

INSPECTION REPORT

IFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Crawley, West Sussex

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126071

Headteacher: Dr. William Lind

Reporting inspector: Russell Sherman
7583

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 December 2002

Inspection number: 251954

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	12 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lady Margaret Road Ifield Crawley West Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Wood
Date of previous inspection:	11 September 2000

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7583	Russell Sherman	Registered inspector	Geography	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9007	Rafi Salasnik	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
31548	Grahame Smith	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
13067	Alan Quinn	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1830	Stuart Charlton	Team inspector	Science	
2731	Penny Holden	Team inspector	Art Education inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language	
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology	
24127	Jim Kidd	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
6364	Geoff Strack	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Biology post 16	

1936	Christopher Brocklesby	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
15926	Janet Dyson	Team inspector	Music	
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education	
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	Business education 11-16 & post 16	
12003	Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	Religious education English post 16	
22370	Peter Harwood	Team inspector	Chemistry post 16	
8090	Frank Turns	Team inspector	Media studies post 16	
18967	Brenda Loydell	Team inspector	Mathematics post 16	
19613	Sue Thomas-Pounce	Team inspector	Music post 16 Information and communication technology post 16	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ifield Community College is a mixed comprehensive college on the edge of Crawley and close to Gatwick airport, an area of full employment. There are some 850 pupils, which is broadly average. There are facilities for adult education on site and an integrated Dyslexia Unit. The percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals (14.8 per cent) is broadly average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is believed not to be English (17.1 per cent) is high but very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A similar proportion of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, predominantly Asian or Asian British. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register (24.9 per cent) is above the national average as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (5.4 per cent). Pupils currently join the college in Year 8 rather than Year 7. Overall, attainment on entry is below average, with the majority entering with average or below average ability. Pupil numbers are increasing.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ifield is an effective college. There has been a significant improvement in the standard of education since the last inspection. Achievement is now sound and teaching good. The senior management team has secured a constructive learning culture across the college and established effective chains of accountability. Pupils value and respect the college for the opportunities it provides for them. Although costs per pupil are high the college provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides consistently good teaching some of which is inspirational.
- Achievements for a significant proportion of pupils in music, art, dance and drama are outstanding.
- The school enables all its pupils to find success in some areas.
- There is a shared commitment to providing a valuable and rewarding education for all.
- There is a quiet but determined and unrelenting drive for improvement from the headteacher.
- Financial management is very strong.
- Relationships and attitudes are generally very positive.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The organisation of the ICT curriculum and the use of ICT across the college.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Attendance, which although now close to the national average, still requires improvement.
- Meeting statutory requirements particularly for ICT and religious education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 2000. There has been significant improvement since that inspection, which listed nine key issues for improvement. Improvement on eight of these key issues has been good overall. The only area where insufficient progress has been made is in implementing the statutory requirements for religious education, the mapping, monitoring and assessment of ICT across the curriculum, and a daily act of collective worship. Overall, standards of achievement and teaching have improved significantly.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	B
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	C	*	

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

- National comparisons not yet available

Overall, standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national average, but standards have improved more quickly than the national rate of improvement. The most recent results represent very good progress from Year 7. In 2002, GCSE results for Year 11 were well below national averages in terms of higher grades, A* - C, particularly in English, mathematics and science, but results were very high in terms of 5 or more A* - G and 1 or more A* - G. This explains why overall GCSE results, as shown above, have improved and are now broadly in line with national averages. The trend in improvement has been above the national trend. Whilst the college is very successful at achieving some success for all its pupils it has been less successful at achieving higher grades in most subjects. Analysis of the work of pupils in the current Year 11 strongly suggests that there will be a significant rise in the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades in the summer of 2003. Based on 2002 results the college was in the top 5 per cent of schools and colleges for at least one A* - G grades, the top 25 per cent for five or more A* - G grades and the lower 25 per cent for five or more A* - C grades. This represented good progress in terms of A* - C grades but excellent progress in terms of the other two measures from a relatively weak set of results for these pupils at the end of Year 9. Results at the end of Year 9 are now stronger and inspection evidence points to this now being translated into higher attainment in the sixth form.

By the end of Year 9, standards are below expectations in English, science, history, geography, modern foreign languages, ICT and RE, but this represents good progress given pupils' low attainment on entry to Year 8. They are above expectations in music and art. This represents very good progress and is the result of very good provision. By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve standards which are below national averages in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and RE. They are above national averages in music, art, drama and dance. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Standards achieved by boys in English by Year 9, and in modern foreign languages and ICT at GCSE, are weaker than would be expected given their achievements in other subjects. Boys achieved much better than girls at GCSE in 2001 but girls achieved much better than boys in 2002.

Results in the sixth form were broadly in line with national averages in 2001. There are no national comparisons yet available for 2002, but the extensive school analysis suggests that there was a dip in AS Level and intermediate GNVQ performance, but that A Level and Advanced GNVQ achievement remained at least sound.

The school's targets are challenging, appropriate and are being met. Overall, pupils are now achieving well in relation to their starting points on entry to the school.

Standards of literacy and numeracy across subjects are below average and, although much good progress has been made in terms of literacy, both areas need to remain a focus for improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to work in the main school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Although there are exceptions, pupils generally behave well both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very positive between pupils and between pupils and staff. Personal development is also very good except for independent learning skills.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is close to, but below, national averages. The school works thoughtfully and diligently to improve attendance and needs to maintain its efforts.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 8 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching in the college is good. Consistent, good quality teaching, with a significant proportion of very good teaching, is now a significant strength and a key factor in the rising standards found by the inspection team. The constructive learning culture which has been established across the college has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching over the past two years. Teaching in English, maths and science is good, although more consistently so in English in Years 10 and 11 and in mathematics Years 8 - 9. Art, drama, dance and music all benefit from consistently very strong teaching which ranges from good to excellent. No subject areas suffer from weak teaching. However, better use could be made of modern technology in almost all areas.

Key factors in securing good pupil progress and raised attainment are the improved expectations of the teaching staff linked to very good pupil management. This helps the college to meet the needs of all its pupils well. Pupils apply themselves well but teaching needs to develop more independent study habits.

Teaching of, and support for, literacy is good, although because of pupil need this requires further improvement. Numeracy development across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language is good. The progress made by gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall. Provision for talented pupils is particularly strong in the performing and visual arts.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Satisfactory range and scope in Years 8 to 11 and good in the sixth form despite not meeting statutory requirements for the delivery of religious education, information and communication technology (ICT) and collective worship.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Learning support is well organised. There is effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants which help pupils to be involved in lessons and to make progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils with English as an additional language have effective support, which allows full access to the curriculum and promotes good progress from their starting points on entry.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for cultural development is very good with a very significant contribution from art and the performing arts. Social and moral development is well provided for. Provision for spiritual development is just satisfactory with weaknesses balanced by strengths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Good personal support and guidance are effectively linked to good monitoring of progress.

The school has a sound partnership with the great majority of parents and works hard to achieve this. Parents are encouraged to work with the school to resolve issues that arise relating to individual pupils. Reports are much improved from two years ago. Extra-curricular opportunities are good and are outstanding in art and the performing arts. Monitoring and tracking of pupil progress is now good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Generally very consistent across middle and senior management with quiet, determined and very effective leadership from the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors now fulfil their most important responsibilities well in terms of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, promoting and planning for higher standards, establishing a clear vision for the school and ensuring effective strategic planning. They have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The senior management team and in most areas the governors and middle managers have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school derived from established monitoring and evaluation procedures.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending is well matched to school priorities.

Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good. The school applies the principles of best value well and financial management is very strong. Non-teaching and other support staff play an important role in ensuring that teachers can concentrate on teaching.

Management is consistently at least good across the college. The vision for the college as an institution which opens up real opportunities for its pupils is effectively shared by the headteacher and senior staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make good progress and like the college. • The college expects their pupils to work hard and achieve as well as they can. • Teaching and behaviour are good. • The school is approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Information about their children's progress.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. It feels that the range of activities is good and feels that although information about progress was a major issue, that significant improvements have been made with the new reporting system although they could show progress more clearly.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The size of the sixth form is broadly in line with the average (127 current compared with 166 nationally) and has stayed much the same over the past three years. The college offers a wide range of A Level, AS Level and vocational courses. There is a very flexible entry policy which means that students at the college represent a very broad range of ability. Some courses are offered in conjunction with other schools in the area, but at the time of the inspection these arrangements had not been taken up.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The college is effective in its primary aim of offering valuable educational opportunities to all its students some of whom come from backgrounds where post-16 education is not valued highly. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Though unit costs are high, cost effectiveness is good, in that students are enabled to achieve what they would otherwise not achieve. Teaching is consistently good or better and students are currently making at least sound and often good progress.

Strengths

- Very good relationships and attitudes.
- Strong, purposeful leadership and management.
- The curriculum is closely matched to students' needs and aspirations.
- Support and commitment from staff is strong.
- Teaching is consistently good or better.

What could be improved

- Strategies to improve unit costs to ensure long-term viability. Unit costs are currently high, largely because of the diversity of courses offered which leads to some small group sizes.
- Non-teaching accommodation – particularly the sixth form common room.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Teaching is good, and resources good apart from insufficient ICT. A Level results have been well below the national average, with too few students each year taking mathematics, or with high enough prior attainment. Standards observed during the inspection are below national expectations.
Biology	Good. Teaching is good; lessons are well structured with concepts introduced in a way that helps students to build up their knowledge and understanding; Students learn well and make good use of available resources; The subject is well led and there is a commitment to improve standards; Levels of attainment in examinations have been low but this largely reflects attainment on entry. Standards remain below national

	averages.
Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Chemistry	Good. At present overall standards are satisfactory but students in both years are developing their knowledge and understanding and standards should improve in future years. The quality of teaching is good: the teachers are strongly committed to helping their students succeed in examinations and have established very good relationships with their students.
Business education	Good. At post 16 the school offers business studies at AVCE and GNVQ intermediate levels. In both 2001 and 2002, results in public examinations were below national averages. However, the standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are in line with national averages for both male and female students.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Standards are improving but are still below average. Students achieve well considering their starting points. Teaching is good, however, the development of systems to monitor students' attainment and progress will assist in the effective setting of more focused individual targets.
Art	Very good. Attainment is very high. Standards are well above average. Students are articulate and confident about their creative work. Teaching is very good. The teachers' high levels of subject knowledge enable them to present complex and demanding tasks in ways that students can understand and tackle. Assessment and monitoring is excellent and promotes high achievement. Students have a very positive attitude to their work. Accommodation is excellent.
Music	Very good. Results are very good. Teaching is very good and often excellent and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provides a breadth of opportunity for all students. Courses are well matched to student need. They learn well and are very positive about their studies. Accommodation is barely satisfactory.
Media Studies	Very good. Teaching is very good. Students have a very positive attitude to the subject and work well. Standards are broadly average. There were no significant weaknesses observed during inspection.
English	Good. Students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Students have very positive attitudes. The subject is well led and managed, with the monitoring and evaluation of teaching being a strong feature. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Greater use of group work would be beneficial. Recent achievement at A Level has been good.

