Project' in science. Other subjects have little contact.

- 89 Links with secondary schools are far more extensive than normally seen. The college works with two Beacon Schools and two specialist schools, one for the arts and the other for sport. Students have benefited from undertaking work in one Beacon School, and active citizenship has been promoted through the link with the other. The Coleridge leadership team has already planned to broaden the curriculum through collaborative arrangements with specialist colleges next year.
- 90 Good liaison with the local college of further education enables those students who choose a vocational 'pathway' in Years 10 and 11 to gain considerable benefit from working there on one-day-per-week, work-related courses. There are positive links with higher education in promoting students' expectations for the future.

Equality of curricular opportunity

- 91 The college's inclusive principles are satisfactorily achieved overall through its curricular provision. A complex timetable gives good access to different courses designed to match students' varied learning needs. Those with special educational needs are provided with satisfactory and improving opportunities to gain skills necessary for effective learning overall. In English, there is very good practice to ensure subject continuity for SEN students following lessons when they are withdrawn for support. Considerable help is given to students whose parents have financial difficulties through two trust funds, enabling full access to educational visits, peripatetic music teaching and theatre trips. However, a few students do not have full curricular access in food technology because they are unwilling or unable to provide ingredients for practical activities.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 92 Since the previous inspection, good progress has been made in targeting the teaching of a second modern foreign language to those students who will benefit. Religious studies is now taught to all in Year 10 and is planned for future groups in Year 11. Students still have a fragmented experience in ICT. However, the new ICT facilities provide the capacity for the improvements necessary. Unevenness in the PSHE curriculum remains.

PROVISION MADE FOR STUDENTS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- 93 Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory on balance because there are variations, as set out below.

Spiritual development

- 94 The provision made for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Across many subjects of the curriculum, such as geography, history, modern foreign languages and religious studies, opportunities for reflection and consideration of the deeper meanings of life are often missed. Art and design lessons provide good opportunities for spiritual development, such as encouraging students to make a personal response to the story of the crucifixion of Christ when studying the topic 'Passion'. Assemblies contribute to spiritual development through providing time for reflection. For example, in a Year 7 to 9 assembly, students were encouraged to think about what they were going to achieve personally and could be proud of during 2003. In an assembly for Years 10 and 11, a local minister encouraged reflection on taking positive attitudes. In form time, opportunities for reflection

are not taken. Overall, there are not enough opportunities for students to take part in collective worship.

Moral development

- 95 Provision for the moral development of students is good in many aspects of college life. Most subjects consider moral issues, such as in science where students discuss the ethical issues raised by cloning. In their drama work, students often explore responses to moral dilemmas. PSHE contributes to moral development through exploring issues such as drug taking and the problems facing young single parents. In religious studies lessons, discussions about attitudes to violence provide valuable opportunities for moral development. Students show a moral concern about the needs of others less fortunate than themselves by raising money for charities, for example 'Winter Comfort', through events such as non-uniform days. Staff set good role models through the relationships they establish with other adults and students. They clearly demonstrate by their work, words and actions that there are principles that distinguish right from wrong.

Social development

- 96 Provision for students' social development is satisfactory. Art and design, drama, English and vocational science lessons effectively develop collaborative group work. Projects such as creating a mural for an old people's home and repainting Mill Road bridge provide opportunities for art and design students to mix with members of the local community. Contacts with visiting groups, such as the Romsey Mill youth workers, provide opportunities for students to mix with young adults. Extra-curricular activities, such as drama productions, chess club, sports and activity days, provide opportunities for social development where students can often work together in mixed age groups. The newly re-constituted college council is providing a useful opportunity for students to become involved in the life of the college through making recommendations about changes to the college uniform. Younger students in Year 8 undertake reception duties and a few students in Year 10 help with the 'Collar Shop' (part of the college reward scheme), but generally, there are too few opportunities for students to take responsibility and show initiative.

Cultural development

- 97 Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory overall. There are good opportunities in the arts, and in humanities subjects, students explore British culture, but insufficient opportunities are provided to prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society. Students benefit from visits to the theatre in drama and English. Drama productions in conjunction with outside agencies and other local schools, and poetry readings and competitions offer opportunities for participation in cultural activities. Visits are made to France in conjunction with modern foreign languages. In art and design and English, opportunities to enrich teaching by using examples from a range of cultures are taken but they are missed in other subjects. In religious studies, several faiths are studied but there is little consideration of how beliefs influence the ways people live. Opportunities to discuss issues relating to cultural diversity in history and PSHE are rarely taken. For example, students have few opportunities to discuss issues relating to racism that would help prepare them for life outside college. The college does not fully utilise opportunities for celebrating diversity that are present within the community it serves.
- 98 Policy documents lack clear statements on how the college seeks to promote students' spiritual, moral and social development, but the recently published teaching and learning policy includes statements on promoting cultural development. Although most subjects have addressed these aspects in their own documentation, the absence of a clear policy means they are not planned systematically into schemes of work, nor are they monitored.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 99 Since the previous inspection, provision for moral development has remained a strength. Provision for social, spiritual and cultural development is not as strong as reported in 2000.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

- 100 The college provides a secure and caring environment. If they have concerns, students know that they will be supported by tutors, senior staff, mentors and other adults such as the student services coordinator and the behaviour support manager. However, the college needs to do more to monitor and deal with attendance problems. Arrangements for tracking students' progress across subjects studied are unsatisfactory.

Promoting and monitoring personal development

- 101 Students' personal development is promoted well. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring students' progress, and the pastoral reporting system is effective at identifying those with problems. A good range of information is received from primary schools. Students are likely to remain with the same form tutor throughout their time at the college. Tutors, teachers, and other pastoral staff get to know the students very well as individuals. They monitor progress by looking at comments in students' books and they help students complete their personal learning plans and progress files. This process gives students an opportunity to reflect on their personal qualities, note achievements, set aspirations and raise concerns. The tutorial programme, along with PSHE and citizenship, makes an effective contribution to students' personal development. There is good additional personal support for students with special educational needs provided by the inclusion department, and through the use of outside agencies and a wide range of mentoring. The rewards scheme promotes students' self esteem, along with commendation letters and telephone calls home. Parents state they are confident to approach the college with their concerns. In these ways the college ensures that the personal needs of students are met.

Promoting and monitoring good behaviour

- 102 Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are satisfactory. The college code lists clear expectations of behaviour and it is promoted through assemblies and the tutorial programme. Students are praised for responsible behaviour and they value the system of rewards. Sanctions are appropriate and encourage students to think about the consequences of their actions. Specific incidents are noted on information slips, and tutors, key stage coordinators and subject leaders are well informed. Personalised targets are set where behaviour lapses. Very effective systems are promoted for improving the behaviour of students who have special educational needs for emotional and behavioural difficulties, such as taking 'time out' when there is a risk of confrontation. The college is quick to involve parents when there are problems and the vast majority are supportive. Interim reports to parents of students in Year 10 and 11 include grades for behaviour. There has been behaviour management training for the whole staff. Provision is sound for the majority of teachers who maintain at least satisfactory standards of behaviour in class. The significant, but small, minority who are unable to manage the poor behaviour of some students are given good personal guidance, but this has not been effective in improving their skills.
- 103 The college is very effective at eliminating oppressive behaviour. The PSHE programme includes topics to discourage and address issues that are contrary to the college's Code for Respect. Bullying, racism, or sexism are quickly and effectively addressed. The good relationships between students from different backgrounds are a positive outcome of the college's work.

Promoting and monitoring attendance

- 104 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are unsatisfactory. Although they have been strengthened this academic year, it will take time for this improved practice to have an impact, especially with older students. The key stage coordinators and tutors monitor attendance and, with the help of the student services coordinator, all unexplained absence is followed up. The education welfare officer visits the college twice a week and works closely with the key stage coordinators to monitor attendance patterns and organise support for those students with the poorest attendance. The importance of good attendance is explained to parents and promoted through newsletters. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates. Letters and attendance records are sent to parents of students with poor attendance (less than 85 per cent), but this has only been operating systematically for one term. At this stage the college does not make telephone calls home on the first day of absence, and there is insufficient support for the large proportion (approximately 15 per cent) of moderately poor attenders. There is an established system of detentions to discourage lateness, but punctuality remains unsatisfactory and a small number of students miss classes. The college is about to install an electronic registration system to address this.

Promoting and monitoring health, welfare and safety

- 105 The college has a strong ethos of supporting students' personal welfare. Provision is satisfactory overall, but procedures for health and safety monitoring need strengthening.
- 106 Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. Staff responsible have been trained, and the PSHE programme includes teaching to help students protect themselves and become responsible adults. There is a clear policy. Students' welfare is promoted and monitored very well through key stage co-ordinators and tutors. There are strong links with the County Council's education welfare service, education psychologists and other services that support specific needs.
- 107 Health and safety procedures are not fully satisfactory. Staff responsible have undertaken training and there are inspections of the premises. However, procedures are not formally audited and some aspects of unsafe practice were observed in design and technology and science.

Promoting and monitoring students' academic progress

- 108 Monitoring of students' academic progress is unsatisfactory. Most students are not receiving with sufficient frequency information on whether or not they are 'on track' to achieve their targets in National Curriculum tests or GCSE examinations. Provision for students in Years 10 and 11 is better than in Years 7 to 9. In Year 10, students are made aware of their GCSE target grade, which is determined by using a combination of a nationally based testing scheme and teachers' judgements. They are then informed of how well they are doing in relation to their target grade at several intervals during Years 10 and 11. Students identified as underachieving are given extra support by 'mentors' in order to improve their performance.
- 109 Arrangements are valued by students, but there are too few occasions when monitoring occurs. Across subjects, the system to detect the gap between students' targets and their current performance is insufficiently rigorous. This results in many students' not being sufficiently supported to improve. The provision is worse in Years 7 to 9 because the majority of students are unaware of their target grade for the end of Year 9, whether they are 'on track' to achieve it, or what weaknesses they should be trying to overcome. There is ineffective analysis of assessment data to compare the progress of different groups, such as boys and girls, those for whom English is not their mother tongue or for different teaching groups. There is, therefore, no sharply-focused understanding of where efforts for raising standards should be directed and too little measurement of the effect of existing strategies.

Use of assessment to inform planning the next stages of learning

- 110 The use of assessment to inform the next stages of learning is unsatisfactory. Many teachers identify common weaknesses in students' work and use this analysis to modify short-term teaching approaches in order to successfully overcome gaps in students' understanding. However, this is mostly done at the discretion of individual teachers rather than as part of a whole subject or college approach. There is too little analysis of assessment outcomes by subject teams in considering changes to long-term curricular plans and teaching approaches. The building up of assessment records against key objectives for students' learning is not yet sufficiently widespread, making it difficult for subject team analysis to take place.
- 111 There are a few examples of effective practice, such as in English, where the content of units of work, and how they are taught, are reviewed regularly. Changes are then made as necessary. Analysis of Year 10 and 11 students' performance in design and technology has identified a weakness in planning. Consequently, teachers are introducing a detailed analysis of how to gain higher coursework grades in order to improve results. Students' performance in drama is analysed rigorously and the information is used very effectively to modify teaching approaches. There is insufficient use of assessment to inform planning in a number of subjects, such as ICT, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious studies and science.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 112 Standards for care and personal development have been maintained since the last inspection. Procedures for promoting attendance have not been good enough to ensure that all students make good progress with their learning. Procedures and the monitoring of students' academic progress were key issues in the previous inspection. Insufficient progress has been made and these remain weaknesses.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CHOOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 113 The college is developing satisfactory links with parents but currently their involvement has insufficient impact on its work.

Parents' views of the college

- 114 Comparatively few parents attended the parents' meeting or completed the questionnaire. These parents were generally satisfied with what the college provides and achieves. The college receives very few complaints.

The quality of information provided

- 115 The quality of general information provided for parents is good but end-of-year reports are unsatisfactory.
- 116 Parents are kept very well informed about life and work at the college. Regular newsletters are informative and well presented. They are now being posted home monthly. The prospectus is well written and the investment in good graphic design results in a reader-friendly booklet. There are a few omissions in the governors' annual report. Parents have been provided with a copy of the Five-year Strategic Plan. They receive a clearly written option booklet and course outlines of the work that will be covered in subjects. There are good arrangements for settling new students into Year 7 and keeping their parents informed. These include a parents' meeting; a discussion with a senior member of staff; and an evening to meet tutors and other staff after students have started at the college. Parents spoken to were positive about the information they receive.

- 117 There are satisfactory arrangements for keeping parents informed about progress. Parents can meet formally with teachers once each year and they receive regular interim reports on effort and homework for students in Years 7 to 9. For students in Years 10 and 11, parents get additional information on quality of work, behaviour, subject targets and predicted grades. Students take home certificates and letters of commendation. Teachers encourage students by telephoning their parents about achievements.
- 118 End-of-year reports are unsatisfactory. The standard of reports varies between subjects, but the majority are insufficiently clear about what the students have achieved, their progress and what they need to do improve. The college is currently working to address this.

Parents' involvement and contribution

- 119 Parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's learning. There is an adequate range of initiatives aimed at improving parents' involvement, but the response of parents has been disappointing. The college explains the support it hopes parents will give to their children's education through the home-college contract, and all parents sign this agreement. Although the contract includes parents' commitment to encourage good attendance, too many students have unsatisfactory or poor attendance.
- 120 The college encourages parents to raise concerns and is quick to involve them when there are problems. There is regular telephone contact with a significant number of parents. Parents state they find the college readily approachable, and the vast majority support the college in raising standards in work and behaviour. Links with parents of students with special educational needs are good, with frequent telephone contact. Better involvement of parents of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties is beginning to improve the behaviour of some more difficult students. Parents are not yet involved in the setting and monitoring of individual education plans, and there is little published information about the services offered by the inclusion department.
- 121 The homework diary offers a useful link between home and college, but some parents do not make use of the facility by signing it regularly. The college now posts invitations for parents' evenings, and there are additional presentations about work experience and post-16 options, but only about half the parents attend. Many parents do support their children on occasions like the cluster sports day, drama and arts productions.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 122 The college has maintained its good efforts to ensure that parents are well informed about its work and students' experiences. It remains a friendly, open and responsive college. Reports to parents still require a greater level of consistency. As reported previously, too many parents do not support good attendance or the home-college contract.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

- 123 The changes in the structuring of the leadership team from September 2002 are having a positive impact on the management of the college. A clearer focus for the future strategic direction of the college is emerging, in partnership with the governors. There is an awareness of areas for development, and several of these are now being addressed.