A range of other subjects were sampled across the sixth form including, health and social care, leisure and tourism, sociology and geography. This sampling confirmed the general picture of good provision across the sixth form.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Procedures for assessment in the sixth form are very good. Tutors carry out regular reviews of subject assessments with students who know how to improve performance. Staff have a strong commitment to helping their students. Guidance is of good quality.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. Leadership provides a clear vision and commitment to meet the needs of students. The key aim of providing all students with a worthwhile learning experience that leads to appropriate skills and qualifications for the future strongly promotes equality of opportunity.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching • Flexible approach of college towards meeting individual needs • Pastoral support • Staff attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-teaching accommodation

The inspection team agrees with both the positive and negative comments from the sixth-form students. The students receive good quality advice and support relating to both further education and training and employment. The only general issue relating to teaching would be that independent learning could be more actively encouraged.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Pupils have entered the college with well below national average attainment levels although attainment on entry is improving. Overall, standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 are below the national average, but standards have improved more quickly than the national rate of improvement. The most recent results represent very good progress for pupils given their results at age 11 and are higher than those reported by the last inspection.

2. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 have improved and are now broadly in line with national averages in terms of average points score. In 2002, they were still well below national averages in terms of the proportion of higher grades, A*-C, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but were very high in terms of 5 or more A* - G and 1 or more A* - G. Pupils' performance at 5 or more A*-C in 2002 represented good progress from their attainment at the end of Year 9. The upward trend in total point score has been better than the national trend. Given pupil's achievements at the end of Year 9, the results they gained in 2002 were outstanding in terms of the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G (99 per cent) and 1 or more A*-G (100 per cent). By this measure, the college was in the top 5 per cent of schools and colleges nationally for 1+ A*-G grades, the top 25 per cent for 5 or more A*-G grades and the lower 25 per cent for 5 or more A* - C grades. This represented good progress in terms of A* - C grades but excellent progress in terms of the other two measures from a relatively weak set of results for these pupils at the end of Year 9. Thus, for the past two years the college has been very successful at achieving some success for all its pupils, whilst it has been less successful at achieving higher grades in most subjects.

3. However, analysis of the work of pupils in the current Year 11 strongly suggests that there will be a significant rise in the proportion 5 or more A*-C grades in the summer of 2003. Results at the end of Year 9 are now stronger and inspection evidence points to this now being translated into higher attainment at the end of Year 11. By the end of Year 9, standards are below expectations in English, science, history, geography, modern foreign languages, ICT and RE, this still represents good progress given pupils' attainment on entry. They are above expectations in music and art. This represents very good progress and is the result of very good provision. By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve standards which are below national averages in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and RE. They are above national averages in music, art, drama and dance. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Standards achieved by boys in English by Year 9, and in Modern Foreign Languages and ICT at GCSE, are weaker than would be expected given their achievements in other subjects. Over the past two years achievement in mathematics at GCSE has fluctuated significantly in terms of boys and girls.

4. The school's targets are challenging and appropriate and are being met. Overall, pupils are now achieving well in relation to their starting points on entry to the school.

5. Standards of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are below average and, although much good progress has been made in terms of literacy, and many subjects now make a positive contribution to the development of literacy, both areas need to remain a focus for improvement. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good because their needs are clearly identified and appropriate support planned when they arrive at the school.

6. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. They are well motivated and make good progress. The school nurtures pupils' expertise in their own language and arranges classes for them to study for GCSE where possible. Pupils have achieved well in Urdu, Portuguese, Turkish and Gujerati.

Sixth form

7. Results in the sixth form were broadly in line with national averages in 2001. There are no national comparisons yet available for 2002, but the extensive in-house analysis would suggest that there was a dip in terms of AS Level and intermediate GNVQ performance, but that A Level and Advanced GNVQ achievement remained at least sound in terms of progress.

8. The work seen in lessons broadly confirms the standards reached in examinations. In A Level classes attainment is generally below national averages, but this reflects the open entry policy of the college. Attainment varies significantly in groups which are often small, but this generally represents sound progress given the often relatively low starting points of students when they enter the sixth form.

9. Some students with special educational needs, particularly those with dyslexia, do enter the sixth form and they make good progress which enables some to go on to further education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall, whilst their personal development and relationships are very good. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. They are also in line with attitudes and views expressed by parents both at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaire. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory as it is below the national target although now close to the national average. The school works thoughtfully and diligently to improve attendance and needs to maintain its efforts.

11. Overall, pupils are enthusiastic about the school and very interested and involved in activities and in some areas, such as music, art and dance, this was outstanding. The previous inspection gave as an example of involvement, a high quality voluntary singing practice; similarly this inspection saw equally highly commendable choir practices, demonstrating that this is an area of school life that continues to excite and involve large numbers of pupils. When spoken to, both formally and informally, pupils showed a wide variation in their enthusiasm for the school.

12. Pupils' behaviour is generally good both in lessons and around the school. It ranges from very good to a few examples of unsatisfactory behaviour being observed. Where pupils behaved well in classes this helped their learning whilst in the few lessons where behaviour, even of a minority, was unsatisfactory, the learning of all was affected. It was noticeable that no vandalism or graffiti were seen. Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of appropriate behaviour. There is a limited amount of bullying which is dealt with quickly and firmly.

13. A total of 51 pupils had some period of exclusion in the last academic year, six per cent of the pupil population. There were 77 fixed term and six permanent exclusions. Both in terms of pupil numbers and number of exclusions there were twice as many boys as girls excluded. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils being excluded is low.

14. The development of pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is very good. For example there are year councils and a college council, with keenly fought elections. Amongst issues discussed at College Council is the behaviour policy with pupils suggesting reducing the five levels of classroom rules to four by merging the first two together. The school sees this as a positive development in pupil self-responsibility. Another issue recently raised by pupils is that of alternatives to the privilege cards, issued weekly to pupils with high points. These can currently only be used to move to the front of the tuck or dinner queue so pupils who do not use either get no benefit from the card. In a number of places around the school there are termly high achievers boards with pictures of pupils who have excelled. These would have benefited from narrative explaining why the children were being recognised. Pupils' independent learning and their ability to take responsibility for their own learning is not so strong. This is an area that the school has already identified for action through study clubs for Years 10 and 11.

15. Pupils' relationships with each other and staff are very good. Pupils were seen working and socialising well with each other, including across genders and across ethnic groups. Pupils stated that they were happy to go to teachers or year heads if they had problems. They showed respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and had an understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

16. Pupil attendance has been fairly constant for the past few years ranging from 90 per cent to 90.8 per cent. In 2000/01 this was below the national average. A comparison with the 2001/02 figures was not available at the time of the inspection. Unauthorised absences at 0.2 per cent in 2000/01 are below national averages. Although unauthorised absences rose in 2001/02 to 0.6 per cent this is probably below national averages.

17. Punctuality to lessons is of some concern. Some of this can be explained in terms of pupils and teachers having to move considerable distances from one end of the school to another between lessons. However, this does not apply where the majority of pupils turn up on time whilst a few turn up late as was observed on a number of occasions.

18. Pupils with special educational needs take the help they are given very seriously and work hard to overcome their difficulties. Whilst some attend school quite reluctantly they appreciate the efforts made on their behalf and particularly welcome the ethos of the learning support and special support facility.

19. Pupils who speak English as additional language have very good attitudes to school. They are very keen to improve their English and to succeed and this high motivation leads to good achievement.

Sixth form

20. The attitude of students towards their learning is very good. A sign of their attachment to their education is that a number of students have part-time jobs to help pay for their keep. Students have very positive views towards the school and their behaviour is good, their major complaint relating to their common room, which is clearly insufficient for the number of students.

21. Their development of personal and learning skills are very good although less so as independent learners. An example of personal skills and initiatives can be seen in peer counselling, a service set up by several students for any students to come and discuss issues. The counsellors know what is appropriate and are looking forward to further training next term. Relationships are good between students and with staff.

22. Attendance is satisfactory in the sixth form overall, but unsatisfactory in Year 13. By arrangement sixth form students do not need to come in until their first lesson or fixed study period.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Overall, the quality of teaching in the college is good. In almost all the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory or better, with a high proportion - four out of five - judged to be good or better. Very good and excellent teaching was seen in over a quarter of all lessons. This overall picture represents an important improvement since the last inspection. Consistent, good quality teaching is a now significant strength and has been a key factor in the school's recent success in raising standards.

24. At Key Stage 3, teaching is at least good in two thirds of lessons and it is even more effective in Key Stage 4, where there is a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching – one third. This represents very good progress since the last inspection, where teaching at Key Stage 4 was found to be unsatisfactory.

25. Examples of effective teaching are evident in almost all subject areas, though it is consistently strong in art, music, drama, history.
26. One of the key factors in securing good pupil progress and raised attainment is the improved expectations of the teaching staff. This is now becoming more embedded and there is a developing culture in the school that all pupils can and will achieve to the best of their ability, irrespective of the set they are in. The level of challenge in lessons is now well matched to the range of abilities in the classroom and this has a positive impact on both teaching and learning. The majority of pupils have a clear understanding of the standards they are achieving and they are aware of the challenging targets they have been set for the end of their key stage. A significant proportion, however, are less sure about what they specifically need to do to achieve those levels or grades. Teachers' awareness of some aspects of equal opportunity and diversity practice needs to be raised. Very good assessment practice was seen in drama, art, history, design and technology, and RE. In these subjects, a consistent focus on learning objectives and an explicit knowledge of levels and grades motivates pupils and supports them in the work they produce. Support staff are very good at setting targets and working with pupils with special needs to help them develop strategies for learning and thus make progress.
27. Lessons generally begin promptly and most develop with pace that is swift and purposeful. The management of pupils has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. Although there are some isolated examples of calling out and talking over others' contributions, classes are almost always orderly and purposeful. The good use of time in lessons ensures that the pace of learning is appropriate and that pupils sustain their interest and concentrate for long periods of time. Support staff are also usefully employed, with information about lessons and pupils well used. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and this is evident in planning, marking and in questioning. Consequently, teachers are able to evaluate pupils' responses, challenge imprecise thinking, and guide pupils to a clearer understanding of their work. The teaching of basic skills is good.
28. These strengths contribute to the positive attitudes and behaviour found in lessons. Much of the very good and excellent teaching is also characterised by teaching methods which are well suited to the focus and demands of the lesson: for example, ensuring abstract concepts are applied to real life situations; the use of challenging questions to extend pupils' thinking; imaginative resources to stimulate interest; judicious use of group work to enable pupils to share their learning; the effective use of teacher demonstrations to scaffold pupils' learning as a stage towards independence. In such lessons, pupils' progress is swift.
29. In one very effective Year 10 history lesson on the causes of the Second World War, pupils were asked to distinguish between three different types of GCSE questions and consider how to approach each. The teacher provided impressive explanations on how to respond, revealing very good subject knowledge. After ensuring full participation through highly productive paired discussions, a writing frame was used, together with key words, to scaffold pupils' early attempts at answering the questions. In this lesson, pupils not only developed a thorough understanding of Hitler's foreign policy, they also enhanced their understanding of how to demonstrate that knowledge most effectively in order to achieve high marks in the examination.
30. In a very good Year 8 English lesson, the teacher prepared a creative writing quiz as a starter activity. The concepts explored during the starter such as metaphors, similes and personification were then applied to pupils' own reading of an extract from 'Goodnight Mister Tom,' and then to their own writing. This carefully prepared teaching sequence helped pupils to crystallise their learning of key technical vocabulary, and then transfer and apply it immediately to their own reading and writing.
31. The carefully selected teaching methodologies chosen in both of these lessons helped to engage all pupils, accelerate their learning, and extend their understanding.

32. On the very few occasions where teaching was less successful, the work provided was insufficiently challenging and therefore pupils did not learn as well as they should. Overall, however, the consistency of the good or better teaching significantly outweighs any weaknesses, although there is a need in some subject areas for teachers to give pupils more opportunities to discuss their work in groups and reflect on what they have learnt, so that they can share ideas, challenge hypotheses and deepen their understanding. This is necessary in order to encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop as independent learners.