Leadership

- 124 On balance, leadership of the college is satisfactory. It has a number of positive elements, but an area of weakness.
- 125 The principal has created a clear vision for Coleridge as an inclusive college where all can benefit whatever their personal circumstances. Evidence that this goal has been secured is seen in the good quality of care shown for students' personal development and the good-natured relationships observed among those from different backgrounds.
- 126 The principal sets a strong example of commitment and responsibility by his pro-active presence around the college. The impact of his leadership is evident in the positive morale of the great majority of teachers and teaching assistants, despite the challenging circumstances faced. College leadership has created a cohesive and optimistic staff.
- 127 The leadership of the management of change in the college is a mixed picture. Some aspects have been positively led. The college building has badly needed improving to provide a better quality learning environment. The principal and governors have worked with considerable energy with the LEA and contractors to improve college accommodation. Some major refurbishments have taken place and a new drama suite will be built shortly. Access to new technology has been transformed. By seeking to engage in partnerships, the college leadership has successfully created links with beacon and specialist schools.
- 128 However, there has been leadership weakness in managing the change necessary to substantially improve the quality of teaching and learning. Too many developments have been tackled at the same time because of a lack of prioritisation, efforts have been dissipated and the impact has been insufficiently effective.
- 129 Good leadership by the principal and governors is evident through the re-organisation of senior management by creating a college leadership team. The six directorates, formed in September 2002, now provide a good framework for implementing change. Early successes include developing an integrated SEN provision and establishing a more rigorous approach to monitoring teaching and learning.

Management

- 130 Overall, college management is unsatisfactory. However, there are aspects that are satisfactory and some are good.
- 131 Senior management did not create a sufficiently focused and prioritised action plan following the previous inspection. It failed to identify which of the many required actions would make the greatest impact on improving the quality of learning and raising standards. The college also adopted other important initiatives. Because change has been tackled on too broad a front over a short period of time the impact has been diluted. This is seen in the insufficiently strong outcomes of activities intended to improve teachers' planning, to motivate students by more varied lessons, to improve the use of assessment information and to introduce target setting.
- 132 Communication of key strategies for enhancing teaching and learning has been unsatisfactory. Outcomes of this are seen, for example, in the considerable inconsistency in how subject teachers match work to students' learning needs, the provision of helpful feedback on work and their support of SEN students' needs. However, senior management has communicated very effectively the principles and values of the college. The impact is seen in the very effective way teachers and teaching assistants apply college policies to

support students' welfare. Also, very positive attitudes have been engendered between boys and girls, disadvantaged students and those of different cultural heritage.

- 133 Improvements to the college environment have been managed very successfully and there has been a massive increase in provision of new technology. These are important for enhancing students' learning opportunities. The leadership team has created good staff morale and secured the college's future with the local community.
- 134 The college's inability to recruit staff in key subjects has impeded management's ability to promote all planned changes that will raise standards. The need to support unsatisfactory teaching and deal with difficult day-to-day issues has reduced time for evaluating the impact of initiatives and identifying the actions that will make a real difference to students' learning experiences.
- 135 Management of planning is unsatisfactory. The college has too many plans that are structured differently. The leadership team and governors have rightly recognised that these different plans confuse the college's strategic direction and they have published a Five-year Strategic Plan. This gives the springboard for rationalising future planning. The Strategic Plan needs developing further so that its objectives are translated into an action plan with targets, timelines and success indicators.
- 136 The vice-principal supports the principal well in dealing with day-to-day issues, particularly staff who find teaching and discipline difficult. He works well with the two key stage coordinators (leaders of tutor teams in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11) in supporting the work of tutors. His effectiveness has been too limited in coordinating subject planning. Data management is under developed, in part due to the lack of a modern information management system. The associate principal has been seconded to the college for a one-year appointment. He has made good progress in establishing a more rigorous programme for lesson planning and for monitoring teaching and learning than had existed previously. His evaluation findings have accurately pinpointed the level of unsatisfactory teaching, confirmed by the inspection. The management effectiveness of assistant principals is covered elsewhere in the report.
- 137 There is a wide variation in the skills of middle managers from good to weak. Good management is seen in English, geography and modern foreign languages. Many leaders are insufficiently skilled in planning. Many subject plans are little more than a list of issues and have remained as draft documents. Subject improvement plans are not being used regularly to guide the work of teams. No improvement plan was written for ICT, PE or special educational needs. Monitoring of students' personal development by the two key stage coordinators is good. They know students' needs very well and liaise well with tutors and support services. They are not yet making a sufficient impact in their role of monitoring and tracking students' academic progress.
- 138 The college works well with the LEA and the assigned inspector has been actively involved in partnership with managers to promote stronger lesson planning and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

Governing Body

- 139 The contribution of governors in shaping the direction of the college is satisfactory. The chairman has been committed to increasing the involvement of governors in raising standards and improving provision. A number of relatively new appointments have strengthened the governing body by introducing management experience from businesses and higher

education. Despite a larger number of committees than usual communications are effective, with members of the Planning and Curriculum Committee serving as a co-ordinating group.

- 140 Governors are now fulfilling their strategic role effectively. Following the previous inspection they encouraged the college to adopt too many different initiatives. But recently they have taken stock. They have now adopted a Five-year Strategic Plan, which stemmed from the governors' determination to have a new, clearer direction. It provides an appropriate manifesto for the future.
- 141 The governing body is holding the college management to account. Challenging performance targets have been agreed for the principal. Link governors meet heads of subjects annually to discuss results and developments, but greater consistency in monitoring is required. The SEN link governor monitors the inclusion work of the college very thoroughly. Governors are fully involved reviewing performance standards using national data and setting targets with the LEA.
- 142 All governors interviewed during the inspection had a good knowledge of the college's strengths and those aspects that require further development if standards are to improve. They are fully aware of the challenges faced by the college, particularly its inability to recruit teachers in shortage subjects.
- 143 Governors fulfil most of their statutory duties. Areas they do not yet address fully are; some procedures of the new special educational needs Code of Practice; the Race Relations and Disabilities Acts; and a daily act of collective worship. Required sections are missing from the governors' annual report to parents giving information about college security, professional development arrangements and examination targets.

Financial management and deployment of resources

- 144 Financial planning and management are good. Having met its target to clear a large budget deficit by the conclusion of 2002, governors set a modest deficit budget for 2002-3, with the approval of the LEA. This they deemed was required to maintain the pace of improvement of college provision. The late, unexpected removal by the LEA of the Small Schools' Allowance created a much larger deficit. The college has produced its own recovery plan. Financial planning for the future is effective and there is a five-year, draft budget based on student numbers projected by the LEA.
- 145 Day-to-day financial administration is well managed by the assistant principal (bursar). She produces good quality monitoring information using LEA approved financial software. The college has acted on the recommendations of a satisfactory audit report. Effective steps are taken to ensure that the best value is gained from contracts for grounds maintenance, cleaning and purchases of educational equipment. The college is shortly to take over its catering facility following a best value cost analysis.
- 146 Learning resources are deployed effectively in subjects. Most have sufficient equipment for class activities but there are insufficient books for homework. The library is a well-equipped, welcoming area which, during the inspection, was adequately used in the day, but only small numbers attended the evening homework club. The severe lack of modern computers has been a very serious impediment to students' learning until a few weeks prior to the inspection. This has had a considerable negative impact on limiting the range of teaching and learning activities in past years.
- 147 Staff mobility has been at a higher level than average in recent years. The great majority of teachers are well qualified and capable, but a significantly large minority are not. Teacher

recruitment has been problematic in design and technology, ICT, mathematics and science. Temporary and agency teachers, including four from overseas, have been used this year to ensure the timetable is covered. Most of these teachers have considerable problems in addressing the National Curriculum. At the meeting for parents and in the questionnaire, concern was raised about the detrimental effect temporary teachers are having on students' learning.

- 148 The above average number of teaching assistants are mostly deployed effectively, with the exception of those who support bilingual students at an early stage of language acquisition. For these students, support is too unstructured. There is an adequate range of technical staff and those working in ICT are particularly effective. Administrative and catering staff support the college well.
- 149 Induction and professional development arrangements for staff are satisfactory. Senior staff are working hard with teachers appointed from overseas in helping to equip them with the skills and capabilities needed to meet the college's needs. The scale of this task is large and the impact of training and mentoring for some been limited. The performance management of staff is undertaken well and fully in line with national arrangements.
- 150 There is sufficient accommodation, but its quality ranges from very good to poor. The recently refurbished ICT suites and science laboratories contrast with the tired interiors of many classrooms. The inclusion suite provides a welcoming environment and has a good range of varied sized rooms. Access to the first floor is by narrow staircases. The energy the governors and principal have invested in upgrading the building has greatly benefited students' opportunities. There is much more to be achieved if all areas are to provide modern learning environments. The site manager and her team support staff and students well through effective daily maintenance of the college accommodation.
- 151 Judgements in the previous report were set against the context of a major staff turnover and a new principal, in post for seven weeks. Governors have now broader representation and are taking stronger strategic and accountability roles. College leadership has retained a number of the positive features, such as vigorously promoting inclusion. The management of planning, which required fine-tuning in 2000, has not been sufficiently effective. Identification of critical actions required to address college improvement was not sufficiently rigorous in the early stages following the previous inspection. Management changes from September 2002 have significantly improved the capacity of the college to address the challenges it faces.

Progress on the action plan resulting from the previous inspection

- 152 Progress on the key issues has been unsatisfactory, overall, because the impact has been insufficient to rectify important weaknesses.
1. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has increased. Although training has taken place in structuring lessons and using a wider range of learning styles, its impact has been very inconsistent across the college. Recruitment difficulties have hindered attempts to eliminate poor teaching and improve behaviour management.
 2. Provision for students with special educational needs has improved considerably since it was re-organised in September 2002. The curriculum manager is now a member of the leadership team. Many developments are promising, but are at an early stage.
 3. Improvements in the curriculum have been unsatisfactory, overall. Religious studies has been introduced for all in Year 10. Recommendations regarding the second modern foreign

language have been successfully implemented. Literacy now assumes greater prominence in subjects, but the impact is mixed. Numeracy skills development in mathematics and across subjects is still poor. ICT is now well resourced but all required elements are not taught.

4. Assessment practices have improved too slowly and have not made sufficient impact on students' understanding of how they can improve their work. Tracking of students' achievements remains a weakness.

153 The college has not moved forward on the issue of daily collective worship and there are still gaps in the governors' annual report.

Summary

154 The direction given in managing change has not been sufficiently focused on critical strategies that will raise the quality of teaching and learning. Standards are still too low. Teacher recruitment problems have constrained development. The college now has a much improved learning environment and better resources. The finance provided to the college is low and the economic circumstances of a sizable majority of students are unfavourable. The college does not give satisfactory value for money because it is not providing an acceptable standard of education.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

155 To raise standards and the quality of learning to an acceptable level, the college management, governors and staff should undertake the actions listed below.

- 1) Strengthen the management of the college leadership team and middle managers by:
 - producing an improvement plan that rigorously addresses raising of quality in teaching and learning; which prioritises activities, provides staged timelines, states clear success criteria; and gives monitoring and evaluation arrangements,
 - improving the skills of subject leaders and coordinators in planning, monitoring and evaluating the areas for which they have responsibility.

(Ref paras 128, 130-43, 207, 216, 249, 258, 285, 295, 302)

- 2) Raise standards and improve students' achievement by:
 - applying the Key Stage 3 National Strategies, particularly to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills across subjects and, especially in mathematics and science, to build a stronger base for studies after age 14,
 - increasing the use of ICT, ensuring students are taught the full range of National Curriculum skills; and applying ICT skills to learning in all subjects.

(Ref paras 12-14, 19-20, 62-3, 77-8, 186-190, 209-10, 231, 251-9, 276, 295)

- 3) Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - communicating to staff a model of good teaching, using as exemplars the strong teaching within the college and from educational partners,
 - training teachers to plan interesting work that is matched to students' learning needs; and increasing the active involvement of students and the range of resources used in lessons.

(Ref paras 41-61, 171-2, 203-5, 215, 232, 256, 290, 299)

4) Make better use of assessment by:

- providing students with better information on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve,
- improving the use of assessment to track the progress of individual students, and to identify and overcome underachievement,
- increasing the use of data to analyse the progress of different groups of students, such as those for whom English is not their mother tongue,
- analysing assessment information more carefully by subject teams, to inform changes to teaching and learning methods and curriculum content.

(Ref paras 61-71, 108-11, 216, 234, 239, 248, 258 275, 282)

5) Improve attendance, and thereby give greater continuity to learning by:

- training staff in the new electronic registration system, applying it consistently at registrations and before lessons, and following up non-attendance rapidly.

(Ref paras 39-40, 104)

156 The college should address full compliance with the following statutory requirements identified in the text of the report:

health and safety; the annual governors' report; the Race Relations and Disabilities Acts; and the SEN Code of Practice.

(Ref paras 105-7, 143, 158-68, 175)

OTHER FEATURES SPECIFIED FOR INSPECTION

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

157 The college has begun a radical reform of work with its larger-than-average proportion of students with special educational needs. The needs of these students are very varied and include: learning problems, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical impairments, language needs and support for those for whom English is not their mother tongue. Currently, the work of the inclusion department covers all aspects, apart from teaching provided for students for whom English is an additional language. Teaching and learning of this latter group of students is managed separately and provided by teachers who are specialists.