33. The quality of learning in lessons matches the quality of teaching, and learning is now good at both key stages; it is very good in art, music drama and history. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection where learning across the college was judged to be unsatisfactory. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils all show that the work being covered now builds on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills, and ensures appropriate progress is made over time. Pupils work at a good pace and the majority are positively engaged in lessons. They have an improving knowledge of the standards required to achieve various levels and are aware of their targets. Pupils work well collaboratively, though much learning is teacher directed and there is now a general need to develop the skills to support independent learning, particularly in mathematics, English and ICT. Pupils with special educational needs are generally very clear about their own strengths and weaknesses because support staff are very good at setting targets and strategies for improvement with them.

34. In most subjects, support for pupils' literacy is good, though numeracy development across the curriculum is currently less well developed. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language is good. Teachers are quick to make the most of the good motivation of pupils who are relatively early learners of English. Most teachers have a good understanding of how to make learning interesting and accessible, and employ a range of strategies to ensure that all pupils are included. This gives rise to good progress relative to pupils' prior attainment. The progress made by gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall, while provision for talented pupils is particularly strong in the performing and visual arts.

Sixth form

35. Overall, the quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Almost all lessons seen were good or better, with a third very good, and some examples of excellent teaching. Standards of teaching have been maintained since the last inspection, where teaching was also judged to be good.

36. The consistency of provision is a real strength. Good teaching was evident in the vast majority of subjects and it was very good in history, art, music, drama, PE and media studies. A crucial factor in the success of sixth form teaching is the very good subject knowledge of the teachers, which enables them to deepen thinking and extend the intellectual, creative or physical demands on students. In a very effective Year 13 dance lesson, for example, students were investigating the history and practice of a classical dance form from Southern India. The lesson was extremely well planned into three distinct phases; these were carefully linked to build up understanding and the quality of performance. The teacher showed a high level of personal expertise, which allowed for an effective demonstration of the standards she was looking for. This acted as an effective model for the students and, combined with effective interactions with individual students, helped to improve their performances. The students themselves showed great motivation and enjoyment, and produced work of high quality.

37. Teachers' planning is also a major strength. It ensures that the pace of learning is swift and that the challenges presented to students are appropriately pitched for their ability. Relationships too are very good and teachers show considerable skill in the management of students during lessons.

38. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for students in the sixth form with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language is good.

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

39. The quality and range of the learning opportunities in Years 8 to 11 are satisfactory, but the college does not meet statutory requirements for the delivery of religious education in Years 9 and 10 and for information and communication technology in all years. The provision for art, music and drama is outstanding and the college has received the prestigious Artsmark Gold Award. In addition, there is a good citizenship programme, including careers education, which offers pupils tuition in all years. However, there is not enough time for design and technology in Years 8 and 9 and German has all but disappeared from the formal timetable.

40. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to GCSE courses, the college offers its pupils an effective vocational programme and youngsters can choose from a range of foundation GNVQ courses in leisure and tourism, health and social care and information technology. Moreover, there is a vocational GCSE course in science and the college is now planning for a triple award in this area. Provision for sex education and for drugs education is appropriate.

41. The college's provision for extra-curricular activities is good and is augmented by a wide variety of sports activities and also by excellent opportunities in art, music, dance and drama for pupils to follow their interests during lunchtimes and at the end of the school day. The choir, for example, is nationally renowned and pupils deliver musical and dramatic performances in prestigious venues across the country. The school is alive in the middle of the day and also at the end, with clubs, societies and teams, all of which benefit from extensive take-up. The activities week for Years 8 and 9 is a strong feature and pupils take part, for example, in outward-bound activities, canoeing and cycling events and a media workshop.

42. The provision for citizenship is good and the school delivers a comprehensive programme of modules in relation to the diverse nature of British society, law and order, rights and responsibilities, the media, health education and issues around government and politics. Teachers with specialist knowledge in particular areas prepare thought-provoking and challenging resources, which contribute strongly to pupils' social and moral development.

43. An essential part of the citizenship scheme is the effective careers education programme. Pupils prepare for their work experience placements by using the well-stocked careers library and computer software such as Kudos. In addition, during citizenship sessions in Year 10, pupils consider their personal characteristics and qualities in order to approach their employer interviews with confidence.

44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are supported either through the special needs department or the special support facility depending on need. In Year 10 and 11, for example, pupils can select a learning support option to help them with their course-work for other subjects and to teach them important study skills.

45. Pupils who arrive at the school in the early stages of learning to speak English are given a very useful induction programme that includes some intensive language tuition. They are then introduced into practical lessons quickly and supported into other lessons as soon as appropriate. These pupils can also choose a learning support as part of their Year 10 and 11 options if they would benefit from additional support. The school strives to arrange GCSE courses for pupils to take in their own language. Currently pupils are studying for their GCSE in Urdu and in the past pupils have been successful in Turkish, Portuguese and Gujarati.

46. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good and, in addition to the benefit provided by a plethora of local employers during the work experience scheme and also by those

involved in vocational courses, a variety of local groups visits the school to take part in a local historians' class, for example.

47. The college's relationships with partner institutions are improving and are now good. Curriculum links with middle schools are growing. Music pupils visit these institutions to encourage pupils to take part in singing projects and local youngsters visit the college for activities in relation to ceramics and also for dance sessions. In addition, it is planned that science teachers from the college will deliver specialist lessons in feeder schools and middle-school colleagues visit the college to reciprocate. The college also organises annual literacy schools, catch-up sessions and able pupils' workshops.

48. As at the time of the previous inspection, the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory, although differences remain in the various aspects of this. There is good provision for moral and social development, and very good provision for cultural development, but provision for spiritual development is just satisfactory.

49. Provision for spiritual development is just satisfactory overall, largely because of some very good contributions in a few areas. As at the time of the last report, the majority of subjects are failing to seize opportunities to extend pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension, and make few references to it in their planning. The exceptions are art, the performing arts, religious education and some aspects of the English curriculum. In music, there is a very sensitive exploration and performance of deeply religious feeling in choral works, for example. In art, pupils have the opportunity to reflect on themselves as creators, as when they lift off a print and see the image, or on seeing a pot emerge from the kiln. The symbolism found in other cultures and religions is explored, as well as the philosophies that drive artists. Non-material aspects of life are faced in dance and drama, too. In sixth form English lessons, the importance of religious language and Christian imagery in the text being studied was stressed by teachers. But in other areas, apart from religious education, provision for spiritual development in terms of personal reflective response is very limited. This includes assemblies, where there is a strong moral and social emphasis but limited attempt to find spiritual meaning. Opportunities are missed: an assembly about Advent, with the lighting of candles, led not to a consideration of the Christian duty to prepare for Christ's coming, but simply to an exhortation to "think of others", and no time was given for reflection. Form assemblies make no provision for an act of collective worship. Thus the college is still in breach of statutory requirements in this respect. There is an awareness of the beliefs and practices of others, for instance, in the provision of a Muslim prayer room and washing facilities, but religious practices and festivals, seem to be regarded as things other people do, and are not 'owned' by the college community as a whole.

50. The provision for moral development is good. Good standards of behaviour are expected and are modelled by staff. Respect for property and persons is institutionalised. Charities are supported, for instance mention was made several times during the inspection week of a Christmas collection of non-perishable food for older residents of the community. Moral values are stressed in assemblies and in form time. In the taught curriculum, opportunities are seized to discuss moral issues, for instance, when studying texts in English or when considering principles of justice and human rights in history. An example of the latter was in lessons on the past sufferings of African Americans, particularly during slavery.

51. Social development is also well provided for. In many lessons, pupils have the opportunity to work in groups: this is true in virtually all history lessons – though, strangely, not in many English lessons. Excellent opportunities for team work are found in music, drama and physical education, and pupils benefit from residential visits where they can learn to live and co-operate with others in a close environment. They also learn to work with adults, for instance in choirs. There is no prefect system, but pupils have the opportunity to participate in college and year councils. Sixth formers are encouraged to work with younger pupils in some of their lessons, as part of their community service.

52. The provision for cultural development is very good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The huge contribution made by art and the performing arts is still very much in evidence, and this impacts on a high proportion of pupils. The cultural heritage of others, beyond the white western traditions, is very well presented in music: North American, South African and less usual traditions are considered. Indian and Egyptian culture is recognised in dance and in art. Much of the excellent work in ceramics is influenced by African and Asian models. The western tradition is not neglected: pupils of drama and English literature have an enhanced sense of this. Theatre visits are encouraged, as are visits to museums and field work. Trips to the continent include visits to World War I battlefields. The minority cultural groups in the college community are not ignored, although more celebration of their contribution to wider culture would be welcome. It is good, however, that in design technology there is an exploration of the contribution of food products to the quality of life in different cultures, and the designing of an Asian garden (in graphics). Cards for Eid and Diwali are constructed in design technology and religious education respectively. Displays around the school, not least of the high quality ceramics made by pupils, reinforce the strong cultural provision being made.

Sixth form

53. Although the college does not meet statutory requirements to deliver religious education in the sixth form, the quality and range of learning opportunities is good overall. Because the college wishes to offer a wide range of experiences to meet demand and to stimulate interest, students benefit from a diverse programme, which offers a very broad range of courses including key skills, GCSE, GNVQ, AVCE, AS and A Level courses. Recent additions are courses in psychology and law.

54. Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress in the sixth form and have high aspirations for their futures.

55. The sixth form enrichment week is a strong feature and students opt for a variety of trips, residential sessions, workshops and other active learning classes.

56. There are good links with local colleges of further education and teachers spend considerable time preparing students for entry to higher education. Such support is augmented by the extensive stock of university prospectuses in the careers library.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

57. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good. Assessment, monitoring and reporting of progress were key issues at the last inspection. The college has addressed these areas rigorously with in-service training and full consultation. There is now a marking and assessment policy that applies across the college. There are also new-style annual reports which convey national curriculum levels and satisfy statutory requirements.

58. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are very good. Pupils have individual short and medium term targets. Teachers tell pupils what they are doing correctly and state whether they have met, exceeded or not reached targets. The process allows progress to be tracked and alerts teachers to intervene quickly when support is necessary. Marking is conscientious and pupils are often involved in reflection on their achievements and in setting targets. The college devotes staff meeting time to the scrutiny of work. Departments monitor individual progress termly and provide a summary in the form of reports sent to the headteacher and governors.

59. In art, procedures for assessment are exemplary. Pupils understand exactly how work can be improved and respond with excellent standards. Other areas where assessment is good or very good are: mathematics, science, design and technology, history, music, drama, physical education. In these areas and subjects, pupils understand assessment criteria, receive close

guidance and know how to improve performance. In English, geography, modern languages and religious education, assessment is satisfactory, but pupils do not always receive advice on exactly how to improve. In the case of religious education, marking and assessment are better in GCSE classes than in Years 8 and 9. Some of the best practice includes the provision of “pupil friendly” descriptions of national curriculum levels for reference. In some subjects, for example history, there are outstanding examples of self-assessment and close pupil involvement in the setting of targets and challenges. Some departments carry out sophisticated analyses of GCSE performance and they have changed their GCSE syllabus to better match pupils’ needs. There is extensive and effective use of resources adapted for different levels of achievement. In physical education, there is a comprehensive system for recording individual attainment against national curriculum levels and pupils are shown how to reach higher levels. In ICT assessment is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not helped sufficiently to understand how to make progress.

60. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Specialist staff have a deep knowledge of their pupils and support them personally and academically both through withdrawal and by advising subject colleagues.

61. Procedures for assessment and monitoring of progress for pupils for whom English is an additional language are very good. Relevant information is passed on to all teachers by specialist staff.