158 Separate reports have been written covering these two aspects of special educational needs provision at the college

Special Educational Needs

(Learning problems, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical impairment and language needs)

Overall, the quality of provision in special educational needs is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The capacity of the leadership team to implement its vision for inclusion.
- Planning and emerging good practice in meeting individual special needs.
- The progress now being achieved in using Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets.
- Good levels of support for individual learning and behaviour needs leading to good levels of inclusion.

Areas for Improvement

- Requirements of the revised SEN Code of Practice are not fully met, including the revision of the SEN policy.
- Many subject teachers are not yet planning for students with individual needs.
- Monitoring of progress of these students in subjects.

Achievement and progress of SEN students

159 There is insufficient data to chart progress in basic skills or achievement of these students. Their progress from Year 7 to Year 11 in subjects, and in working towards IEP targets, has been unsatisfactory. In Year 11, many SEN students gain GCSE and Certificate of Achievement accreditation and a few achieve NVQs in communication skills. Those students taking the vocational course are make good progress in developing skills for living through a series of planned visits to industry, business and the local community.

160 However, since September 2002, the introduction of well-planned programmes of work linked to IEPs is leading to good progress in basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills, and satisfactory progress in subjects. With good support, these students make progress that is commensurate with that of other students. Students with behavioural difficulties make good progress against their IEP targets. Year 8 students with specific learning difficulties make good progress in spelling using an in-house phoneme programme, and are able to transfer their learning of phonemes to less frequently used words. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties acquire sound group-sharing skills through the playing of numeracy games. Many make good progress against their IEP targets.

Teaching and learning

161 Teaching of students with special needs is good in withdrawal lessons where there are some very good models of specialist teaching in learning and behaviour. Well-structured programmes of study, linked to the variety of special needs experienced by these students, are used. Teaching assistants deliver IEP programmes well because of the strength of the planning and good, in-house training. In subjects, standards of students with special educational needs are satisfactory where there is support from teaching assistants. In the past, subject teachers had too little information on which to plan for the individual needs of these students. IEPs are now available but are not yet used systematically to inform planning. There is very little use of additional resources to aid the learning of these students. Where subject teaching is good, with well-structured teaching points and learning activities, these

students make good gains in understanding and knowledge. They make notable progress in art and design, drama and geography.

- 162 The learning of students with special needs has been unsatisfactory from Year 7 to 11, overall. When there are no teaching assistants, teaching in subjects neither builds upon these students' strengths in learning nor recognises their difficulties. This results in work that often lacks challenge or is too demanding, and these students often fail to complete tasks, or demonstrate a lack of understanding in their answers. When tasks are matched to their needs, as in withdrawal lessons, they consolidate learning points well, and maintain good levels of learning recall.

Response

- 163 Most students with special needs respond to lessons well and approach learning activities confidently. They expect to learn, and commence tasks quickly when they understand what is required. Many students who have behaviour targets use strategies well to manage their behaviour in class. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the behaviour of significant minority of students with behavioural needs deteriorates rapidly.

Curricular provision

- 164 The curriculum for students with special needs is satisfactory. The development of the inclusion base (learning support department) since September 2002 is ensuring good access to the whole curriculum. There are good arrangements for IEP work, and a good level of in-class support across subjects. Very good support is provided for students with behavioural difficulties. The college includes students with pronounced special needs such as visual impairment or physical impairment well. The department works to ensure that students who are withdrawn for support retain a balanced curriculum, for example, students with behavioural difficulties who miss large parts of subjects, such as science. Alternative provision in the curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 is developing satisfactorily, and the vocational studies course is a strength.

Assessment of students with special educational needs

- 165 The assessment of students with special needs is unsatisfactory. Until September 2002 it failed to meet the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. There is emerging good practice, although key requirements, such as reviews, are still not met. Procedures for identifying students with special needs are good. But as yet, there is little on-going assessment of the learning of these students, apart from some recording related to withdrawal for lessons. This results in too few teachers knowing their learning strengths, or how to plan the next step in learning. Currently, students are not involved in agreeing or monitoring their learning targets, apart from students with behavioural targets, whose involvement is seen as key to their successful improvement.
- 166 There is very good support for the assessment of disaffected students from external agencies, including the Youth Service. Support from the Behaviour Support Service and educational psychologists is very useful, although the priority between assessment of behaviour and learning difficulties has yet to be achieved.

Parental involvement

- 167 Links with parents of students with special needs are good, with frequent telephone contacts. Better involvement of parents of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties is beginning to improve the behaviour of some more difficult students. Parents are not yet involved in the setting and monitoring of IEPs, and there is little published information about the services offered by the inclusion team.

Management

- 168 Through strong leadership the vision for inclusion is being translated into good practice. The newly developed management structure, with a twin focus on behaviour and learning, has provided a sound basis for the development of the college's inclusion provision and has encouraged the formation of a strong team, including teaching assistants, with a shared purpose. There are intentions to produce a strategic development plan, update the special needs policy and complete the inclusion policy. Good practice is developing in monitoring the quality of teaching and support. There is an awareness of the need to monitor how well students with special needs achieve by the time they leave the college and to ensure the training requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act are met. There is strong support from the special needs governor who provides an excellent model of monitoring and accountability. The provision is well staffed, and the teaching assistants provide very good role models for the development of students' moral and social skills. Currently, the provision of ICT as an aid to Code of Practice administration and access to learning for students is very underdeveloped.
- 169 Initial work on the key issues arising from the previous inspection was too slow. However, since the establishment of the inclusion department from September 2002, there is emerging good practice in meeting the needs of students, and these issues are now being addressed successfully.

Special Educational Needs (English as an Additional Language - EAL)

Overall, provision for students for whom English is an additional language is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- Students make sound progress in subjects once they have gained basic competence in English.
- Good support is given to students by their peers in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Leadership does not provide for the rigorous identification, monitoring and assessment of students' needs and progress.
- Provision for students at the first stage of English acquisition is unsatisfactory.
- Subject teachers are provided with too little information on students' language needs.
- A lack of resources to support students' learning in subjects.
- Failure to conform fully to the Race Relations Amendment Act regarding the monitoring of achievement and progress.

Achievement and progress of EAL students

170 There is insufficient data to chart the progress over time of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL), or to compare the attainment of students in different ethnic groups with other students within their cohort. Analysis of these students' work in lessons shows that students who have gained a basic competence in English language are achieving as well as other groups in their classes. Able students make good progress in acquiring English language skills through setting arrangements in core subjects, and a few make very fast gains in learning. However, progress is unsatisfactory for those who are at the first stages of English language acquisition. This is because learning objectives in individual plans are insufficiently matched to linguistic needs and few opportunities are provided for developing speaking skills. Progress is satisfactory, once these students have achieved a minimum level of independence, because there is less need for reliance on adult intervention, and these students receive good support from their peer group.

Teaching and Learning

171 The teaching of English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because there are insufficient links in planning to the learning requirements of subjects, and there is insufficient use of support materials to facilitate the acquisition of key words and concepts. Much in-class support is unsatisfactory where it is unplanned, or inhibits the EAL learner from working with peers. There are a few examples of effective EAL support, where planning focuses upon the key learning points and concepts in the subject, seen for example, where key words in a story were being analysed in an English lesson. Withdrawal sessions are satisfactory because of the clearer identification of learning objectives and better use of learning aids to promote language acquisition.

172 The learning of students at first stages of language acquisition is unsatisfactory because of unstructured support but improves as more independence is gained. Where they receive well-planned support their learning improves. Good support was observed in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where additional materials were used effectively to promote the concept of probability. Overall, EAL students are well-motivated, and through their own efforts they increase their knowledge and understanding of the key learning points in subjects as their knowledge of English increases.

Response

- 173 EAL students have very positive attitudes to the college. They expect to learn, and settle down quickly when they understand the task and feel confident they can tackle it. Early-stage learners are very dependent upon adults to structure and guide their learning. They have very few strategies to aid their own learning.

Curriculum for students with EAL

- 174 The range of curricular activities provided for EAL students is sound. There are appropriate levels of support. The impact of support enables all students who have some independence in using English to access the National Curriculum. Support is not sufficiently well directed to enable those at the first stages of English acquisition to gain full benefit of learning experiences. There are good opportunities to achieve national accreditation in heritage languages in Year 11. Subject teachers are provided with too little information about the learning needs of these students to enable planning for their successful involvement in learning when there is no support.

Assessment of EAL

- 175 Assessment of students with EAL is unsatisfactory and impedes better learning. There is insufficient identification of the strengths and weaknesses in these students' acquisition of English. The needs of the various groups of ethnic minority students are insufficiently identified, and monitoring progress over time to raise the achievement of these students is only just beginning. The outcomes of current monitoring are insufficiently recorded, analysed or shared.

Management

- 176 Management of the provision is unsatisfactory because of a lack of strategic direction in developing the provision and the slow development of monitoring procedures. There is no promotion of the raising of achievement of ethnic minority groups, including students for whom English is an additional language, through rigorous identification, monitoring and assessment of their progress, as required by the Race Relations Amendment Act.
- 177 Since the previous inspection, insufficient progress has been made in relation to tracking and supporting students for whom English is an additional language.

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	141
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	20	37	49	19	8	3
Percentage	4	14	26	35	13	6	2

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

Information about the college's students

Students on the college's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the college's roll	433
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	98

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	29
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	91

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	62

Student mobility in the last college year	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	57
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	42

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	9.7
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	3.3
National comparative data	1.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)¹

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	48	56	104

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	13	20	20
	Girls	24	20	20
	Total	37	40	40
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	36 (33)	39 (33)	39 (29)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	10 (7)	24 (21)	10 (11)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	12	20	18
	Girls	27	20	17
	Total	39	40	35
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	39 (40)	40 (50)	35 (15)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	10 (12)	22 (26)	20 (1)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

¹Footnote

The table for National Curriculum Tests/Task Results is from the Ofsted/DfES/QCA Performance and Assessment Report (December 2002) which states that 104 students were registered in the final year of Key Stage 3.

The college states that in the Summer term 2002 there were 99 students on roll. In which case the results are English L5 38% L6 10%, mathematics L5 40% L6 25% and science L5 40% L6 10%.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)¹

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	40	73

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	6	25	33
	Girls	12	31	37
	Total	18	56	70
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	College	25 (25)	77 (83)	93 (89)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	College	27.7
	National	39.8

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

¹Footnote

In the tables above, college results for 5 or more grades A* to C and 5 or more grades A* to G are from the DfES Performance Table for Cambridgeshire (January 2003), which states that 73 students were registered in their final year of Key Stage 4.

Other results are from the OfSTED/DfES/QCA Performance and Assessment Report (December 2002), which states that 75 students were registered.

The college states that in the Summer term 2002 there were 70 students on roll. In which case the results are 5 or more grades A* to C 26%; 5 or more grades A* to G 80%; 1 or more grade A* to G 100%; and average points score per pupil 29.7.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last college year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	310	42	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	3	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	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	17	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	13	8	0
Black or Black British – African	11	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6	0	0
Chinese	2	1	0
Any other ethnic group	33	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	27.2
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	669

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.2
Key Stage 4	18.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	1,593,365
Total expenditure	1,421,442
Expenditure per student	3,536
Balance brought forward from previous year	-90,000
Balance carried forward to next year	81,000

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	13.8
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	18.94
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	433
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	37	61	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in college.	37	54	7	0	2
Behaviour in the college is good.	27	49	17	5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	41	22	10	0
The teaching is good.	27	56	7	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	39	22	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	49	49	2	0	0
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	34	5	0	2
The college works closely with parents.	27	44	20	5	5
The college is well led and managed.	24	56	12	0	7
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	56	12	0	5
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	49	20	5	7

Other issues raised by parents

- A strength of the college is its small size, where students are known well by teachers.
- There is strong respect by students for others whatever their background.
- Teachers give students good support.
- The results of the college look disappointing but are not bad considering students' backgrounds.
- Some teachers are very good, but recruitment difficulties have resulted in some staff being appointed who experience problems in controlling behaviour.
- The induction programme to the college is very good.
- Communications with parents are good and appointments can be made rapidly if requested.

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths

- Excellent subject leadership.
- A very good A* to G pass rate in GCSE English and English Literature.
- Good use of assessment and monitoring of students' progress.
- A team of specialist English teachers who provide good quality teaching.
- Well-planned lessons and very effective behaviour management.
- Identification and support of students in danger of underachieving at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards, so students' attainment overall is closer to the national average.
- Improve the attainment of boys across year groups.
- Target the highest-attaining students in aiming for higher grades.
- Ensure greater consistency in the application of best teaching and assessment practices, including the use of ICT.
- Review departmental planning by prioritising key developmental activities.

178 In 2002, results in national tests taken in Year 9 were well below national standards, but they were average when compared with schools which had a similar intake. The number of higher grades was very low. There has been a downward trend over the last five years but results showed an up turn in 2002. In the 2002 GCSE English examination, the proportion of students achieving grades at A*-C was well below the national average. The pass rate at grades A*-G includes good achievement by students identified as having special educational needs. All students taking the Certificate of Achievement gained accreditation, with almost all being awarded distinctions or merits. In the 2002 GCSE English Literature examination, results at grades A*-C were well below the national average. However, students gained a higher proportion of grades A* and A than average and all entered achieved grades A*-G. Girls gained most of the higher grades.

179 Standards on entry are well below average but have risen considerably over the past three intakes. Current work seen in Years 7 to 9 is well below national standards overall but there is wide variation across sets. Students in top sets in Year 9 attain average standards and a moderate majority above, because of the focus on challenging teaching and learning approaches. From samples of work and lessons seen, steady progress is being made from Year 7 to 9. Girls progress more rapidly than boys. In Years 7 and 8 particularly, a large number of students have problems with basic literacy, particularly writing at length with accuracy and structure. By Year 9, most students are writing at length, but a significant number still have literacy problems which, for a few, are carried through into Years 10 and 11. Setting is currently working well in Years 8 and 9, particularly in aiding the performance of more-able students. For lower attainers, the investment in teaching assistants makes a very positive impact with students who have special educational needs for learning and for those who have progressed beyond the early stage of language acquisition where English is not their mother tongue. This enables them to make steady progress. Although reading, writing and speaking and listening skills are well below average, the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is making a positive impact on students' standards. The use of writing frames (guidance supporting the structure of written work) helps students improve their compositions. This

was seen in Year 8 lessons, where students were preparing a speech to be used by a tour guide at 'The Globe Theatre'. Progress in literacy for lower-attaining students is being consolidated well through effective liaison meetings between the English and the inclusion departments. This is especially the case with the use of Progress Units (learning tasks for students whose attainment is below the standards expected) being implemented this year.

- 180 In Years 10 and 11, standards remain well below average overall, but higher-attaining students reach average standards and some above. Within lessons, useful work is being done to raise standards of key vocabulary. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson on 'Out' by Alan Metcalf, where students in a lower set were identifying and using terms such as 'diegetic' and 'non-diegetic' sound with confidence and applying these concepts to sound tracks for their storyboards of scenes. The good level of data collation allows effective tracking of student performance and is a secure foundation for further work on target setting.
- 181 The quality of teaching in English is good, with a significant number of examples of very good and excellent teaching. English specialists have a very good level of subject knowledge and understanding. Planning is good and lessons have effective structures. They invariably open with a sharing of lesson objectives, followed by a range of activities designed to maintain interest and participation. Lessons are concluded with a 'plenary' when progress against lesson objectives is reviewed. Sometimes, too little time is given to the 'plenary'. Behaviour management is a strength of teaching, and the isolated incidences of poor behaviour are dealt with most effectively.
- 182 The best lessons are well paced, have a challenging range of activities and provide effective interaction between the teacher and class. This was seen, for example, in a Year 10 lesson on Dickens' short story 'The Signalman', where the excellent use of sharp, directed questions and a sequence of short, focused activities gave the learning both pace and depth. The use of probing questions results in pacy lessons and ensures students do not coast. The increased use of collaborative group work is allowing good progress in developing speaking and listening skills, as well as less teacher-dependent learning. Simple classroom drama techniques are used, such as 'freeze-frame' and 'hot-seating'. In a Year 8 lesson on 'Frankenstein', the use of digital camera freeze-frames linked to a PowerPoint presentation enabled reflection on a dramatic performance and provided an example of very good use of ICT. Students animated a scene from the book where the monster comes to life.
- 183 Marking and assessment are developing strengths. The best marking practice makes very good use of developmental comments and focused targets for improvement. This is an area for dissemination across the whole department, half of whom are relatively new in post.
- 184 The response of most students to lessons is good across all years, with only a minority showing disaffection. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and students. These are fostered well through teachers wanting students to succeed and valuing their contributions. When given the opportunity, students collaborate together effectively to resolve group tasks or 'brainstorm' ideas prior to writing. Very positive features of the department's approach are an emphasis on performance and presentations. These help students develop oral skills, confidence, and the ability to respond sensitively to the work of others.
- 185 The subject has dynamic and innovative leadership. Good management has driven improvements since the previous inspection, despite a significant turnover of staff that has, at times, slowed the pace of developments. It has produced a range of initiatives and opportunities which enhance students' experience of English. These include: the advanced readers group, in conjunction with Cambridge colleges where students join seminars on

chosen books; a good range of theatre visits and enrichment trips; transition projects with feeder schools; and successful entries in writing competitions for high attainers. The department has the capacity to improve standards further.

- 186 Since the previous inspection, standards have remained broadly similar. Boys' underachievement is still an issue. The application of the 'Literacy Initiative' of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is improving basic skills, especially in Years 7 and 8. Subject management, including monitoring and evaluation, has improved. The subject is now using ICT to extend students' learning.

Standards and provision of literacy in subjects

- 187 Standards of literacy across subjects are well below average. Written work for a significant number of low- and middle-attaining students is marred through an inability to spell correctly, structure sentences and use grammar appropriately. The literacy initiative of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is being introduced appropriately. A successful outcome of the college's literacy programme is the emphasis on specialist vocabulary banks or 'word walls' in all subjects. Some sound work on modelling writing is being developed effectively in science. Structuring writing is the most problematic literacy element, particularly in Years 7 to 9, where many students have difficulties with technical accuracy and presentation. A current cross-curricular development to raise standards is the use of writing frames to 'scaffold' written work, particularly for lower-attaining students.
- 188 Reading skills are well below average. In the top sets, particularly in Years 10 and 11, reading standards are at least average and often above. In lower sets, many students lack fluency in reading and this is seen when students are asked to read aloud. Higher attainers make steady progress in Years 7 to 11. However, a significant majority of low attaining students find difficulty with comprehension skills when reading texts. This is especially the case in design and technology, English and modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. Teaching assistants are being used well in the college for the development of reading skills. The library supports the development of reading well and reading certificates are presented in assemblies. The use of the SuccessMaker ICT program in Years 7 and 8 is reinforcing important literacy skills as well as increasing students' confidence.
- 189 Speaking and listening skills are developed soundly in many areas but are most advanced in drama. Within other subjects, the development of these skills depends largely on how much collaborative group discussion and presentation of ideas develops as part of the normal teaching and learning approach. This is good in art and design, drama, English, geography, and in top-set science.
- 190 Girls make better progress than boys in literacy across subjects, but there is no difference in those from different cultural heritages.
- 191 Inclusion teachers are developing literacy practices well when students who have specific literacy learning difficulties are withdrawn for individual or group support. When these students work in subject classes, there is effective support by teaching assistants in reinforcing students' literacy skill development.

Drama

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is very good.

Strengths

- The excellent leadership and management of the subject.
- The consistently high examination results at GCSE, particularly in 2002.

- The high quality of teaching.
- The very good progress students make in developing drama skills between Years 7 and 9.
- Well-planned lessons, with very effective behaviour management.

Areas for improvement.

- Recruiting more boys into GCSE drama.
- Subject facilities, with the equipping of the new studio due in Summer 2003.

- 192 GCSE results have been consistently very good. They peaked in 2002, when the pass rate at grades A*-C was well above the national average. All students achieved grades A*-G. These results are a consequence of excellent teaching and committed learning of students. Among the passes were real successes for some lower-attaining students.
- 193 Students enter the college in Year 7 with little systematic drama experience. From this low base students progress rapidly so that attainment in lessons by Year 9 is above average. This three-year programme provides a secure foundation upon which to build the GCSE course. Drama also plays a significant part in the development of literacy and oracy standards in these years through group work, performance and script reading. Students make very good progress in Years 7 to 9, developing an awareness of the need for drama discipline, internalising a repertoire of techniques for exploring drama contexts, and developing the ability to create and sustain role.
- 194 By the end of Year 11 students reach well-above-average standards. In Years 10 and 11, they make very good progress, building on the work of the previous three years. Students are able to resolve performance tasks independently, operate well in role and develop mature levels of constructive criticism about their own work and that of others. A good level of liaison takes place between drama and English. Standards achieved in a Year 10 lesson observed on 'An Inspector Calls' by J. B. Priestley, had clearly benefited from work done on the characters in the previous English lesson, and the drama work deepened their understanding still further.
- 195 The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with all lessons observed being very good or excellent. The teaching quality is consistently challenging, with the teacher having high expectations of the students' attitudes and their commitment. This, in turn, makes them interested and responsive, and leads to high achievement in collaborative work and performance. The units of work are interesting and challenging in relation to content and methodology. Lessons are often ambitious in their intent, for example, the Year 9 lesson observed where the class produced a five-scene extract from 'Macbeth' in one period. Each group of four students took a different 'bare bones' script (as seen in the performances of the 'Reduced Shakespeare Company') of one scene, and by dint of hard work and enthusiasm produced a performance of all five by the end of the lesson. Teachers' planning provides a coherent framework for learning, and excellent working relationships prevail during lessons. There is a very good range of curricular enrichment activities and theatre visits. Occasional, large-scale productions are undertaken, though more often performances are small-scale studio productions linked to GCSE course work.
- 196 Drama plays a key role in students' personal development by building confidence and trust. Students say they enjoy drama: in discussions, drama came out as being a very popular subject across all year groups. Performance evaluations by the teacher and students are a positive feature of learning and personal development. Skills of speaking and listening are fostered well.
- 197 There is effective and rigorous leadership of the drama curriculum. The number of students opting for GCSE drama varies year on year, ranging between 12 and 30+. However, more

girls choose the course than boys. The recruitment of boys is a departmental target, and the new studio, furnished with technical lighting and sound equipment, will open up syllabus options that are particularly conducive to boys. Though currently in temporary accommodation until the new studio is built later this year, best use is being made of adequate facilities. The current lack of good quality lighting to create atmosphere is the major drawback.

- 198 Since the previous inspection, the very positive teaching and learning has continued. Standards have been maintained in Years 10 and 11 and they have improved in Years 7 to 9. Drama continues to make a strong contribution to students' personal development. The new drama studio provides the very good prospect of improved accommodation and facilities.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- An effective contribution to improving students' literacy skills.
- The Year 7 and 8 computer-based individual learning scheme is motivating students.
- A good start has been made on providing for gifted students.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in National Curriculum tests are well below average.
- Standards at GCSE are very low.
- The quality of teaching and learning is poor.
- There is too little use of assessment to help students improve.
- Insufficient support is provided for teachers to develop a wide range of teaching approaches and resources.
- Improvement planning is ineffective.

- 199 In 2002, standards in National Curriculum tests at age 14 were well below average. Following a downward trend in 2000 and 2001 there was a small improvement in 2002. Results demonstrated good progress when compared with students' test results at age 11. Standards in GCSE examinations at age 16 were very low, with boys doing significantly worse than girls. Students attained approximately one grade lower in mathematics, on average, than in their other subjects. Both boys' and girls' results showed that students did not achieve well enough.
- 200 Current students' work seen during the inspection shows that they are not achieving well enough. They enter the college with standards which are well below average and are not improving sufficiently, with many only attaining very low standards. The highest-attaining students in the college often demonstrate standards which are only similar to the national average. For example, in Year 9 about half of the students in the highest-attaining group are able to solve very simple equations but struggle when attempting slightly more difficult questions. Lower-attaining students can interpret simple pie-charts but are unable to interpret a bar-chart. They often present bar-charts incorrectly with inappropriate or missing labels and titles. Discussion with these students shows that they are capable of attaining higher standards but are hampered by the low quality of teaching. When teaching is of better quality students' standards improve, such as in a low-attaining Year 7 group where students were able to quickly place different events in order of likelihood.
- 201 In Years 10 and 11, students do not achieve well enough and standards are well below average. The highest-attaining students in Year 11 only demonstrate average attainment. For

example, when investigating the effect of transforming the letter 'E' they have good ideas for exploring and developing the task, but are not competent in presenting their ideas, hypothesising or testing their hypotheses. Their lack of confidence stems from being given too little opportunity to practise their skills earlier in their college career. The standards of the lowest-attaining groups are very low, such as in Year 10 when many do not draw basic pictograms accurately.

- 202 Poor numeracy skills often hold students back. For example, highest-attaining, 'fast track' students in Year 10 demonstrate high level understanding of how to find the length of an arc of a circle but are unable to use fractions to calculate the solution. The use of a computer-based individualised learning scheme is motivating students well in Years 7 and 8, but has not yet had sufficient impact on improving numeracy. Students' work shows substantial examples of low attainment, such as only being able to add or subtract single and double digit numbers. Teachers are making an effective contribution to improving students' literacy skills. Strategies, such as producing booklets with 'lists of words to know', displaying key phrases on classroom walls and pairing weak readers with better students, are improving students' competence in interpreting written problems and deciding which aspects of mathematics to use. Students for whom English is not their mother tongue are supported well by teaching assistants who use techniques such as writing key phrases on individual cards and encouraging students to use key words in conversation. This results in their progress being similar to that of other students.
- 203 The overall quality of teaching is poor and this leads to poor learning. Teaching is unsatisfactory in over one third of lessons. Less than one third of lessons benefit from good teaching. This is much worse than normally seen and is a serious weakness. There is too little use of the 'Numeracy Initiative' from the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, such as mental starters, individual whiteboards, number lines and counting sticks, and this is preventing students from developing their numeracy skills sufficiently.
- 204 Most teachers have sufficient knowledge of mathematics to meet students' needs but, on occasions a teacher makes a serious error, such as presenting a bar chart with the axes the wrong way round, resulting in students being very confused. Most teachers make learning objectives clear to the students and there is good development of college-produced booklets and worksheets to enable students to achieve their objectives. These are used well but, overall, there is too narrow a range of teaching styles. Opportunities to make lessons more interesting by using a wider range of resources, such as overhead projectors or probability kits, are missed. This leads to students showing a lack of enthusiasm and becoming bored quickly. Teachers often use questioning in lessons but rarely ask students to explain their answers, resulting in both students and teachers being unsure about how well the mathematics has been understood. It also prevents teachers from building on students' current knowledge and understanding to provide more challenging work. The use of a plenary at the end of a lesson, to summarise key learning and implications for subsequent work, is not done well. This leaves students unsure as to how well they are achieving or what they have to do to improve.
- 205 In a large number of lessons the lack of effective behaviour management techniques has a major, adverse effect on students' progress. Teachers do not make their expectations of an appropriate code of conduct sufficiently clear and do not emphasise the impact poor behaviour is having on learning. There is too little scanning of the room to detect and challenge inappropriate behaviour, too much acceptance of students not working properly and too many occasions when the teacher shouts over students' noise for sustained periods. This results in a poor working ethos in many lessons, with students only completing small amounts of work. Any good qualities of teaching, such as clear explanations, do not have the

positive impact on learning that they normally would. The head of department has prepared a series of mathematical activities where students can use ICT skills, but because of a lack of access to computers these have not been used. Most students, therefore, have used computers in mathematics lessons far less than in most schools, which adversely affects their progress.