62. Assessment arrangements are contributing towards higher standards of achievement, but that implementation is inconsistent. It is unclear how assessment is used to place pupils in teaching groups. Overall, progress in improving assessment, marking and reporting has been good since the last inspection and in many areas very good, with some examples of exemplary practice.

63. To improve, the college needs to ensure that all subjects and areas follow best practice, explain more clearly the link between assessment and the consequent grouping of pupils.

Sixth form

Assessment

64. Procedures for assessment in the sixth form are good. Tutors carry out regular reviews of subject assessments with students who know how to improve performance.

Advice, support and guidance

65. The school takes good care of its students. Procedures for supporting students’ personal development are very good, those for attendance and behaviour are good and those for eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. These are in line with or improvements on the results of the last inspection.

66. The arrangements for supporting students’ personal development are very good. Pastoral tutors appear to know students across their whole year group as well as their own group. Year teams meet regularly and both tutors and heads of year are kept well informed on behaviour and attendance issues. In a number of class registrations observed, students were engaged in year activities such as completing CVs, self-evaluation forms and filling in questionnaires on appropriate social behaviour.

67. Medical procedures are good and staff involved know what to do and also record and report on incidents appropriately. Child protection procedures are good, complying with the local arrangements. One of the assistant principals is the named officer and all staff know this, although it is not in the current staff handbook as it should be to cater for temporary staff. There are good links with appropriate social services agencies. Health and safety is well monitored with annual risk

assessments by faculty heads for their areas. All matters are followed up and dealt with accordingly and there are no outstanding issues.

68. The policy and procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The school has operated a Discipline for Learning policy for the past decade. It was looked at afresh three years ago and streamlined in conjunction with the staff and discussed at College Council. The school feels it works for most students who know how the warnings work. It is a universal policy although it is accepted that there are some inconsistencies in its application. There are currently five stages ranging from a warning to 'Long Stopping', removing of students from their classrooms. As the sanctions get more serious the student's tutor is involved. After that a Student Information Form is issued. This is a multi-part form with copies going to relevant staff and the parents are also informed. It is a well-produced form, which includes tick boxes and text areas for recording information about the incident, who has been notified and who has taken action. All serious issues are reported to the school's senior management team. After these sanctions there are the fixed or permanent exclusions. To prevent exclusions the school operates a Pastoral Support Plan. This initiative seeks to identify students at risk of being excluded and is individually tailored. It is multi-agency, runs for a set period and the student is involved in the meeting. The Crawley Counselling initiative allows a small number of students to see a psychologist for six weekly sessions. It is a valued and promising initiative. The school is developing a programme to operate prior to the Pastoral Support Plan. There is also a points bulletin system where every student starts with 500 points, these can be deducted for a variety of infringements such as uniform or homework planner, or can be increased, for example for good behaviour.

69. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, however, their impact remains limited. The figures are slightly affected by a few cases where the school needs or chooses to keep students on roll despite long-term absences. Registers are filled in correctly and quickly and returned promptly to the office. Register sheets are transferred daily onto computer. Students, who arrive late, sign in at the office. The number of these is small, unless a bus is late, and most are soon after the beginning of the day. Persistent offenders are noted. Sanctions for lateness include short period detentions. The whole system is administered well by a member of the administrative staff who phones parents of those students who are absent without a reason known. This list is circulated to tutors, heads of year and senior staff very early in the day. Parents are happy with this first day phone call as it lets them know if their child has not arrived. Information on individual students can be easily be produced. The school works with the educational welfare officer who visits two or three times a week. There is a local authority red/amber/green scheme that identifies schools with low, medium and high absences. It is used to rank schools in the authority and the school is starting to use this internally as well to identify students. Full termly attendance is praised in the newsletter and there are certificates for full annual attendance. The school believes that holidays are a major cause of absences and together with the middle and first schools in its area has produced a leaflet for parents explaining the issue and the effect missed school time has on students.

Sixth Form

70. The tutor and head of year system also operates in the sixth form. The school provides good support for sixth form students, including where requested, helping with outside problems that affect their college work. Procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress are very good.

71. The monitoring and improving of attendance is satisfactory. Students are required to be in for their first lesson or fixed study period. Where a student is absent without notifying the college the first day phone call is done by the tutors not the school office.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72. The partnership with parents and the impact of their involvement in the work of the school are satisfactory, these are in line with the last report. The quality of information provided is now

satisfactory, an improvement on the findings of the last report. The parents' view of the school is generally very positive.

73. With only two notable exceptions, those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and filled in the questionnaires expressed high levels of support for the school and the education provided for their children. Those issues that gave parents more cause for concern were over how well they felt informed about how their child gets on and whether an interesting range of activities is offered. The former concern is in contrast to the results of the school's own questionnaire given at parents' evening which shows high levels of satisfaction about the information provided by teachers. This questionnaire is a good development since the last report.

74. The annual pupil reports, which were found to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last report, have improved. These reports are still staggered throughout the year and as none of them are end of year they only show pupils' current levels and targets but not whether they achieve them. The school is considering ways for an end of year summary sheet to show this. Whilst the form for each subject looks similar there are different approaches by each faculty so that in some cases the grade is for the subject, in others it is broken down into a number of components. There is an area for targets to improve progress. In the better reports this lists targets while some are only narrative without any clear targets, and can be vague.

75. The reports are individual to each pupil. Reports are discussed individually at a parents' meeting held soon after the report comes out. The school tries to arrange alternative dates for parents who cannot attend. The other parent evening is held in the first term when staff inform parents of what their children will study during the year. Options booklets are sent out in advance of Years 10 and 12 with full details of what will be studied. Parents of pupils in Year 8 get a list of the subjects studied. In the past more detail was provided in written form but the school found this was not used and discontinued this practice.

76. The governors' annual report contains information about the activities of the school but continues to be a fairly brief document. Newsletters are sent out termly. These are well produced and contain details of pupils' achievements, some are by year and others by faculty. Many faculties also send letters home about academic achievements and year heads send letters on pupil improvements.

77. Parents can see staff, including senior staff, very easily, by a note in the pupil's planner, by letter or phone call. If parents phone up, this is recorded on a form and it can easily be seen whether the matter has been followed up, including reporting back to parents. The school is confident that they keep parents well informed of progress on each matter with the assistant principal knowing at any one time which are the outstanding matters. There is a good home-school-pupil agreement signed by all.

78. Parents help out with non-educational events, for example, with the enrichment week a number showed skills from their own cultures. There continues to be little involvement of parents from ethnic minorities in the teaching of multi-culturalism in the curriculum. The school would be happy with more parental involvement. There is currently no parents' association although the school and some parents are interested in setting one up.

79. There is a home-school links scheme run by a volunteer working with ethnic minority parents. This includes helping where parents do not have a sufficient level of English. Translations of documents and letters can be provided.

80. The special needs department works closely with parents who write generally very positive comments about the support their children get on the annual review documents. Many parents follow the school's requests in providing support and guidance for their children working towards targets.

81. The school values their contacts with parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The co-ordinator of pupils who speak English as an additional language is keen to fully involve the parents in their children's progress and she has run successful family literacy projects in the past. For many families newly arrived in the country the contact with the school is a very important link for them.

Sixth Form

82. Students are very positive about the college, the support and guidance it provides, the opportunities it provides for them by its flexible approach to meeting individual needs, about the quality of teaching they receive and about the committed attitudes of staff to providing them with appropriate quality courses. The only major complaint they have is about the low level of non-teaching accommodation. The

83. There are two parents' meetings each year, an academic one with teachers and a pastoral one with tutors.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

84. Leadership and management are both good. They are generally very consistent across middle and senior management with quiet, determined and very effective leadership from the headteacher, which concentrates appropriately on raising achievement and meeting the college aims. Since the last inspection, the senior management team has secured a constructive learning culture across the college and established effective chains of accountability. Governors now fulfil their most important responsibilities well in terms of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, promoting and planning for higher standards, establishing, with the headteacher, a clear vision for the school and ensuring effective strategic planning.

85. The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the particular strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. This is generally clearly shared by the senior management team, middle managers and the governing body. All play a constructive and effective part in taking the college forward. Both the headteacher and the governing body maintain a close evaluative oversight of the monitoring of teaching and learning. A consultative approach is used in much of the management processes and this has led to a very positive sense of ownership amongst the great majority of staff. The school is very clearly dedicated to offering its students a broad range of appropriate educational opportunities and to overcoming the sometimes less than positive view of post 16 education which exists in the broader community. It has established an inclusive ethos where the rhetoric is matched by reality.

86. Governors are both professional in their approach and dedicated to taking the school forward. Although some statutory requirements, including ICT, collective worship and religious education, are not met the governors have concentrated rightly on taking teaching, learning and attainment forward. This they have done successfully. They are appropriately involved in development planning and in the setting of targets. Decisions are considered carefully and are considered against the underlying aims of the school. The development plan itself is clear and cogent and is generally appropriately costed. Evaluation within the plan could be more specific in places in terms of both process and criteria but monitoring and evaluation across the school is normally effective. There is a shared commitment to providing a valuable and rewarding education for all and a recognition that performance needs to be regularly reviewed. Targets are challenging, with an appropriate level of aspiration whilst being realistically grounded.

87. Management is consistently at least good across the college. The vision for the college as an institution which opens up real opportunities for its pupils is effectively shared by the headteacher and senior staff. The school enables all its pupils to find success in some areas.

88. Increasingly this is a school which is developing in the fullest sense into a learning community in which all members of staff question the ways in which they do things and are

prepared to learn from each other. Overall, the school makes very good use of attainment data to monitor achievement and progress of pupils and of subjects. This data is well used by the headteacher, senior managers and in most cases by heads of department although there is still some significant variation of the skills of senior managers in this area.

89. The special needs department is well led and managed, staff work as a cohesive team both in the main department and in the special support facility and this ensures pupils make good progress.

90. The curriculum is well supported by a well-qualified group of dedicated teaching staff whose experience and qualifications provide a good match to the curriculum demand. This helps to ensure that the quality of teaching is good and that it has a positive impact on achievement. An able group of administrative and non-teaching staff provide good quality support for teachers. This allows them to concentrate on their primary purpose and therefore to be more effective in raising standards. The school has put significant resources into non-teaching staff. Non-teaching and other support staff play an important role in ensuring that teachers can concentrate on teaching. Non-teaching staff are effectively managed.

91. All staff are valued by the college. They benefit from effective management, well thought out performance management systems and good professional development opportunities. Awareness of some aspects of equal opportunity and diversity practice needs to be raised. This commitment to developing its staff, along with good links to training institutions, has aided the school in improving the quality of teaching in the college. From reception, to finance and reprographics and non-teaching assistants there is a common appreciation of the aims of the college.

92. Accommodation ranges from just satisfactory to excellent. Accommodation for music, dance and business studies is only just satisfactory. Accommodation for Art is excellent. The college is aware of the issues and anticipates a complete new build in the near future. Accommodation is well used and well maintained. As with all other staff, the school-keeping staff take a pride in the college and contribute significantly to its smooth running.

93. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, although better use should be made of modern technology across the college. At an individual level information systems and ICT support administration well, although there is room for greater access and integration of systems across the school. The library is of a reasonable size and is well managed. Subjects are not evenly represented in terms of stock, but what is there is generally well used. The overall ratio of computers to pupils is better than average, although their use by subjects is uneven.

94. The school applies the principles of best value well and financial management is very strong. Specific grants are spent appropriately and to good purpose. Negotiations over contracts are rigorous. The college's available funds are spent on current pupils as they should be. Although unit costs are high the college provides satisfactory value for money given the opportunities they provide. Spending is closely linked to educational priorities.