- 206 Students' attitudes to mathematics are unsatisfactory. Many lessons are characterised by students having a far too relaxed attitude to learning. This results in a slow pace of work, with students showing too little understanding of how badly their learning is affected. Behaviour is poor, with many students talking or not concentrating when they should be listening. Some students deliberately disrupt lessons by shouting across the room, and many have frequent periods of not working. Boys' behaviour is worse than girls, leading to them attaining lower standards and making slower progress.
- 207 Leadership is satisfactory; there is a vision for providing high quality education, set out clearly in the department handbook and understood well by teachers. However, management is unsatisfactory. The scheme of work identifies objectives well but not a range of resources or teaching approaches. Lesson observations have taken place but teachers need more detailed comments on their strengths and how to get better. The improvement plan identifies a list of things to develop but does not contain criteria for success, responsibilities for implementation or time scales. Overall, teachers receive too little support in contributing to raising standards.
- 208 Since the previous inspection, the quality of provision in mathematics has deteriorated. Standards in national tests in Year 9 have declined and results at GCSE have remained very low. Behaviour was satisfactory at the previous inspection and it is now poor. The quality of teaching is worse and management has become unsatisfactory. There are still too few opportunities for students to use computers. Lesson observations have not had sufficient impact on standards and assessment remains a weakness.

Standards of numeracy across subjects

- 209 Standards of numeracy are well below average. For example, students demonstrate low standards in design and technology when adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing. In French, students' recall of numbers is weak, and in mathematics a significant number of Year 7 students are only able to add and subtract single and double digit numbers. Poor numeracy skills often hold students back from developing higher level skills, such as when high-attaining, Year 10 mathematics students are unable to use fractions when calculating the length of an arc. There are a few examples of girls or boys using numeracy in a satisfactory manner. For example in Year 10 geography, students analyse the percentage of different occupations within an employment structure. Presentation and interpretation of data, such as in pie-charts and bar-charts, is close to a satisfactory standard in geography and design and technology. Physical education students in Year 11 are able to calculate the percentage of goals scored against shots taken.
- 210 Standards are insufficiently high because strategies for teaching numeracy are underdeveloped. Training has been held for all teachers in developing numeracy skills across subjects. The college has adopted the 'Numeracy Initiative' of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy in its college improvement plan. Subject teams have identified their contributions, but the application of numeracy within subjects is very limited in practice. The use of a computer-based, individual learning scheme in Years 7 and 8 is providing a wide range of activities. These are motivating students, including those with learning difficulties to improve their numeracy skills well, but have not yet had a sufficient impact on their attainment. No evidence of a contribution to numeracy was seen in a large number of subjects during the inspection.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is poor.

Strengths

- Changes made to science courses in Years 7 and 10.
- Student involvement in the applied science course in Year 10.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching.
- Management of the subject.
- The development of investigative skills.
- Increasing the use of ICT in science.

211 In 2002, test results taken at the end of Year 9 were very low. Over recent years, there has been a downward trend in the proportion of students attaining the expected level, but it rose slightly last year. Compared with results of national tests taken by this group at the end of Year 6 in their primary schools, students made steady progress over three years. The science department has a good revision programme and prepares students well for the Year 9 tests. The proportion of students attaining a GCSE pass at grades A*-C was well below average in 2002. Results have followed a downward trend and many students achieved less well in science than in their other subjects. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

212 By Year 9, standards of attainment in science are low and a significant proportion of students have made little progress in the subject. In Year 7, students were studying forces at a standard equivalent to that expected early in the primary school. There is little evidence of investigative work in students' books and no records of their work from previous years. A few Year 9 students are successful in working out moments of force, but for most, poor numeracy skills hinder work involving calculations. Students with special educational needs do not make sufficient progress across Years 7 to 9 because most teachers do not plan to meet their individual level of need.

213 In Years 10 and 11, standards are well below average. Where there is effective teaching some students in top sets attain high standards; for example, in a Year 11 lesson about moral and ethical considerations of cloning, there was a high level of debate using technical language which showed an understanding of the changes to cells during reproduction. Practical skills are below the expected level. For example, students in a Year 10 chemistry lesson did not handle apparatus with the level of skill normally seen. Standards of numeracy across the age range are lower than expected and there is no evidence that teachers are planning activities to develop numeracy skills in science. There is, however, some good quality extended writing in Year 11 biology, but the spelling of technical words is weak in all classes. There is no analysis of performance of students for whom English is not their mother tongue. In general, higher-attaining students make more rapid progress than others because they receive a higher proportion of the better teaching.

214 Students' attitudes in science lessons are dependent on the quality of teaching and the relationships developed with staff. They are willing to apply effort and work together well when the tasks are suitable. In general, they are not well motivated when required to complete extended copying tasks or listen to teachers' talk for prolonged periods. There is no evidence of different attitudes between girls and boys. The highest-attaining students are

encouraged by their friends to answer questions and are often asked for their opinions and for explanations.

- 215 The quality of teaching is poor in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is, however, some good and very good teaching, mostly with the GCSE classes. Teachers have the appropriate subject knowledge, and in some lessons observed, they clearly showed an infectious enthusiasm for the subject presented to the class. The best teaching was well planned, with very good resources chosen to interest and enthuse students. In these lessons the teacher judged quickly when students had difficulty in understanding and was able to help them. Good lessons seen included those with a variety of tasks which students completed quickly. In contrast, an unacceptably large proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, especially in Years 7 to 9. In these lessons, the work offered to students was uninspiring, often badly planned and ill-matched to students' prior experiences. The quality of work expected of students was too low. Teachers had few skills to manage students' behaviour, and the poor behaviour of a few students disrupted the learning of all. In general, the marking of books is regular and teachers praise students' work, sometimes inappropriately: inaccurate diagrams and incorrect use of vocabulary are sometimes marked as correct and thus students are unaware of the expected standards.
- 216 There is weak leadership and management of the subject. The subject improvement plan includes too many items and there are no action plans to show how these will be achieved. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 consist of little more than a list of topics to be covered. Similarly, there is sparse guidance for GCSE courses, although the chemistry element is more detailed. There is not enough support from these schemes for inexperienced teachers to plan effective lessons. Procedures for assuring the health and safety of students are unsatisfactory, in part because these are not detailed in schemes of work. There has been some monitoring, such as homework and marking, but no records of this, or follow-up, to ensure improvement in performance. Whilst some lessons of colleagues have been observed, there is no evidence that there have been improvements in teaching. There are regular tests to judge students' attainment but no evaluation to influence the teaching. Students' progress has not been measured at regular intervals and there are no clear guidelines for the assessment of practical work.
- 217 The difficulty in recruiting experienced and qualified staff is a significant feature in the unsatisfactory and poor teaching in science.
- 218 Science has sufficient time in Years 7 to 9. However, there are currently gaps in the breadth of activities offered. As well as the low number of investigations, ICT is rarely used in science. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has been changed recently with the adoption of appropriate examination courses. However, each course is taught by three teachers, which is a significant weakness as there are no systems to ensure effective communication about the achievements and needs of individual students. A good development in Year 10 is the addition of an applied science GCSE course. This provides a good opportunity for success for students who enjoy exploring how science is used in manufacturing and more widely in society. This course is effectively taught by one teacher. Appropriately, lower-attaining students are entered for both GCSE science and for an easier, certificated course. Resources for science are satisfactory, although the lack of a functioning fume cupboard restricts the range of practical work in chemistry.
- 219 Since the previous inspection, progress in the subject has been unsatisfactory. Teaching now consists of an unacceptable amount of poor or unsatisfactory teaching. There are also lower levels of attainment in investigative skills. Difficulties in recruiting science teachers, together with building work that has resulted in some teaching taking place outside

laboratories, has hindered students' progress. Recent curricular changes in Years 7 and 10 are appropriate, and there is some evidence in students' books that this could help bring about a rise in standards.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- GCSE results are above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good: challenging and creative.
- Relationships between students and teachers are strong and effective.
- Self-confidence is developed well and students produce highly individual pieces of GCSE coursework.

Areas for improvement

- Involving students more in the assessment of their work.
- Using ICT as a creative aspect within art and design.

220 In 2002, results in teacher assessments at age 14 were broadly at the national average. At age 16, GCSE results were above average at grades A* to C in 2002, with half of the group achieving better grades than had been predicted. Over the last three years the proportion of students obtaining an A* or an A grade has been high, with very small numbers at the lower grades. There is no significant difference in boys' and girls' results overall. Students' art results are better than the majority of their other subjects. Results in GCSE photography, studied after college, are also above average.

221 In Years 7 to 9, all students engage well and make good progress to reach average standards. This is evident in the development of skills and understanding from a starting point of low self-confidence. Students are soon producing well-finished, thought-provoking work. For example, students practise drawing in a variety of contexts, such as life studies, composition, designing and recording ideas. They can handle with competence line, shape and tone. They develop sound skills when working in paints, pastels, pencils and charcoal and use colour particularly well. Good choices, with careful colour-mixing and application, lead to work that is fresh and bold. This was seen in a large number of very effective paintings for the project on volcanoes in Year 9. Students develop the ability to apply the techniques they have acquired and work successfully on a small or large scale. Techniques were combined well in the Marble Project where an observational drawing was enlarged and explored through five separate stages, using different materials and treatments at each point. The historical and critical elements of the course are integrated well with practical activity, and students are challenged to use visual language creatively and for a specific purpose. The impact of this approach can be seen in the re-telling of the Easter story as a group project. Students were each allocated a phrase to interpret and juxtapose modern photographic images and text. In this task, students demonstrated maturity and imagination. In past years their work has been of a sufficiently good standard for the story to be 'told' in the local community.

222 In Years 10 to 11, standards are above those seen nationally. Students quickly extend their interests, understanding and range of skills and techniques. Mixed media and three-dimensional work flourish. Students plan their work well and use experimentation purposefully. Research is an effective tool, with students developing opinions and a secure knowledge about different artists' work. They responded well to questions about the direction of their work, and a good level of preparation has had a positive influence on

progress in learning. By the second half of the course, an unusually high degree of individuality and expression is displayed across the whole group. Those who are achieving the highest standards have developed work that has strong visual impact and an identifiable personal style.

- 223 The quality of teaching is good. It is consistent and includes examples of very good practice. Enthusiasm, energy and humour underpin excellent relationships with students. These qualities establish very positive attitudes to learning and sustained enjoyment of the subject. Teaching provides a challenging and supportive atmosphere for learning across different ages and groups, and is self-critical. Lessons are carefully prepared, and learning objectives include practical activities that are also mentally demanding. Introductions are well planned and ensure that students settle promptly and understand what they will be doing. Demonstration and explanation are balanced; good use is made of visual materials; and the time allocations within each lesson are clear. The well-thought-out start sets up the opportunity for learning, and resources are appropriately organised so that the teacher is then able to focus and guide the response developed by individuals and groups. For example, in one lesson observed, work completed by a previous group was analysed and small details of methods and good decisions were highlighted rapidly, so that awareness was raised without wearing attention too thin. Subject knowledge is very good and is matched by high expectations, a deep and caring commitment to the subject and to ensuring that all students participate fully and gain success. Students across all years achieve equally, well whatever their backgrounds, including those with special educational needs.
- 224 Students respond well in art. They come relaxed and ready to co-operate, complying willingly with classroom procedures and accepting responsibility for looking after the environment and resources. Good levels of concentration and sensible behaviour are the norm. Spells of total absorption, curiosity and determination lead to good progress in lessons. Students develop the ability to use time well, to work together constructively and to take pride in their achievements.
- 225 Art is well managed. The subject leader has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses and deals efficiently with day-to-day detail as well as the long-term view. There is very good leadership of the direction of the subject. Its contribution to the whole curriculum and the personal development of students are strengths. Effort and experience are applied to developmental and co-ordination tasks. Documentation is of good quality, providing a comprehensive overview of planning and subject policies. The curriculum meets the needs of a wide range of students and aims to develop them as art students, members of the college and the local community. The provision of art in Years 7 to 9 is varied. It includes links to other subjects and themes, as well as developing literacy skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are key features of well-planned schemes of work which include citizenship and community projects. This creates a strong foundation for the GCSE programme. There are further opportunities in after-college activities, including a GCSE course in photography.
- 226 The department has made steady progress since the previous inspection. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 has improved through a clear focus on National Curriculum levels and new recording systems, although there still needs to be better feedback to help students know what they need to do to improve. Older students' self-evaluation skills should be developed more strongly. The use of ICT as a creative input to learning is a departmental priority, but remains underdeveloped at present.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and assessment in textile technology in Years 10 and 11.
- Attitudes and behaviour of students.
- GCSE results in textile technology.
- Support given to students with special educational needs.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work require more detail, with emphasis on activities and outcomes.
- Units of work in Years 7 to 9 need to cater for all levels of prior attainment.
- Schemes of work need matching to National Curriculum programmes of study.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT, with currently no aspects of computer-aided design or manufacturing (CAD/CAM).
- Students' assessment data for the subject should be recorded centrally.

227 In recent years, the great majority of students have reached the nationally expect standard in Year 9 teacher assessments. However, from a scrutiny of students' work during the inspection these assessments appear too high. In GCSE examinations at age 16, passes at A*-C grades have risen over three years by 17 per cent. Although this represents positive progress, results taken overall are still below the national average. In 2002, textiles results were well above national levels, but those for food technology and resistant materials were well below. Few students achieve the highest grades. When compared with other subjects taken by students, results are positive, with boys achieving higher than girls. Almost all who were entered for GCSE courses passed at grades A* to G.