Sixth Form

95. Leadership and management are good. The head of the sixth form provides a clear vision and commitment to meet the needs of all students; to give them access to, and to prepare them for, appropriate future choices. The key aim of providing all students with a worthwhile learning experience that leads to appropriate skills and qualifications for the future strongly promotes equality of opportunity. This vision is shared by staff. Management across the sixth form is flexible, but well focused. Governors are very clearly committed to the success and maintenance of the sixth form and to ensuring that an open access sixth form with a flexible curriculum that meets the needs of its community of students is maintained.

96. Monitoring and evaluation of sixth form performance are good. Examination data is translated into detailed value added analysis which is closely scrutinised and acted upon. Heads of

department are expected to act on the outcomes of this analysis to improve performance. The sixth form is very much an integral part of the college.

Resources

97. There are adequate learning resources and teaching and learning accommodation which support sixth form students in their studies. However, non-teaching accommodation, although it is now appropriately sited towards the centre of the college, does not meet the needs of students and is unsatisfactory. Access to computers is good.

98. There are some very small groups and average costs per student are high. Despite this, value for money is satisfactory, as this translates into flexible, supportive and effective provision which meets the key aims of the college.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

99. In order to improve standards further the college should:

- Improve attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT particularly at the end of Year 11 by:
 - i. sharing the effective practice and building on the individual strengths which exist in departments across the college; (paragraphs 26, 59, 119, 134, 145, 153, 155, 158, 159, 161, 162, 167, 175, 184, 192, 193, 201, 208, 215, 227, 237)
 - ii. maintaining and developing the whole school focus on Literacy and instituting a whole school approach to the development of Numeracy; (paragraphs 5, 34, 47, 81, 103, 116, 118, 124, 127, 128, 135, 141, 143, 147, 150, 153, 160, 175, 192, 202, 250, 251)
 - iii. evaluating and addressing the reasons for differences in performance by gender as noted in the report. (paragraphs 3, 109, 110, 123, 139, 172, 198, 209)
- Ensure that senior management creates an appropriate and effective structure for ensuring the effective delivery and use of ICT across the college. (paragraphs 59, 86, 93, 124, 146, 200, 203, 213, 245)
- Maintain the coherent approach to improving attendance. (10, 16, 18, 28, 65, 66, 69, 70)
- Review arrangements for meeting all statutory requirements. (paragraphs 39, 49, 53, 86, 124, 240)

Sixth form

- Review current structures and practices to develop strategies which will improve unit costs to ensure long term viability of the broad range of provision
- Improve non-teaching accommodation

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The Special Support Facility

100. The Special Support Facility is for pupils with severe specific learning difficulties. There are 18 places, for approximately four pupils in each year group, all who have statements of special educational need because of their severe specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). Their inclusion in the unit is made on the recommendation of West Sussex Education Authority.

101. The Special Support Facility offers pupils with dyslexia the opportunity to be supported within a mainstream school. Whilst every pupil has their own individual education plan they spend much of their time in ordinary lessons with special support when helpful.

102. The teaching that pupils receive from specialist teachers and support assistants is good as staff are experienced and skilful. Many of the pupils are of average and above average ability but severely hampered by their dyslexia. The support in lessons helps these pupils make progress at a faster rate than they could unsupported. The unit teachers have high expectations of their pupils and do all they can to help pupils achieve good GCSE grades and in 2002 all pupils achieved an A to C grade with one pupil achieving 10 A – E grades.

103. Much of the work the pupils in Years 8 and 9 do in the unit is focused on improving their literacy and numeracy skills. This work is effective and many make very good gains in their reading skills. In Year 10 and 11 pupils choose an option that gives them learning support time where they can be helped with course work from their 9 GCSE subjects. The strategies and skills pupils learn in the unit add to their ability to work more independently. For example, pupils learn information retrieval skills, how to make useful notes and record facts graphically. The support pupils receive in mainstream lessons from teachers and learning support assistants also promotes their autonomy. Pupils are encouraged to try to solve problems for themselves and the support staff focus on helping them develop strategies to do so. Support staff also help pupils by boosting their self-esteem so they do not panic when encountering difficulties.

104. Pupils are highly motivated by the support they receive and are very clear about their own strengths and weaknesses. They also are prepared to work hard with the support staff to learn strategies to help them cope with their learning difficulties. Relationships are very good and help to promote the very supportive and business-like atmosphere in the facility. Staff and pupils all work well together to meet the challenge of the severe learning needs of these pupils. The facility is very well led so that the support pupils receive is well managed and effective. The effectiveness the unit has been maintained since the last inspection.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 8 – 11	137
	Sixth form	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 8 – 11

Number	6	24	71	33	2	0	0
Percentage	4	18	52	24	1	0	0

Sixth form

Number	2	19	23	2	0	0	0
Percentage	4	41	50	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y8 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	723	127
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	111	

Special educational needs	Y8 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	39	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	156	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	108

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	49

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.6
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	90	109	199

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	49	57
	Girls	76	65	63
	Total	119	114	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (53)	57 (58)	60 (49)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	22 (19)	32 (30)	22 (16)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	47	62
	Girls	64	65	74
	Total	103	112	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	52 (54)	56 (59)	68 (44)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (19)	27 (21)	31 (11)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	73	64	137

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	18	71	73
	Girls	22	64	64
	Total	40	135	137
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	29 (31)	99 (98)	100 (99)
	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 pupil	School	37.5
	National	39.8

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	23	17	40
	Average point score per candidate	8.1	9.1	8.5
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	22	15	37	9	4	13
	Average point score per candidate	7.7	9.9	8.6	1.9	1.5	1.8
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		81.0

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
653	71	6
0	0	0
53	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
46	1	0
61	3	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
4	2	0
6	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
15	0	0
3	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	59.46
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.3

Education support staff: Y8 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	516

Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68.3
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Average teaching group size: Y8 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25
Key Stage 4	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	2,868,921
Total expenditure	2,873,414
Expenditure per pupil	3,508
Balance brought forward from previous year	118,333
Balance carried forward to next year	113,840

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	24.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	725
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	53	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	34	5	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	38	10	5	4
The teaching is good.	29	59	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	46	14	10	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	46	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	22	52	15	4	8
The school is well led and managed.	34	49	6	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	52	6	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	38	18	4	14

Other issues raised by parents

Just two parents raised significant issues about communication with the college. The evidence suggested that this was a very rare problem.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The proportion of good and very good teaching, which helps to motivate pupils and ensures that appropriate progress is made.
- The positive response and attitudes of the vast majority of pupils to English, which are good and sometimes very good.
- The systematic way in which teaching and learning are now monitored and evaluated in order to secure improvements and identify priorities for future development.
- The clear and determined focus on improving basic standards of literacy.

Areas for improvement

- To improve results in English and English Literature at GCSE, and improve the performance and progress of boys at Key Stage 3.
- To build on the improvements in teaching by:
 - adopting strategies to maximise the engagement and involvement of all pupils in lessons through, for example, collaborative group work, use of talk partners, use of pupil whiteboards etc;
 - making explicit links between reading and writing, with more teacher demonstrations of skills to act as effective models to support pupils;
 - ensuring that spelling and sentence level skills are taught more systematically, and that improvements are made to the cohesion of pupils' extended writing.
- To improve the quality of the schemes of work, policies and procedures at Key Stage 3, so that they more rigorously underpin current practice and the improvements that have been made.

106. Pupils enter the college with literacy skills well below the national average. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards at both key stages have risen to just below national average and that pupils now make at least satisfactory progress at both key stages; pupils with SEN and EAL make good progress.

107. In 2002, attainment at the end of Year 9 in the national tests was below the national average but in line with the performance of similar schools. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection with nearly twice as many pupils (60 per cent) now reaching the expected standard of Level 5 or above. There has also been a marked increase in the percentage of pupils reaching Level 6 or above, with 22 per cent now reaching the higher levels compared with just five per cent at the last inspection.

108. At GCSE, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in English in 2002 was 31 per cent. This was well below both the national average and the performance of similar schools. Standards have been variable since the last inspection and there has been no overall improvement in results. Standards in English Literature GCSE, however, have risen slightly, with close to 40 per cent now achieving grades A*-C. Entries for both subjects are higher than is normally found.

109. Overall, girls attain more highly than boys at both key stages. The gap at Key Stage 3 is wider than the national difference, although at GCSE it is not significantly different to the national picture.

110. In speaking and listening, most pupils are willing to share their ideas and show respect for the views of others. Some pupils express strong opinions and higher attainers are able to offer more extended oral responses when given the opportunity to do so. However, overall there are too few opportunities at both key stages for pupils to use talk as a vehicle for investigating, evaluating or

testing hypotheses. Too much talk consists of brief responses to teacher-led questioning and there is a need to develop more pupil-to-pupil interaction, particularly in small groups. Seating arrangements in classrooms do not currently encourage group work, and this is having an adverse effect on boys' attainment in particular, where, in some lessons, there are significant numbers who contribute little to whole class discussions. The use of standard spoken English is also insecure and, in general, few pupils are able to vary their expression and vocabulary to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. However, the vast majority of pupils listen well to teachers and to each other, and whole class discussion work is usually co-operative and orderly.

111. In Years 8 and 9, pupils are able to offer a strong personal response to what they have read and can recognise general features of texts such as plot, character and major themes. Written responses to reading, however, tend to focus on summary at the expense of analysis and evaluation. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and their understanding of the language and structures of non-fiction in particular is improving due to an increased focus on this area.

112. In Years 10 and 11, the use of specialist literary terms to aid analysis is improving rapidly as a result of a more explicit focus from the department. Consequently, more pupils now have the critical language to identify the key features of literary and non-literary texts, though many still have difficulty explaining these effects in terms of the impact on the reader. Increased opportunities for close-textual analysis in GCSE classes is, however, beginning to improve this area of reading.

113. Overall, higher order reading skills (skimming, scanning, information retrieval, inference, deduction and evaluation) are improving, but their development remains a major priority, along with the significant minority of pupils at the lower end of attainment who remain hesitant readers, lacking fluency and confidence. These pupils need continuing additional support to develop a wider range of reading strategies. There are still few pupils who read independently either for pleasure or study.

114. Standards of writing have improved since the last inspection though they are still below the national average and remain a key priority for improvement. Higher and middle attainers at both key stages are able to write at length and a wider range of genres is now practised. Pupils show good imagination and creative writing remains a strength. However, there is a significant proportion of pupils who have difficulties varying their style to suit a range of purposes and audiences, particularly in non-fiction forms. This is being addressed positively by the department and is beginning to have an impact. Vocabulary develops well throughout the college as a result of some effective word level teaching. However, spelling and punctuation errors persist at all levels of ability. Pupils also adopt a limited range of sentence structures with few able to write complex sentences consciously and with confidence. A more explicit focus on using a variety of sentence structures is needed if pupils' extended writing is to improve further.

115. Pupils become more confident in planning and sustaining their writing as they progress through the college. There is, however, a need to improve the cohesion of extended writing, which suffers through inconsistent use of features such as tenses, pronouns, connectives and sentence punctuation. Presentation is generally good and many pupils show a real commitment to their writing. This was clearly demonstrated in a recent competition where large numbers of pupils from the college had some excellent poetry published in a book that resulted from the Young Writers' Poetry Competition in West Sussex.

116. The college has worked hard to improve standards of basic literacy and this has had a real impact. Standards seen during the inspection are now closer to the national average than they were at the last inspection and pupils now make appropriate progress from their point of entry to the college.