228 In Years 7 to 9, standards for current students are below average when taken across the different elements of design and technology overall. Students start from a low base, with little prior experience of designing and making, and make steady progress. They develop a range of basic skills and techniques in electronics, food, pneumatics, resistant materials, structures, textiles and ICT. Students cover an adequate range of materials and techniques, but because many of the tasks are undemanding, skills of designing and making are of a low level. For example, in a Year 8 electronics lesson, students built circuits in series and parallel in order to gain an understanding of how electric current flows. They assembled components sensibly and found simple faults, but when they applied this knowledge to the design of an electronic quiz game it was at a low level. In a Year 9 food technology lesson, students made biscuit butter muffins. They selected equipment independently. However, practical work was of a lower level than expected at this age and little theory work was undertaken. Because a large number do not bring ingredients for food technology lessons they lack experience of practical work. In contrast, in a Year 7 resistant materials lesson, students designed and made a money box from pine. They glued and fabricated their boxes, cut out shapes using appropriate tools and took a pride in the quality of finish. Here good standards were promoted.

229 The contribution of the subject to literacy standards is weak, but students do encounter some important technical vocabulary. Students with special educational needs are supported well in lessons. There are no discernable differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Students are not given the opportunity to use sufficiently high level designing and making skills. A wider range of design skills needs to be taught and used consistently in all aspects of the subject.

- 230 In Years 10 and 11 standards are average, overall. Above-average standards are achieved in textiles technology. Students select from food, resistant materials or textiles for examination studies, and continue to develop designing and making skills. They use the skills developed earlier in the course to apply to their final projects in Year 11, and work confidently and independently. They are prepared well for their examination and given much individual guidance. Students act well on the good quality advice regarding how to improve the work contained in their design folios. They adapt commercial patterns carefully and take a pride in their practical work, demonstrating accurate skills in cutting out and joining fabrics to achieve good results.
- 231 In resistant materials, students use only a limited range of materials, such as pine and MDF (medium density fibreboard) to make a product of their choice. They develop and use more advanced methods for joining materials, including dovetail joints, and most practical work is made with average attention to detail. Students use a narrow range of power tools and machines with average levels of skill, but sometimes need reminding about health and safety requirements. They have little understanding, and no practical experience, of modern CAD-CAM techniques. In food technology, standards are well below average. Students use an appropriate range of ingredients to produce main courses as part of their set meal menus. They mix ingredients and cook simple meals. However, their knowledge and understanding of food processes, diet and manufacturing technologies are well below average because teaching is not sufficiently matched to the examination course requirements. Students with special educational needs and those from different backgrounds make steady progress overall, with some demonstrating good achievement.
- 232 The quality of teaching and learning is variable across different aspects of the subject. Lessons range from very good in textiles to poor in food technology. Where teaching and learning is good or very good, lessons have clear introductions from which students fully understand what is required of them. Lessons are broken down into manageable practical tasks interspersed with good demonstrations. These enable students to see clearly how tools and equipment are used safely so that they can put this into practice for themselves. These lessons end well. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, planning is inadequate. On occasions it lacks effective strategies to deal with the disruptive behaviour of a minority of boys. In food technology lessons, students who do not bring in ingredients are not included fully in meaningful work. In other cases, designing and making tasks are constrained, undemanding and lacking interest for students. In resistant materials, textiles and some food technology groups, students are given good, sometimes excellent, feedback on their design folios and this helps to raise standards.
- 233 Behaviour is good in the majority of lessons seen. In these lessons, students listen well, concentrate on their work and persevere with tasks. Relationships in lessons are mostly good. Students with special educational needs are supported well and most respond positively. A relatively small minority of students slow down the pace of learning and behave poorly in food technology lessons.
- 234 Administration of day-to-day routines is satisfactory, but a clearer direction is needed for the development of the subject. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. A subject improvement plan has identified several issues but these have not been resolved and the short-term action plan is superficial. In resistant materials, the range of designing and making experiences is narrow. There is little use of data to aid target setting. Higher ability students need access to the higher examination tier in order to realise their full potential. There is insufficient monitoring of learning to identify under-achievement, or strategies in GCSE courses to the raise potential C grades into B's and D's into C's. The high quality

assessment in one area needs to be spread across the subject. There is good support from the technician in food technology.

- 235 Since the previous inspection, standards have remained below average in Years 7 to 9. The quality of design folios has improved in Years 10 and 11, and a greater depth of research is evident. Good examination guidance is given in textiles and resistant materials, and IEPs are used more effectively. Schemes of work still lack detail.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths.

- Students have a very good grasp of geographical skills.
- Progress made by low-attaining students is good.
- Varied teaching styles enable students of all abilities to learn well.
- Students take a pride in the presentation of their work.
- The subject is well led and this gives clear purpose and direction.

Areas for improvement.

- Target setting and assessment, so that students know what they have to do to improve.

- 236 In 2002, standards achieved in teacher assessment at age 14 were at the national average. At age 16, GCSE examination results were also in line with the national average and above the average for the college, as they have been for a number of years. Girls performed better than boys at GCSE and the results reflect the national picture

- 237 In Years 7 to 9, students make good progress in lessons and attain standards comparable to those normally seen. Less-able students make very good progress. Students' use of geographical skills is good. They handle geographical data confidently and are given many opportunities to practise skills associated with thinking and listening. These skills benefit all students but, in particular, encourage the less able and also allow gifted students to extend their learning. In Year 9, most students predict a sequence of events from visual clues when studying the Auvergne and, in a lesson on Japan, students could describe and explain to each other the content and context of landscapes from photographs. In Year 8, students were observed using the Internet with confidence to find appropriate information when comparing two different areas of Japan.

- 238 At age 16, progress in learning is good, and this is maintained by very good teaching styles. In Year 11, students communicate well with each other and discuss relevant facts and sequences of events. They clearly understand the unreliability of the climate in West Africa and the consequences this has on the people and environment. In Year 10, students devise hypotheses to explain the changing employment structure of the United Kingdom. Lessons such as these lead to very good levels of learning whilst consolidating geographical skills. Coursework is of high quality, with most students showing good use of ICT. High-attaining students use their writing skills well to explain ideas and argue points of view convincingly and at length. Overall, students reach average standards across Years 10 and 11.

- 239 Teaching is very good or good in almost all lessons. Specialist teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and have a depth of knowledge and expertise which is passed on well. They establish very positive and purposeful relationships with their students. Non-specialists are supported well. Oral work is a strength, helped by the good use of questioning techniques

used to elicit from students what they already know. In particular, teachers are patient in encouraging participation by more reticent members of classes. This gives the less able confidence in themselves and their ability to succeed. Lessons are planned and managed well, with an effective variety of teaching and learning styles. All lessons have a clear structure, students are informed of the aims and focus of the lesson. Often, the lessons with most impact on learning are those that are very simple in structure and require the minimum of resources. The pace of learning is good, and lessons have a variety of activities, including periods of time for individual work, thinking and reflection. Good use is made of resources, including the well-stocked library. Students with special educational needs are managed well and they work with confidence. Teaching assistants liaise thoroughly with teachers and provide effective support. Work is always marked, often with helpful comments. Progress is monitored by regular assessments, although students are not informed of their National Curriculum levels, except at the end of Year 9. Assessment procedures need to be developed further to include individual targets to motivate students and inform them of their progress.

- 240 Students are punctual, settle down quickly to learning and are interested in their work. They are responsible, well motivated and respond well to their teachers. In class, students are courteous, helpful and show respect for each other. They work hard and co-operate with each other. Levels of concentration are good in all years. They are capable listeners and are keen to do well.
- 241 There is very good leadership which gives a clear purpose and direction to the department. Management is satisfactory. Subject development is effective, but the recording of planning intentions is insufficiently structured. The curriculum has good range and balance and is under continuous development, with schemes of work regularly updated. Teachers work well together and are supportive of each other. Coursework is appropriate and well organised. Plans are in hand to expand fieldwork to include short courses at a centre in Derbyshire and to develop a photographic archive of Cambridge. These will give added opportunities for the most committed students. Assessment procedures are effective but need to be further developed to accurately track the progress of individual students. Departmental resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory. In-service training is well targeted.
- 242 Since the previous inspection, the use of ICT has improved and is rapidly becoming an integral part of the curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is better, but individual target setting, and monitoring students' progress against National Curriculum levels of attainment requires further development in Years 7 to 9.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Committed teachers who produce good learning materials and tasks.
- Good day-to-day marking and oral feedback provided for students.
- Consistency in dealing with some students' challenging behaviour.
- Good support for the development of basic skills, such as subject vocabulary, library research and essay writing.

Areas for improvement

- Planning schemes of work to include the development of skills, such as the use of sources, historical interpretation and enquiry.
- Assessment to inform students more fully of their progress and to enable teachers to modify curricular planning.

• Elements of leadership and management.

- 243 Over the past three years standards achieved by the end of Year 9, according to teacher assessments, have been rising to a level close to the national average. From a scrutiny of students' work during the inspection these assessments appear too high. GCSE history is chosen by a relatively small number of students so it is difficult to draw conclusions from comparisons with national standards. The college's results in 2002 were well below national figures for those achieving the higher A* to C grades, and below national standards for those gaining grades A* to G. Girls achieve at a higher level than boys.
- 244 In Years 7 to 9, the work of current students is well below national standards. Most students, including those with special educational needs, are making steady progress from their level of entry. Students describe people and events, such as in a Year 7 lesson on the Black Death, using pictures and text to help them. They also develop their understanding of historical events and how these can be seen from a number of different points of view. In a Year 8 lesson, they could explain why some people might not have wanted the death of Charles 1. However, there is less progress in the development of their skills of independent enquiry or the critical use of the sources provided.
- 245 In the lessons seen, there was a difference between standards in Year 10 and Year 11, with Year 10 below the national standard and Year 11 well below. Students are making good progress in Year 10 and steady progress in Year 11. Students are gaining sound knowledge and understanding of the units of work they study, as in Year 11 revision lessons where they recall and describe the impact of World War 1 on the role of women in society. In Year 10 lessons, they are also gaining skills needed to be successful in examinations but more rapidly than in Year 11, as when writing about issues associated with the invasion of the Ruhr. Further development is needed in their level of analysis and interpretation. Students also need to be more critical of the source material they are given in order to improve their standards of attainment.
- 246 Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory in history. Teachers have a sound command of the subject which enables them to give clear explanations. They conduct effective question-and-answer sessions, helping students to gain knowledge and understanding of the topic being studied. In a Year 8 lesson on James 1 and the Divine Right of Kings, the teacher provided a range of sources and set activities so that students could respond to questions set. A whole-class session was used to check students' understanding and progress. The teacher persevered throughout the lesson, keeping students focused on the task, and responded to questions from the students and their need to have their work checked frequently. Homework was set to consolidate the work done in the lesson. The teacher encouraged students by using credits well to reinforce good behaviour and attitudes. Where teaching was less effective, as in a Year 9 lesson on slavery, the structure of the lesson led to students taking a long time to settle to work. The purpose and expectations for the lesson were not made clear to the students, although expectations about behaviour were reinforced well. Time was set for the tasks but this was not imposed, so that there was no sense of urgency to get the work completed or corrected. However, good relationships were maintained throughout the lesson. Nearly all lessons are well planned, but the schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that all skills and content are progressed across years. There is good day-to-day marking and feedback to students through correcting their work and encouraging them to do their best.
- 247 Many students indicate that they enjoy history and they show an interest in their work. They volunteer answers to questions and are willing to read to the rest of the class. Most are willing to ask for help from the teacher when needed and many students help each other.

They often show a lack of confidence and need to check out their work frequently before going on to the next task. Although many are well behaved and co-operative, a small proportion present challenging behaviour which is immature and requires a great deal of time and attention from the teacher.

- 248 The National Curriculum is covered well for most students. Units of work are appropriate, but the scheme of work does not ensure that there is sufficient development of historical skills across Years 7 to 9. There is some assessment against National Curriculum levels, but this is not fully developed so that it does not help students to know what they need to do to improve. In Years 10 and 11, those following the examination course are assessed against GCSE grades, but they are not sufficiently familiar with the criteria for grades to enable them to move to the next level. Insufficient use is made of assessment information, and the students are not monitored to ensure that they are reaching their optimum standard. Assessment is an area for further development.
- 249 The subject leader for history is a newly-qualified teacher, so elements of subject leadership and management normally expected are not being undertaken. Although there is some leadership, monitoring and evaluation from the head of humanities, further support for subject leadership is required. Priorities for development are needed which will build on work already done in order to give a clearer direction to the planning and development of history. Until recently, little ICT has been used to support history teaching. There is good team work, and aspects of the course, such as coursework and resources, are well organised. Overall, subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory at present.
- 250 Since the previous inspection, staffing in the department has changed but the situation remains similar to that described in the last report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Resource provision in the new ICT suites.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour in ICT lessons.
- Technical and learning support provided in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Co-ordination of ICT across subjects.
- Mapping ICT used in subjects against the National Curriculum programmes of study.
- Raising teachers' understanding of the ICT programmes of study.
- Earlier teaching of ICT basic skills in Years 7 to 9.
- Schemes of work need to show learning progression and expected learning outcomes.
- Assessing and recording students' ICT capability in subjects.
- An Internet safety policy.

- 251 The Year 9 teacher assessments for 2002 show that over three-quarters of students achieved the standard expected nationally, but no higher levels were achieved. From observations of work currently produced by these students in Year 10, these assessments appear to be too high. There are no separate ICT examination courses at age 16.
- 252 Due to a modernisation programme, the two new computer suites had been in use for only three weeks prior to the inspection. The server was still not in full use, which was making the saving of students' work a problem.

- 253 Across Years 7 to 9, the standards of current work are well below those normally seen. There is no separate teaching of basic skills in Years 7 and 8. In the ICT lessons provided for Year 9, students develop word processing skills by writing a business letter to a bank manager. This includes a business card, using images successfully imported from the Internet, and many combine text and colour effectively. Students use a basic template to help with their letters but do not extend their presentational skills. They also use the PowerPoint program to prepare a presentation on a topic of their choice. Too much time is spent on the Internet searching for suitable images. Only basic use is made of the software. The tasks are often too open-ended and students need support material to help them structure their work.
- 254 In other subjects, ICT is also used to support learning. For example, in Year 9 geography, effective use was made of ICT when students found information on Japan and compared two regions. They used a suitable task guide containing useful websites to start their searches, hence saving much time. In this subject, students are taught basic skills and are supported well. Students with SEN are fully included and boys and girls achieve equally well. In a Year 7 French lesson, students used ICT to improve their understanding of the language. They used the Internet to revise and consolidate their vocabulary, successfully using keyboard number keys to generate accents. Literacy skills are developed appropriately through word-searches in French and English and through on-line, interactive learning. English teachers also develop word processing, desktop publishing and researching skills soundly. SuccessMaker is used effectively in Years 7 and 8 to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Although good use is made of ICT as a learning tool when using this program, it does not develop skills sufficiently.
- 255 In Years 10 and 11, standards are well below average. Students experience only nine, separate half-hour skills lessons in Year 10 and no separate lessons in Year 11. Only a minority of subjects are using ICT to enhance learning. In Year 10 skills lessons, students gain an understanding of the use of a spreadsheet. They input data into cells, copy formulae to work out calculations and create graphs. They use a cake recipe to model a variety of calculations. However, progress is limited within the short sessions and their knowledge and understanding are poor for their age. In business studies, good use is made of ICT to enhance and present students' work. They word-process their hand-drafted work effectively. Many have good keyboard skills. They navigate through software confidently and use the tools well. Documents are produced to a high standard with a specific audience being addressed. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. In English, students use basic ICT skills to display work and they word-process coursework. However, the use of ICT is not being developed sufficiently across all subjects, and students' ICT skills remain at a low level.
- 256 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and varies from good to poor. Where teaching is good, teachers plan lessons well, have good subject knowledge and know how to use ICT to enhance learning. Good task-guidance sheets help students of all abilities select web sites, which prevents too much time being spent on the Internet. Lessons are broken down into short tasks which keep students engaged and maintain their interest. Where teaching and learning are poor, students are given too much freedom to spend unlimited time on the Internet. Task sheets are not provided and students have no clear direction. The ICT suites are new and lack whiteboards and data projectors. These deficiencies currently make whole-class teaching difficult. The PowerPoint program is beginning to be used effectively for teaching where teachers have access to a laptop computer and projector.
- 257 Students are well motivated. Their behaviour in lessons is good or very good, in all lessons seen. They work well when given clear direction and could achieve far higher standards if given the opportunity to develop their full potential. Relationships in lessons are good.

Students with special educational needs, those from different backgrounds and girls and boys achieve equally. Students use the library computers at lunchtimes and after college, and some attend the after-college computer club.

- 258 Management and co-ordination of the subject are poor. Although the co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time, and there have been delays in installing new equipment, there has been little progress with improving written documentation. An action plan is now being implemented. However, although staff have undergone training they have not been prepared adequately for using the new facilities. Many staff are not aware of the National Curriculum programmes of study and level descriptors for ICT. On the timetable, there are still un-booked places in the suites. Provision will be further improved shortly when another suite is opened. There is currently no mapping of the programmes of study: this is urgently needed. A central data base is required for recording and reporting students' ICT capability. The subject is supported well by a network manager and enthusiastic technician. The co-ordinator has a pivotal role to play in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects and implementing the 'Informing Vision Plan'.
- 259 Since the previous inspection there has been unsatisfactory progress in raising standards. However, there has been a high level of investment in ICT facilities recently. Resources are now at an adequate level and of good quality. As at the previous inspection, lack of sufficient teaching of ICT skills results in students' low levels of capability. The use of SuccessMaker has been a positive innovation in improving standards of literacy and numeracy.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Management of challenging and potentially disruptive students.
- Emergence of examples of extended composition with higher-attaining students.
- Leadership of the subject, which achieves stability and cohesion.
- Improved status of the subject and motivation of students.

Areas for improvement

- Raising standards achieved by all students, especially boys.
- Broadening of the teaching repertoire to encourage active, intensive practice and independent skills.

- 260 In 2002, teacher assessments show that by the end of Year 9, the proportion of students reaching expected standards was well below average. The proportion of students gaining grades A* to C at GCSE over the last three years has been well below the national average, with a downward trend. Boys' performance has been particularly weak. Last year, a strong cluster of passes at grade D, and fewer lower grades, suggest that action taken to improve GCSE results is beginning to have an impact.
- 261 In Year 9, the majority of students reach standards that are well below the national expectation. In lessons, students in upper sets show the capacity to reach average standards. For example, in Year 7 they write paragraphs about themselves and their college. In Year 8, they form the past tense, and by Year 9 they write longer compositions, understand longer printed and recorded texts and sustain conversations which contain longer and more complicated sentences. However, most students operate at very basic levels which are well below what is usually seen in this age group. Their understanding, speaking and writing

involve single words or phrases, with limited fluency, accuracy and confidence. They build up knowledge of individual words and grammar, but have not developed the skill of applying this knowledge and combining phrases in order to give multiple answers or write longer compositions.

- 262 In Years 10 and 11, the proportion of students working at levels which match GCSE grades A* to C is significantly below the national average, but it is higher than for recent years. The use of written course work is encouraging improved written outcomes. Given clear criteria and an opportunity to redraft, the majority of students in upper groups are producing confident and detailed written work which meets course requirements. Many borderline students, with training and support, and with language fresh in their memory, meet Foundation GCSE course requirements in lessons, but have difficulty transporting this knowledge unaided into tests and examinations. They, and all lower-attaining students, produce very short bursts of written and spoken language, and their understanding is limited to short and uncomplicated texts.
- 263 Teaching is satisfactory in a demanding climate, and leads overall to learning which matches individual students' capability. Students with special educational needs make sound progress, except when unsatisfactory behaviour impedes their learning. Bilingual students generally make sound progress and, for some, progress is good. When they begin language studies late, for example because of recent arrival in England, their progress is slow because of gaps in their knowledge. A significant minority of boys make less progress in their learning than they could, but this is often because of their own negative attitudes or behaviour. A particular strength of teaching is very good behaviour management which usually ensures a stable and productive learning environment. Teachers have a calm, brisk, and assertive style that engages attention and respect. Lessons start and finish in an orderly and organised way. Routines for the start and end of lessons, pair-work, note-taking and answering questions are well established, so that the work progresses efficiently. All teachers of French and Spanish have good subject expertise which gives them authority and confidence, and allows them to offer students a good level of challenge. Computers are used creatively, with a clear, positive effect on students' motivation and achievement. For example, a Year 9 group completed a word-processing task quickly, quietly and accurately, before enhancing their work with material drawn from a French Internet site.
- 264 The weaknesses in otherwise effective lessons stem from the need to maintain a controlled and reassuring environment. These sometimes reduce the level of challenge and the pace of activity because too long is spent on basic tasks, resulting in students losing their concentration and focus on work. Also, too much of a lesson is oral activity conducted by the teacher from the front. This puts a heavy strain on students' concentration and limits the amount of active participation for individual students. Many otherwise satisfactory lessons do not offer enough intensive and independent practice of essential words and phrases, and give too few opportunities for students to apply and re-use freshly learned language. A notable exception to this was a very good Year 11 French lesson, where students moved from activity to activity, practising different aspects of GCSE oral work, demonstrating a good level of fluency, confidence, self-organisation and maturity.
- 265 The response of most students in their lessons is at least satisfactory, and often good. The large majority of students behave well. There are many examples of enthusiastic participation in games and speaking activities. Most students complete their work to the limit of their ability. In many classes, a small number of students systematically interrupt the teacher and are noisy. This detracts from positive teaching and learning and is particularly evident in Years 8 and 11.

- 266 The leadership and management of the subject are good. A dynamic and resourceful head of department has built a cohesive and effective team with many shared practices and values, which has stabilised a previously fragile situation. New schemes of work have provided a coherent programme of study. There is a thorough system of assessment securely linked to National Curriculum levels.
- 267 Since the previous inspection, the rate of improvement has been satisfactory. The subject is now fully staffed with qualified teachers. Curricular provision for Spanish has been appropriately rationalised. Formal procedures for the small number of students who do not study a language are not properly followed. New text books have greatly improved teaching and learning, but a wider variety of materials is still needed, especially for students with special educational needs. Analysis of results, and use of the results to guide students towards improved attainment, are not yet fully developed. Students' attitudes have improved.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is poor.

Strengths

- Commitment of college management to offer music at GCSE level.

Areas for improvement

- Improving planning for progression in performing, composing and appraising.
- Improving assessment and reporting procedures.
- Developing resources to enable students to experience ICT applications in music.

- 268 During the inspection there was no music teaching to observe: due to exceptional circumstances the music teacher left two weeks before Christmas. The college is working hard to provide meaningful cover for music lessons until it is able to appoint a new, permanent music teacher. The leadership team has sought help and advice from other schools and the LEA's music service. They have arranged for an instrumental teacher to cover the GCSE music teaching. An overseas-trained teacher, who has specialised in music, is to cover some of the lessons for students in Years 7 to 9.
- 269 Because of these staffing difficulties, during the inspection the college was unable to provide for music teaching which met the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Students were not observed playing instruments, composing or listening to music during the inspection. A number of students were interviewed about their music experiences in recent terms.
- 270 In 2002, teacher assessments of students' attainment recorded at the end of Year 9 were below average. The most recent GCSE results in music were in 2001. Results were below the national average, based on a small number of entries. Nine students were entered in 2001 and none in 2002.
- 271 Because there are no audio or video recordings of students' previous practical work, it was not possible to make a judgement on standards of performing, appraising or listening skills of current students due to a lack of evidence.
- 272 There are no GCSE music students in the current Year 11. However, the leadership team is committed to raising the profile of music as a GCSE subject. In Year 10, they have supported the timetabling of the GCSE option for the four students who have opted for the subject.

- 273 There is no scheme of work. There is only a very brief list of topics that will be covered, such as major and minor scales in Year 7 and the music of Java and Bali. The list gives no information about how the skills of performing, composing, listening and appraising are going to be developed. The nine students from Years 7 to 9 who were interviewed appeared to have done little composition, but they had all done a small amount of keyboard work. They had completed worksheets that enable them to recognise instruments and had watched the musical Grease, although this was not one of the topics listed to be taught.
- 274 A small number of students (less than 5 per cent) receive instrumental lessons in a limited range of instruments. The instrumental teachers are involved in extra curricular work such as a drum ensemble. The college's commitment to talented musicians and those who wish to start learning an instrument is seen in the financial support it provides for students who would be unable to afford the cost of lessons.
- 275 Reports for music are brief and do not sufficiently comment on individual progress. They include space for a comment from instrumental teachers where appropriate.
- 276 Accommodation for music is good. There is a purpose-built music room and sufficient practice rooms. However, at the time of the inspection the music room was being used for drama lessons as an interim arrangement while the new drama accommodation is being built. Provision of instrumental resources is satisfactory and includes a set of community steel pans, a drum kit and electric guitars, but the level of ICT is unsatisfactory. There is only one computer for the subject.
- 277 Progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. In the previous report the majority of students in Year 9 were reaching average standards. The quality of teaching was good across all years. As now, ICT was not used sufficiently in music lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Well-planned lessons, with a range of appropriately challenging activities that allow students to achieve success.
- Teachers' positive relationships with students.
- A supportive, encouraging learning environment.
- Specialist teachers committed to the development of physical education

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards across the range of activities in core physical education lessons by improving techniques.
- Increase the percentage of students gaining A* to C grades in GCSE physical education.
- Complete the writing of schemes of work.
- Assess and monitor students' attainment and progress using National Curriculum criteria.
- Use assessment to plan curricular experiences that will improve standards.

- 278 In 2002, the results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below average, particularly for girls. Results have fallen over the last three years, reflecting the general attainment of each cohort. In the GCSE examination in 2002, results were well below the national average. There has been a significant decline in attainment since 2000 when the percentage of students gaining grades A* to C was above the national average. All students

entered have gained a grade A* to G. The ratio of boys to girls taking the subject reflects the national picture.

- 279 Standards in Year 9 are below average. The standard of boys exceeds that of girls in games. In hockey, the higher attaining boys combine dribbling, passing, receiving and shooting skills to keep possession and build successful attacking moves in small-sided games. In netball, Year 8 girls find it difficult to get free by moving into position away from defenders to receive a pass. This results in the breakdown of the game. Students' progress in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. They know and apply the rules and conventions of a range of sports. For example, in Year 9, students use the badminton scoring system correctly for their doubles games. Students with special educational needs are given a good level of support. They are well integrated by the teachers to ensure they make steady progress.
- 280 In Year 11, standards are below average, overall. A relatively small proportion of students in the examination group attain average standards. The quality of students' practical work varies from good to poor. The most competent Year 10 rugby players pass and receive the ball consistently while moving at speed, accurately judging the weight and flight of the ball. The least competent have a very limited tactical understanding of the game. Students who opt for the GCSE course in PE have more time than others and they gain a better knowledge and understanding of physical education and different sports activities. In particular, they take on different roles such as officiating and coaching. Good teaching of the theoretical component of the course means that students make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 281 Overall, the quality of teaching in the lessons taken by all students is satisfactory and students' learning is sound. Teaching of the GCSE option course is good. The most effective teaching arises from the supportive learning environment created, where the teachers encourage individual students' endeavour. They carefully select teaching approaches that motivate students and enable them to gain success. These include good demonstrations by the teachers that provide a model for the students to copy, and provision of a range of stimulating activities that capture the interest of students and encourages them to learn. For example, in one GCSE theory lesson, the students had to use a toy doll to demonstrate sporting actions. Using written instructions that described the range of movement at a joint, they practically demonstrated sporting actions, such as throwing the hammer and hurdling. In the small proportion of weaker lessons, the teachers' expectations were not sufficiently demanding and, as a result, the students underachieved. For example, in a Year 8 trampolining lesson, students performed a range of basic jumps, such as straddle, tuck and star, but the teaching did not give sufficient emphasis to the quality of body shape.
- 282 Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' attainment and progress are insufficiently developed. Criteria for assessment have not been established for the four strands of the National Curriculum. The marking of GSCE theory does not always aid students' learning sufficiently. Students would benefit from knowing their level of attainment. In written work, they need clear guidance from teachers to enable them to improve.
- 283 Teachers with specialist coaching qualifications support the physical education department in providing a range of extra-curricular activities. Coaching in sessions observed was very effective and the students who attended benefited by achieving higher standards of performance.
- 284 The great majority of students are keen to learn and they enjoy their lessons. They are motivated by the teachers' encouraging and positive approach. A minority of girls do not participate regularly and this prevents them achieving a satisfactory standard.