117. Overall, the quality of teaching in English is good. The teaching seen during the inspection was almost always at least satisfactory, with over half of all lessons seen judged to be good or better, and one in five very good. The teaching seen was generally stronger in Years 10 and 11, where almost all lessons were good or very good.

118. English teachers are appropriately qualified and subject knowledge is secure. Planning is sound and homework is well used as a means of consolidating and extending learning. Many of the weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed and this has improved the overall quality of the teaching. Teachers' expectations and the level of challenge in lessons are now better matched to pupils' abilities and there has been an improvement in classroom management. These have all had a positive effect on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils and have been major factors in the improvement of standards. There has also been a much more explicit focus on developing basic skills throughout Key Stage 3, which has included additional literacy lessons, revised schemes of work, additional staffing, and resources to support teaching. Good use has been made of LEA consultants to support teaching and attainment.

119. The best teaching seen was characterised by a lively pace and quiet but purposeful behavioural management. Lessons were carefully planned to ensure teaching sequences that supported and scaffolded pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations of all pupils were high and there was an assumption that all pupils can and will achieve to the best of their ability. There was also very explicit and routine use of technical vocabulary, and the expectation that all pupils would use the appropriate terminology as tools in their analyses. This was evident in a very effective Year 8 lesson, where the teacher prepared a creative writing quiz as a starter activity. This challenge was highly motivating for the pupils. The concepts explored during the starter such as metaphors, similes and personification were then applied to pupils' own reading of an extract from 'Goodnight Mister Tom,' and then to their own writing. This carefully prepared teaching sequence helped pupils to crystallise their learning of key technical vocabulary, and then transfer and apply it immediately to their own reading and writing.

120. In another highly effective Year 10 lesson, pupils explored a range of past scripts from anonymous candidates and were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses. These were then graded and the GCSE assessment criteria made transparent for the pupils. In this way, pupils were developing their own powers of evaluation and being made aware of the features required to achieve the highest grades. The teacher also probed pupils' responses further, challenging them to clarify answers and deepen their understanding. In these lessons, progress was swift and pupils rose to the challenge.

121. Where teaching did not meet these very high standards, objectives were unclear and therefore activities themselves lacked a clear focus. Opportunities were also missed to provide pupils with effective models of reading or writing and therefore, although skills were being practised, there was insufficient guidance on how to improve on the features required to produce high quality work.

122. Despite the considerable improvements that have been made in a relatively short time, and evidence of some high quality teaching, there are still some important general improvements that need to be made in teaching. For example, further opportunities for group oral work and other strategies to maximise engagement; more explicit links between reading and writing, with more teacher demonstration of skills to act as effective models to support pupils; and greater explicit attention to the progression of skills in spelling and sentence level development.

123. Overall, pupils' attitudes and response to English are good and are linked directly to the quality of teaching. Behaviour is also good. Pupils at the college respond positively to challenging work and high teacher expectations. The majority show a good level of commitment to lessons and they respect the views, values and beliefs of others. Most show pride in their work and are happy to present work to others. Relationships are usually good and whilst there are some examples of calling out and talking over the contributions of others, classes are generally orderly and well-managed. Generally, however, boys and girls do not mix in English classes and tend to remain in single sex groupings. Planned opportunities for pupils to collaborate in mixed gender groups would broaden perspectives, particularly of boys, and engage more pupils in structured discussion work.

124. Curriculum opportunities overall are satisfactory. Key Stage 4 is supported by a rigorous GCSE syllabus that sets the expectations and ensures range, breadth and balance. Weaknesses

remain, however, in the curriculum at Key Stage 3. Although there has been a recent focus on delivering more explicit basic skills and including a greater balance of fiction and non-fiction, this has not been fully reflected in the scheme of work, which is not sufficiently specific about skills to be taught, lines of progression and standards of outcomes. Consequently, guidance for staff is too general, allowing for variations in expectations. Statutory requirements are generally met though opportunities to use ICT to support and extend literacy are limited. Resources are generally adequate but the provision of multi-cultural literature at Key Stage 3 is also limited. Overall, assessment runs smoothly. Improvements have been made to target setting, with all pupils being aware of their target level and grades, which are appropriately challenging. Pupils are less aware, however, of what they specifically need to do to achieve those grades. This is the next phase for development. Overall, English makes a good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

125. The English Department is well led and managed. Responsibilities within the department are clearly defined with key staff specifically responsible for Key Stage 3 development, Key Stage 4 and co-ordination of literacy. There has been a very explicit focus on raising attainment and, although this is only just beginning to impact at GCSE, Key Stage 3 results have improved significantly and inspection evidence suggests improved attainment at both key stages. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is also beginning to have an impact. The monitoring and evaluation of performance, identified as a weakness at the last inspection, is now a key strength. It is systematic and focused, with monitoring reports well used to identify priorities. The department's action plan is also good and has clearly identified the key areas for development. Provision has, however, overtaken documentation and support materials. Standards have risen, practice has moved on, but the scheme of work at Key Stage 3 and the policies and procedures in the handbook do not reflect these improvements and developments. There is a real need to update these areas so that they truly underpin practice and policy, reflect tighter systems and procedures, and ensure consistency of application from all teachers.

126. The department has made good progress since the last inspection: behaviour in English is now good and there are few examples of indiscipline; the evaluation of performance is a key strength and standards are rising at both key stages; teaching has improved and is now good, with little evidence of unsatisfactory teaching. Whilst good progress has been made, the department is aware that there is still more to be done. The department is, however, well placed to make these further improvements.

LITERACY

127. The college's provision for developing literacy across the curriculum is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Most departments plan for literacy in their schemes of work and training has taken place on supporting reading and writing. Pupils transferring to the college who are below expectations are given an additional lesson per week in Year 8 with an explicit focus on developing literacy skills. The college has adopted a flexible approach to the Key Stage 3 Strategy catch-up units and it will be necessary to ensure that the effectiveness of the college's programme is fully monitored and its impact on pupil progress evaluated. Additional staffing and management responsibilities have also been created to drive the improvements across the college.

128. Individual examples of good literacy support outside of English can now be found in almost all subjects, with some very good practice found in PE, history and art. Key words are a feature in the majority of classrooms and most subjects where extended writing takes place have supportive frames for planning and producing written work. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud and good opportunities for collaborative group work are found particularly in history, RE and drama. The college's new marking policy is working well in some areas such as DT, history, RE and PE, but the picture is not yet consistent. There is also a need for more subject areas to encourage active reading strategies, and to analyse and demonstrate the specific types of writing required for high performance in their subjects.

DRAMA

129. Overall the quality of provision in drama is **very good**.

130. Attainment at GCSE has fluctuated considerably over recent years from below average to above national average in the latest 2002 examinations. Consistently, however, pupils have performed significantly better in drama than in the average of their other subjects.

131. Most pupils enter the college with little experience of drama and attainment on entry to Year 8 is below average. By the time pupils reach Year 11, standards are above average with pupils making very good progress during their time at the college.

132. At Key Stage 3, pupils' vocabulary is limited and their preferred option of working in single gender groups tends to produce some stereotyped scenarios, particularly from the boys. Where mixed gender groupings were observed, outcomes were less predictable and attainment was higher. In Key Stage 4, drama routines are clearly very well established and pupils work with conviction and commitment. Pupils' understanding of different styles of presentation develops very swiftly. Coursework at Key Stage 4 is very well presented and frequently demonstrates real commitment.

133. Pupils develop appropriate technical vocabulary as they move through the college. Improvisations are lively, with good use of voice and movement. A particular strength is the quality of reflection and evaluation: pupils are honest and discerning but entirely supportive of each other. Weaknesses are openly discussed in a constructive way, in a climate of respect and appreciation. Pupils are co-operative and relationships are good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Drama also makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

134. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good. It ranged from good to excellent. Lessons are well planned and classroom management is strong. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and both drama teachers are well equipped with a wide range of strategies to secure maximum engagement and involvement. Expectations of all pupils are particularly high and deficiencies in performance are dealt with directly but sensitively. Teachers are energetic and engaging and this enthusiasm for drama translates to the pupils and has a direct impact on pupil attitudes and progress.

135. The Drama Department is very well led and managed by the head of department who has been in post for just one term. Already, however, significant developments have been introduced including a new GCSE syllabus and some revised schemes of work at Key Stage 3, which reflect a greater emphasis on engaging boys through physical theatre. There is a very good handbook outlining clear policies and procedures. The end of unit assessment system is a powerful tool for ensuring that pupils know how well they have performed, the level they are at, and the specific skills required to improve still further. The department has also improved its use of technology and now has a digital camera and camcorder in the studio, which are used regularly. Evaluation of performance is also strong: issues from the previous inspection report have been considered and acted upon. There is good support for pupils' literacy and there are plans to extend the tradition of productions at the school. The drama club running in Years 8 and 9 is well attended.

136. The strengths of provision identified in the last report have been maintained and strategies have been put in place to address the deficiencies. The department is well placed to improve still further.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- The management and leadership of the subject.
- Pupils' good progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of pupils' progress over the short term.
- The schemes of work.
- The full integration of the National Numeracy Scheme at Key Stage 3.
- The use of ICT.

138. Pupils enter the school in Year 8 with numeracy skills that are well below average but they make good progress through Years 8 and 9. The standard of work seen indicates that attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations. This constitutes a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection when standards were well below expectations. The results of the national tests in Year 9 in 2001 and 2002 show attainment to be below the national average in comparison to being well below in 1999. Between 2001 and 2002 those achieving above average levels increased by 50 per cent. Compared with similar schools the results in 2002 remain below the average.

139. The proportion of pupils reaching grade C and above, in each of the 2001 and 2002 GCSE examinations, was well below the national average. The percentage gaining grade G and above was above the national average in 2001 but just below in 2002. This means that very few pupils have failed in the subject in the last two years. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the high grades, A*-B, over these years has been well below average. Boys significantly outperformed girls in 2001 but this was completely reversed in 2002. Close monitoring of any such differences needs to be carried out regularly and appropriate action taken to reduce any gap.

140. In Years 8 and 9, in the lessons observed and in written work seen, most pupils are reaching levels of attainment that are in line with expected national levels for their ages. Pupils in upper sets often produce work that is above these levels. In Year 8, for example, they can calculate interior angles to polygons, plot the graph of a linear function, know the basic properties of simple quadratic functions, round decimal numbers to three decimal places and to a given number of significant figures, multiply and divide fractions and expand and simplify algebraic expressions. In one class pupils solved simultaneous equations through graphical intersection. Lower attaining pupils show a mostly sound understanding of some important basic concepts such as approximations, multiples, factors, equivalent fractions, simple probability outcomes and measuring angles. In Year 8 classes, lower attaining pupils can determine patterns in a number sequence, through investigation, and arrive at a rule, whereas higher attainers can substitute numbers in a derived expression and find the 'nth' term. In Year 9 high attainers show improving confidence in the application of more complex algebra, including the construction of formulae and the plotting of graphs of quadratic and simple cubic functions. They show good understanding of transformations and can solve problems using sine and cosine. Such pupils also use negative numbers, reciprocals and standard form confidently. Work in lower-attaining groups indicates progress in the application of basic operations, including percentages, in calculating volumes, constructing conversion graphs, understanding symmetry and in the gathering and representation of data. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are making good progress.

141. In Years 10 and 11, attainment in work seen is below the expected national levels but, as in Key Stage 3, there is a wide range of ability found. Much of the syllabus is covered in Year 10 and so Year 11 is largely used for review and further consolidation. Higher attainers pupils extend their data-handling skills to deriving cumulative frequency curves, preparing scattergrams, determining

positive and negative correlation and using standard deviation. They can investigate problems involving loci and simple constructions, derive quadratic and cubic functions from investigations into sequences and apply Pythagoras' theorem. They understand and apply equivalent fractions, percentages, probability, complex decimals, square roots and can express numbers in standard form. Much of the work of lower sets centres on consolidation of basic skills and concepts through practice but progress in algebra is evident, for example, and pupils succeed in solving linear equations or, at a lower level, drawing graphs of linear function with positive numbers. They can also carry out measurements, draw probability diagrams, work out averages and percentages and calculate equivalent fractions and simple decimal fractions. They apply their understanding to a range of real-life situations and effectively use data gathering and handling skills in investigating and solving problems. Whilst there is some above average work in the Year 11 coursework seen, such as in finding the largest area formed by a given piece of string, the majority of the work is at levels below average. The weakest aspects are in explaining findings, and here low literacy levels play a part, and in mathematical reasoning. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are making satisfactory progress.

142. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress across both key stages.

143. Most pupils show an adequate grasp of the basic operational skills needed for the level of work they meet but overall numeracy levels are below average. This slows progress at times. There is a lack of confidence evident, even in simple multiplication and division sums, and too ready a recourse to the use of calculators. A more rigorous integration and application of the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 8 and 9 would improve this, particularly through the use of a structured and more challenging programme of mental exercises at the start of each lesson.

144. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall but good in Years 8 and 9. Behaviour is good. Pupils show a commitment to their work, stick to the tasks set and respond well to the teachers' instructions. They usually work co-operatively and constructively in class, often consulting and helping each other, but the rate of work could be improved in some classes. There is too little opportunity taken to engage with the teacher. In being compliant and willing, pupils are often content to accept the instructions and tasks set in a passive rather than inquiring manner. There is no disharmony evident between different racial groups or between boys and girls.

145. The quality of teaching is good overall but better at Key Stage 3. The central strengths in the teaching lie in the management of classes, the individual support given in class, the sharing of objectives and an emphasis on methods and keywords. The method of using applications to real-life situations to support and enhance knowledge and understanding is particularly effective. The teachers show good knowledge and understanding and explanations and instructions are usually clear. The displays in the department are good and add valuable support to learning. Whilst the effectiveness of teaching methods is generally good there are some weaknesses in the planning of lessons. The learning objectives of lessons are usually apparent but the means by which they are to be assessed in class or through homework, so that pupils have a more immediate awareness of their progress is not always indicated. Whilst good use is made of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and set long-term grade targets there is a need to assist pupils more in their immediate advance in understanding of topics through short-term, specific learning targets. The overall pace of most lessons is satisfactory but timing of each phase is often adrift and leads to insufficient time for an effective conclusion to the lesson. This is an important time for re-emphasising the key concepts covered. As there is a wide range in attainment levels within the school and in most sets, the lesson plans need to address specific needs more clearly. Although extension work is usually available, specific learning should be set for groups or individuals, rather than relying on how much work each pupil can cover of the same exercises or tasks.

146. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The department works collaboratively, with a sense of purpose, towards the aim of raising standards. The new head of faculty has analysed strengths and weaknesses and identified priorities. The new handbook is a well-structured and useful document and addresses the required policies. There is an appropriate development plan. The schemes of work require comprehensive reviews. They are not a good

resource for planning lessons. Links between learning objectives and assessment need to be included. The use of ICT to support learning must be integrated more fully and the contribution that studying mathematics can make to spiritual, moral and cultural development must also be addressed.

NUMERACY

147. Skills in numeracy are below average. At present there is no cohesive approach to raising standards across the curriculum. Consultation with departments has taken place and a policy is soon to be drawn up. Training of staff is due to begin in the summer term 2003. The opportunities for developing numeracy through all subjects have not been properly identified as yet. They tend to be implicit or incidental in lesson plans. Calculations, scales and the gathering and representation of data are naturally found in use regularly in science, design technology and geography but incidents also come up from time to time in other subjects.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The number of pupils who gained the expected level (level 5+) in the end of Year 9 standard attainment tests (SATs) in 2002 was close to the national average and has nearly doubled since 1999.
- Good quality teaching enables pupils currently to achieve well, particularly those in Year 8.
- The head of faculty provides a clear vision for the work of the department and has brought together a strong teaching team whom he supports well.
- The science curriculum and accreditation is well matched to the needs of the pupils and is soundly based on good quality schemes of work.
- Pupils' learning is well supported by good quality textbook and learning resources and good use is made of ICT as an information source, particularly for Year 10 and Year 11. The learning resources for AS Level physics are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have not made sufficient progress over time and the standards which pupils and students attain in GCSE and GCE are not as high as they should be.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are not used sufficiently systematically to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in science.
- Written feedback does not clearly identify what pupils need to do to attain the next National Curriculum level and hence work towards their targets.

149. The science department has made significant improvements in all areas of its provision from a low in 1999. These improvements date from the appointment of the present head of faculty in September 2001 and are firmly based on the strong teaching team which he has brought together. Of the five other full-time members of staff, four have been appointed in the last eighteen months. For pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 there has been a lack of systematic development of their basic science skills over time.

150. When pupils enter the school, their scientific knowledge, skills and understanding are well below those which would be expected and their literacy and numeracy skills are weak and adversely affect their performance in science. In the present Year 8, these weaknesses are being addressed well and generally these pupils are making good progress. However, the lack of systemic development of pupils' science skills over time for those pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 has left a residual underachievement which is being addressed more slowly. This means that these pupils can still achieve more.

151. The standards which pupils obtained in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below those expected nationally and followed the pattern established between 1999 to 2001. In the 2002

SATs for pupils aged 14, the results were close to the national average and the number who obtained the expected level, Level 5 and above, has nearly doubled since 1999. This represents significant improvement. The attainment for students who study science post-16 are also well below those which would be expected and have been so for a number of years. To address these weaknesses in attainment at GCSE and GCE, the science faculty has made radical changes to the way in which science is taught and to the accreditation systems which are used. There is now a very positive commitment to matching the science curriculum to the needs of the students. Modular science schemes for GCSE have been replaced by 'linear' assessment and the new vocational GCSE has been introduced for a pilot group in Year 10. These changes are having a positive effect on pupils' attainment by generating greater interest and self-esteem. The flexibility in teaching and learning styles offered by the vocational approach will have a further positive impact on pupils' attainment when the pilot is extended.

152. Good quality schemes of work have been developed which for pupils in Years 8 and 9 are soundly based on a commercial package. Across the school, pupils' learning is well-supported by good quality textbooks and other learning resources such as the Internet. The Faculty has a good range of resource materials which pupils can use and there is a further good range available in the school library. The teaching of science is effectively based on investigative and practical work. This has a very positive impact on engaging the interest of pupils and gives them good opportunities to achieve well. Generally, pupils' practical skills are good, and in a Year 10 lesson focusing on investigating exo- and endothermic reactions, pupils made good gains in their understanding of these difficult topics through the practical approach which was used. Using a topic-based approach has enabled good links to be made across year groups which give good coherence to pupils' learning. For example in Year 8, pupils study diet and healthy eating, in Year 9 this is extended to Health and Fitness and in Year 11 pupils work on the Food Production and the Environment module for GCSE. For the Year 10 vocational GCSE group, this theme is pursued through work related to the science of commercial production. Another good example of the focus on the investigative approach to stimulate pupils' interest was a Year 10 lesson on the Earth in Space. This rather 'dry' topic was made interesting and accessible to pupils by using the Internet to access the NASA web site and download the results from the Mariner space probes.

153. The quality of teaching in science is good overall, with a significant number of lessons in which teaching was judged to be very good. All teachers have good subject knowledge and they set high expectations of the pupils. This was particularly the case in a Year 8 lesson which focused on organic food where pupils were encouraged well to develop their thinking skills and form an opinion for or against organic food production based on evidence taken from resource material. In a Year 9 lesson very good focus was given to the development of thinking skills when pupils were asked to summarise arguments for and against the contention that 'Mendeleev deserved to be famous'. All teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, all of which are firmly based on a practical or investigative approach which is well matched to the needs of the pupils and stimulates their interest and concentration. Teachers manage the pupils well and establish good relationships which are used effectively to head off potential conflict. Many pupils in all year groups but particularly those in Years 8 and 9 are immature and display inappropriate behaviour at times, but this is managed well and is not allowed to affect learning. Lessons have good pace and teachers challenge pupils well through the use of carefully focused questioning. Support staff make a strong contribution to science lessons by good targeted support for those pupils with specific learning needs, particularly literacy needs. For example in a Year 10 lesson about energy in chemistry, the two support assistants worked effectively to enable a group of six pupils with very weak literacy skills to take a full part in the lesson. They also helped others in the group so that all pupils made good gains in their learning.

154. Across the school, the literacy and numeracy skills of many pupils are weak and adversely affect their science learning. Teachers make good use of keywords to develop pupils' understanding but they do not always make sufficient use of writing frames and other aides to help pupils with their science. This is particularly so with respect to pupils' note-taking skills to ensure that all pupils leave lessons with useful reference material from which they can revise effectively. Teachers mark work regularly, but written feedback does not clearly indicate what pupils need to do

to attain the next National Curriculum level and how this will enable them to meet their personal targets. Teachers know their pupils well and oral feedback in lessons is more helpful in identifying what pupils need to do to improve.

155. The head of faculty has only recently been appointed, but the significant improvements which have been made from the low in 1999 are attributable to his leadership. He has a clear vision for the future of the faculty and he has articulated this well to his colleagues. Of the five other full-time teachers in the faculty, four have been appointed by the head of faculty in the last 18 months. Through a carefully structured programme of classroom observation and scrutiny of pupils' work, he is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher and works very effectively to ensure that the faculty works to their strengths. The priorities for the development of the faculty are totally appropriate. The curriculum and accreditation are now well matched to the needs of the pupils and good schemes of work and learning resources have been developed to support pupils' learning. Of particular note are the very high quality resources which have been implemented for pupils in Year 12 studying AS Level physics in response to the poor attainment and drop-out from the course last year. This subject is led by a new and inexperienced member of staff but who has been well supported by the head of faculty, and as with other teachers in the faculty, this level of empowerment has helped the teacher to develop his confidence. This has a significant impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The impact of these changes is particularly evident for pupils in Year 8 who are now making good progress from a low starting point. The next stages of development are clearly identified in the faculty improvement plan. These include using more detailed analysis of external attainment data to focus teaching on areas of weakness and producing a more comprehensive faculty handbook which sets out the vision for science across the school and celebrates the achievements of the department.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently very good with many outstanding features.
- Standards are very high and pupils produce work of very good quality particularly in ceramics.
- Pupils have a very rich and varied experience in art that includes ceramics, printing, textiles, painting and drawing.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is excellent and helps them understand how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Pupils enter the art rooms ready to be artists and quickly become totally absorbed in their work.
- The art department is very well run and everyone, including the technician, plays an important part in its success.
- Examples of artists and craft people's work from a wide range of cultures are used very well to inspire pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Increasing the opportunities pupils have to use computers to produce their own art.

157. Examination results at GCSE are very high with many more pupils achieving the higher grades than nationally. Both boys and girls do well. Standards in Year 8 and 9 are also high. The very good teaching pupils receive helps them to achieve well very quickly. This good progress ensures they produce work of a high standard in lessons, often better than might be expected. This is true of pupils with special educational needs who achieve real success, for example, one pupil with a statement for special educational needs produced an excellent plant design on fabric before any of her classmates.