285 Overall, the leadership and management are unsatisfactory. However, administration of day-to-day routines is satisfactory. The subject leader has recently been appointed on a temporary basis and is new to the role. However, she enjoys good staff support, and the team is keen to improve standards. Currently, there is insufficient planning, monitoring of teaching and assessing the standards and progress of students. The lack of a detailed scheme of work seriously impedes teaching. The subject improvement plan does not identify the key issues needed to raise standards.

286 Since the previous inspection, standards have declined. However, the facilities and accommodation for physical education have been improved. The refurbishment of the changing rooms provides a more appealing environment that encourages students' participation and learning. The resurfacing of the netball courts and new storage spaces ensure acceptable provision.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (Religious Education)

Overall, the quality of provision in religious studies is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- Appropriately broad curricular provision in Years 7 to 9.
- Teacher enthusiasm for the subject.
- Good opportunities are provided for students' moral development.

Areas for improvement

- Behaviour management in lessons.
- Increasing the variety of teaching and learning to make lessons more interesting.
- Matching resources more closely to students' learning needs.
- Planning lessons more carefully to focus on improving literacy and evaluation skills.
- Writing a scheme of work for the GCSE course adopted.
- Informing students what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.
- Using ICT to support teaching and learning.

287 In Year 9, standards are below the expectations of the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus. Students have basic knowledge of some of the features of the religions they are studying, such as Christianity and Judaism, but have little understanding of the beliefs on which they are based. In their work on the Bible, students in Year 7 know that it is divided into two testaments, each containing many types of writing. However, they demonstrate very little awareness of why the Bible is important to Christians or how they may use it in life and worship. In their work on 'Faith in Action', students in Year 9 find it difficult to make the link between Mother Teresa's actions and her Christian beliefs. In discussion, students state an opinion in answer to questions such as 'Should we help the poor?' but show little recognition of how a person's faith might influence their response to such a question.

288 Students find it difficult to grasp some of the important terms associated with belief. This was seen in a lesson on Judaism when students in Year 8 struggled in their understanding of the idea of 'Covenant'. Across Years 7 to 9, students make slow progress, particularly in gaining understanding of the key beliefs and principles of the faiths that they are studying. The progress of students with special educational needs is slower than would normally be expected because the work is not sufficiently adapted to meet their needs. Gifted students do not make as much progress as they could. This is because they are not developing sufficient understanding of the important beliefs and concepts on which religions such as Christianity are based.

- 289 In Year 10, students work at levels that are well below those expected for their age. Students follow a recently introduced short GCSE course. This year group will be the first to be entered for the examination. They are making slow progress in their knowledge and understanding of the topics included in the course. In their work on 'Making Moral Decisions', students show that they are aware of the different ways that factors such as family, friends and the media can influence the way we make decisions. They recognise that within the class individuals will view moral issues, such as the use of violence, in different ways but find it difficult to understand the ways in which a person's faith may influence their view of what is right and wrong. Students' understanding of important terms, such as 'Relative Morality and Absolute Morality', is weak and well below that usually seen at this stage of the GCSE course. In their discussions and writing, students' work lacks the detail, explanation and evaluative comment expected at this age. For example, in their work on 'The Moral Ocean', students struggle to give valid reasons why Christians might turn to the Bible, the Church or the Pope to give them moral guidance. Students with special educational needs make slow progress because the work is not adapted to meet their learning needs. Gifted students are not achieving the high standards they are capable of because their work shows that they have not begun to develop the higher level skill of evaluation.
- 290 Teaching is unsatisfactory, overall, and this leads to ineffective learning. Although the teaching was satisfactory in a large minority of lessons observed, in the remainder the weaknesses outweighed the strengths. Teaching is based on sound subject knowledge and great enthusiasm for the subject, but there are weaknesses in lesson planning, behaviour management and assessment. Students rarely fully understand what they are expected to do in lessons because teaching focuses on activities to be undertaken rather than outcomes expected of students. Lesson activities lack variety and do not engage students sufficiently in their learning. In most lessons, too much time is spent on teacher-led explanation. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson on 'Making Moral Decisions' where, as a result of an over-long teacher exposition, students became restless and inattentive, completing very little work.
- 291 Students do not learn as well as they could because the tasks they are set are unexciting. They consist mainly of answering comprehension questions from photocopied sheets. There are too few opportunities for structured discussion, group work and independent research. Writing activities are not sufficiently well planned to meet the learning needs of the different ability groups in classes. This slows down learning because there is insufficient attention given to extending the higher-attaining students or meeting the needs of those with learning difficulties. Insufficient attention is given to supporting students with poor literacy skills. In a Year 9 lesson on Mother Teresa, many students could not complete the task because they found difficulty in reading the text and questions. In Year 10 lessons, students are achieving low standards because they are not given help in developing writing skills, such as discussion and evaluation, that they will need to be successful in the examination.
- 292 Although the teacher is enthusiastic, and generally gets on well with students, management of their behaviour is weak. Across all years, only the keenest students maintain concentration throughout the lessons. Many others quickly become inattentive. Lessons such as one in Year 8 on Judaism, often continue against a background of chatter whilst the teacher is talking, which is not quelled firmly enough. Such behaviour slows the pace of learning down to a standstill so that very little progress is made during the lesson. Assessment through end-of-unit progress tests is not sufficiently rigorous and is not used enough to focus planning for lessons. Marking of students' work usually gives encouragement but, across all years, there are too few comments about how standards can be improved.

- 293 Students display unsatisfactory attitudes to learning in religious studies. They show little interest in the topics covered and, in most lessons, pay insufficient attention to the teacher or the task in hand. Written work is often scruffy and unfinished. In most lessons, only a few students are willing to contribute to class discussions, which often take place against a background of disruptive chatter and behaviour.
- 294 The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is broad and meets the requirements of the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus. Schemes of work need to be written for the new GCSE course in Year 10 to ensure that teaching meets the requirements of the examination syllabus. Through opportunities to consider topics such as ' Making Moral Decisions', religious studies makes a useful contribution to students' moral development. Across all years, there are too few opportunities for students to reflect on their personal responses to 'Questions of Meaning and Value', and valuable opportunities for spiritual development are missed.
- 295 Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the subject, but planning and strategies for implementing developments are poor. Resources are unsatisfactory. There are not enough textbooks, videos, artefacts and other materials to support students in lessons, with the result that most learning is based on using unexciting photocopied materials. Much work is needed to develop students' literacy skills to enable them to learn more effectively. Very little use is made of ICT to enhance students' learning.
- 296 Since the previous inspection, there has been insufficient progress because many of the strengths noted then are no longer evident. There has been success in improving provision for older students, with the introduction of a short GCSE course.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- Good units of work are planned across the age range.
- The time allocation for citizenship is good in Years 10 and 11, with an additional lesson for PSHE and citizenship.
- Students have positive attitudes to this area of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Planning to ensure the full coverage of the programme for all students.
- Identifying how citizenship will support the aims, values and ethos of the college.
- Making students fully aware of the citizenship programme.
- Teaching citizenship consistently across the college.

- 297 Citizenship is part of the tutorial programme for students in Years 7 to 9. For older students in Years 10 and 11, there are additional PSHE and citizenship lessons. There are elements of citizenship identified in a number of subjects but these have not been co-ordinated into a planned programme across year groups.
- 298 Standards in Years 9 and 11 are below those in most schools. Students have developed skills so that when given the opportunity they can give and justify their opinions on difficult issues, as in a Year 8 science lesson when they discussed the moral issues related to cloning.

Students take part in group discussions in a satisfactory manner, such as in English and drama lessons. They respond well and take opportunities to contribute to the college and community, as they do when representing their tutor group on the college council, but these skills are not sufficiently developed for all students. Basic knowledge and understanding of aspects of citizenship are developed through the units of work in the tutorial programme, including units on local and national government in Year 9 and through the PSHE programme in Year 11, but opportunities are missed to apply these in subject lessons. Many have a poor understanding of political structures and world events.

- 299 Teaching in the tutorial period is just satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but it is inconsistent and dependent on the individual tutors. Teaching in the tutorial period and the PSHE and citizenship lessons is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their students well and ensure that all participate in lessons effectively, giving additional help and support to those who have special educational needs or when English is not their mother tongue. Individual lessons are well organised, but planning does not make the expected learning outcomes for the students sufficiently clear. As a result, students' overall understanding of citizenship is limited. In discussion, many Year 9 students were not aware of the citizenship aspect of their work and a few Year 11 students said that they felt that the unit they were following on 'volunteering' was not relevant to them and did not relate to citizenship provision. They recognised the college council as an opportunity to take responsibility but did not see either the importance of this or the contribution it could make to citizenship.
- 300 Students' attitudes are satisfactory and improve over time. In discussion, most indicated they felt the topics covered were important but they were unclear about the structure of the course or how the different elements that they cover fit together. In many lessons seen the behaviour was good, and overall it was satisfactory. Students engaged well in most of the topics covered. The programme provides opportunities leading to good personal development. Teaching and learning are well supported by good relationships, particularly between teachers and students.
- 301 The college has a timetable structure that could deliver citizenship effectively. However, the planning to ensure the programme of study is well covered is not yet in place. There are good units already planned, including political education, consumer rights and volunteering. Planning does not show how skills such as enquiry, participation and responsible action will be developed. There is also lack of clarity about the relationship between the tutorial periods and PSHE/citizenship lessons in Years 10 and 11. The expected outcomes and how they will be achieved also need clarification. In the tutorial programme, there is some good recording of students' general development and progress using the Progress File. No decision has been made yet on the way in which the college will assess, record and report citizenship as a subject.
- 302 The college has a structure for leading and managing this subject but, as yet, there is insufficient coherence or direction. There is no clear policy for citizenship or how the programme relates to the college's aims and values. There is no monitoring and evaluation of the citizenship programme to ensure quality and effective planning. Work which contributes to citizenship is clearly done in a range of subjects, for example, science and geography, but these are not yet included properly in the programme. Very little use is being made of ICT, visitors or visits. Overall, at this stage of development of the subject, leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

OTHER SUBJECTS STUDIED

- 303 Curricular breadth is extended by the study of subjects that are additional to the National Curriculum. These are not subject to full inspection, but a few lessons were observed and brief reports have been included below.

Business Studies

- 304 Business studies provides an optional subject for students in Years 10 and 11. They show an interest and enthusiasm in their studies. Examination results have fluctuated over the past two years; they were well below the national average in 2002 and below average in 2001. The work seen during the inspection showed achievement close to syllabus expectations. Students are making good progress and use and understand a range of technical vocabulary, such as cash flow forecast and fixed and variable costs. In the lesson they gave examples of each of these. They collect and use information from a number of sources and present this clearly and accurately. The students draw conclusions from their work, although often at a simple level. The amount of primary and independent research is limited.
- 305 Teaching is good, with clear planning to enable the students to meet the examination requirements. Lessons are well structured and this enables the students to work at a good pace. The teacher is enthusiastic, expecting and getting students to work hard and concentrate during the lessons. Students were monitored well during the lesson observed and were provided with a good level of individual, verbal feedback. There is little formally assessed work in students' folders. All lessons are held in the computer room and this, together with good technician support, leads to good use of ICT in lessons and enables the students to develop appropriate skills.

Vocational Studies

- 306 In Years 10 and 11, students who find GCSE examination courses challenging are offered an appropriate alternative curriculum. This enables them to retain basic subjects and also follow a vocational studies programme in place of certain optional subjects. Strong curricular provision includes the teaching of life skills at Coleridge, together with a link course at Cambridge Regional College in Year 10 and extended work experience in Year 11. The course also has well-planned visits to industries, businesses and local community facilities. Youth workers are engaged to support the programme. Almost all students involved have special educational needs for learning or behaviour difficulties. Some take GCSE examinations in subjects and others take the Certificate of Educational Achievement. Many also gain a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in communication skills.
- 307 A very small sample of teaching was observed during the inspection. Lessons were very well prepared, with clear learning objectives that were shared with the students. For example, a Year 10 life skills lesson on healthy eating involved very-well-planned support from teaching assistants who participated fully in discussions. During the lesson, students learnt new vocabulary, gained an understanding of how food additives could effect peoples' health and reviewed the content of their own diets. They established targets to make their future food intake healthier and agreed to monitor their weight. Lessons were planned well to meet students' IEP targets, and teaching assistants were fully aware of the support needed to achieve the goals set.
- 308 Students observed were fully engaged in lessons. The short tasks set helped some with challenging behaviour to concentrate throughout. The good relationships between the teacher and students had been enhanced because the teacher also monitored the students' out of the college placements.