158. Teaching throughout the art department is very good. There are many great strengths shared by all teachers and a key to the success of the department is that there are many areas of consistency. All staff treat pupils very respectfully and relationships are excellent. Pupils are

extremely supportive of one another's efforts and regularly admire and comment on each other's work. In the very best lessons the end of the session is used to rehearse what pupils have learnt and to allow them to evaluate the work that has been done and to identify progress made. Pupils start lessons expecting to work as artists and know that the teachers have plenty to teach them. Teachers are extremely good at giving pupils important technical skills that make certain they can produce their creative ideas effectively. For example, in a ceramics lesson a Year 11 pupil was able to translate her excellent sketchbook ideas into reality and produce a large and innovative final piece with strong catlike properties because she had a good understanding of how to construct with clay.

159. Teachers expect a great deal from pupils, not just in terms of quantity of work but also quality and application. They help pupils in this by structuring lessons so that the pace is constantly demanding. Every minute of each hour-long lesson is used productively. In a Year 9 lesson where pupils had to draw a still life the teacher broke the lesson into many parts. This allowed him to give pupils short tasks with clear time limits, to set new challenges and to add new information as relevant, building up their knowledge systematically. By the time the lesson finished everyone had learnt a great deal, worked extremely hard and produced good quality drawings. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning in art and are well motivated, expect to learn, to work hard and quickly become totally engrossed in their work. Computers are beginning to be used by pupils to produce original art work but this is relatively underdeveloped.

160. Sketchbooks are of exceptional quality; pupils use them to record information about techniques, biographical details and the important work of famous artists as well as experimental ideas and designs for future work. These sketchbooks are an excellent source of material and information and show clearly how pupils' ideas develop and improve. Every pupil takes pride in their own sketchbooks and is keen to discuss their content. Teachers also value the pupils' efforts and mark them sensitively and rigorously. Pupils also take great pride in their work which is always completed to a high standard. Ceramic work, for example, is large, highly finished and well glazed often with under-glaze colours effectively used. Great emphasis is placed on pupils' literacy skills and requirements for written work are as demanding and just as thoroughly assessed and improved as art work.

161. Assessment is of the highest quality and has an extremely positive impact on pupils' progress. Every pupil has a target grade for their work, recorded in the sketchbook, that can go up or down as time progresses. Each pupil knows how well she or he is doing and what they have to do to improve. Their work is exceptionally well marked. Teachers write on removable gummed notes; recording if the piece of work met the required grade or not and why, and then how the work might be further improved. Pupils often act on this advice and improve the piece, which the teacher then re-grades.

162. During lessons teachers are extremely good at asking different questions of individual pupils to see how much they have understood and to help them to become even more analytical and to move forward in their thinking. This is one of the very successful ways teachers help pupils whatever their ability make good progress in lessons.

163. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the many strengths identified in the last report have been maintained. Leadership and management of both the art faculty and the art department are very good and ensure that everyone works as a team giving pupils a consistently high quality experience. The staff individually have a good range of specialisms and this is reflected in the experience pupils are given. The very wide curriculum in art covers two-dimensional as well as three-dimensional work and gives pupils opportunities to work with many materials and techniques including paint, print, ceramics and textiles. The accommodation for art is extremely good, rooms are light, spacious and very well organised and contribute well to the pupils' art experience.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management are good and, following an audit of provision across the curriculum, have established a relevant and comprehensive programme of study.
- Teaching is good and teachers challenge their pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in practical aspects of citizenship, both inside the college and in the local community.

Areas for improvement

- The assessment of pupils' performance is underdeveloped.
- Because of issues in relation to the timetable, a significant number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not receive discrete citizenship.

165. In the modules studied so far in Years 8 to 11, pupils' attainment is in line with expected standards and their achievement is good. In Year 9, for example, pupils make good progress in understanding the nature of stereotyping, how and why it often arises and why individuals and groups may be upset by it. Pupils experience problems with literacy but they are becoming more confident in discussing issues with their peers and presenting the results of their findings to the rest of the class. In Year 10, youngsters not only talk quite cogently about consumer rights and responsibilities, they learn from each other as they consider the qualities needed for a successful work experience placement. Moreover, they evaluate their own characteristics and discuss them with their classmates as they prepare for an employer interview.

166. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, is good overall and is characterised by secure subject knowledge of teachers, effective classroom management and an emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their own learning. In a good Year 9 lesson, for example, pupils who often find the work difficult were encouraged to collaborate in pairs and groups to approach a quite complex topic about thoughtless language, which can often offend others. Because the teacher treated the youngsters with the utmost dignity, they responded in a positive fashion, behaved well and thoroughly enjoyed the session. Teachers' use of humour and praise is effective in engaging their pupils and the majority, therefore, adopt a most mature approach to their studies.

167. Leadership and management are good and have established a comprehensive programme, following a detailed audit of where citizenship is delivered in other subjects of the curriculum. Furthermore, teachers with specialist knowledge in particular areas have prepared thought-provoking and challenging resources to support their pupils during lessons. Pupils in Year 11, for example, are fascinated by a series of cartoons, which make them think quite deeply about ethical considerations in relation to embryo technology. Pupils receive tuition in a wide range of topics in relation to the diverse nature of British society, law and order, rights and responsibilities, the media, health education and issues around government and politics. Moreover, they have many opportunities to take an active part in the democratic process when they exercise their right to vote during the elections for pupil representatives on the college council. Members of the sixth form, in particular, benefit from the enrichment and community service programmes and, inside the college, they support younger pupils in lessons. In addition, each year group takes responsibility for a charity appeal on an annual basis and pupils demonstrate their willingness to provide assistance for those less fortunate.

168. The citizenship programme is staffed by talented and industrious teachers, who are deeply committed to the welfare of the pupils in their charge. They believe that active participation in citizenship activities is of the essence if pupils are to be prepared effectively for life after compulsory school age. The subject area is, therefore, well placed for future development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Hardworking nature and competence of the head of department.
- Teaching is good overall; lessons are planned well and proceed at a good pace.
- The progress made since the last inspection two years ago.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- The standards at GCSE.
- Curriculum time available for design and technology in Years 8 – 9.
- Integration of ICT as tool for effective teaching and learning through the whole design and technology curriculum.

170. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average. However, the pupils enter the school with standards that are below average and their progress is good over the key stage. In lessons the more able pupils are sufficiently challenged and reach higher standards. Standards are higher in manufacturing, in which all pupils make good progress. Standards of designing are average. There are particular strengths in the pupils' use of research to support their designing, their ability to record and communicate their ideas and to evaluate and improve them as they progress.

171. The pupils' progress in Years 8 to 9 is hindered by the lack of time available. The emphasis in most lessons is on manufacturing, to ensure the pupils finish making their products in the limited time available. Lesson plans ensure that pupils apply and build on previous learning as they move through the year. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the subject by the age of 14. They know how to use tools and equipment to a satisfactory standard and achieve a satisfactory level of consistency. Satisfactory standards were seen in their food technology products, graphics and in the resistant materials projects. Their knowledge of the use of control systems and computer aided design is limited.

172. The standards the pupils achieve at GCSE by the end of Year 11 are below average. The results in 2002 show no improvement over the previous year. Results in design and technology are above the average of other GCSE results in the school. The performance of boys is better than girls overall and there is a significant difference at higher levels. Standards in food technology were below those attained in other aspects of the subject. Pupils were more successful with the coursework element of the examination. All evidence indicates that, although standards could be higher and examination results for 16 year olds could be better, the quality of teaching and learning has been effective in promoting at least satisfactory achievement.

173. Current groups in Year 11 are achieving a higher standard than this in their practical work although their folder work is not always at a satisfactory stage of completion for this time in the year. Overall pupils' attainment in Year 11 lessons is average. They have satisfactorily mastered a range of skills in making products and their knowledge and understanding of the properties of materials is generally good. Though overall standards are average, higher attaining pupils are attempting a range of projects in the graphics option and are using drawing skills well to develop their ideas. Pupils' research is thorough and helps to shape designs such as a packaging project in Year 10 based on commercial designs which the pupils sketched and developed to suit the materials and skills available. There is good use of ICT in the presentation of design folders usually text and graphics processing. Computer aided design is beginning to be used to produce design drawings but there is not a structured approach.

174. Pupils generally work purposefully and demonstrate a positive attitude to the subject. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are more confident in practical work and help each other in their tasks, offering comment and criticism in a positive manner. They are prepared to give up their own time to complete project work.

175. The teaching and its impact on learning is good. All staff work hard to develop productive relationships with classes and these are mostly good. Teachers have a wide range of knowledge and experience and plan work carefully to suit the particular group of pupils in each class. Teaching challenges pupils well in their practical work and the skills of designing are taught in the same detail. The teaching is well planned and leads to a coherent learning programme that is well supported with prepared lesson notes and work sheets which can then be retained to build up a good picture of individual progress. There is good practice of individual mentoring and assessment. Each day's progress is reviewed effectively in the plenary session at the end of lessons. In lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge engages pupils. Their skilful handling of materials and equipment enables pupils to be successful. All staff work hard to develop productive relationships with classes and these are generally good. Pupils are rightly proud of what they achieve. In a Year 11 food technology lesson they were keen to share their success when preparing different types of food products to a specification. The lessons are well structured and teachers' questioning is good. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and the good range of activities ensures that all pupils are actively involved in their learning. New knowledge and skills are introduced as needed so that pupils can immediately use them to develop their understanding as seen in the Year 8 lesson where pupils were making a model tug boat. In the best lessons there is a collaborative approach to the learning that encourages pupils to become curious and ask questions. The planning and purpose of the lesson is sufficiently focused and the objectives are shared sufficiently with the pupils. There are good introductions to lessons which link with previous work and teachers use technical vocabulary to help pupils understand and extend their vocabulary. The differing needs of pupils are well met and their designing and making skills are sufficiently developed. Teachers work well with pupils with special educational needs, and are aware of targets in individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the teachers provide extra support for learning. Teachers support literacy well and are careful to introduce new words, they provide writing frames and design frames and this gives pupils better access to the written elements of examinations. There is an emphasis on health and safety during lessons.

176. The display of pupils' work in classrooms and the open areas around the department is good and this contributes to pupils' interest and the development of their ideas. The lessons are characterised by the quality of teachers' focus on the progress and needs of individual pupils. The effective challenging, but supportive, relationships between the teachers and the pupils, coupled with on-going individual feedback and support, ensure that all pupils make progress.

177. Homework contributes markedly to pupils' learning. Key words are well reinforced in many lessons. Classes are competently managed and pupils are attentive, co-operative and eager to learn. Pupils make best progress in the lessons where activities are practical and challenging and they have opportunities to discuss their ideas with others. There is on-going marking and assessment to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teachers have a wide understanding of pupils' individual needs and provide appropriately challenging tasks for the more able pupils and alternative ways for pupils with particular learning needs to understand. The use of ICT is not integrated in the schemes of work and there are too few opportunities to use computers to support teaching and learning.

178. Leadership and management is good. The head of department is hardworking and competent. He has a clear view of how the department should be developed and is fully aware of the need to provide support for pupils in both key stages in the form of monitoring and assessment of attainment and progress. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all which is reflected in the work of the department. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. There is good delegation to ensure the effective contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities. There is rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, which is recorded and reported to the senior management team. This initiative is having a significant impact on raising achievement. The curriculum has been developed with the result that the activities are relevant to pupils. Schemes of work are in place giving detail of long-term planning to show what knowledge, skills and understanding it is intended that pupils of differing abilities should achieve. The assessment system and the analysis of data is used to make predictions of grades at GCSE. The number of rooms

available is good and the department presents a good learning environment. Department meetings are used sufficiently well to discuss issues to improve policy and standards in the subject. The technician provides a good level of support and makes an effective contribution to the smooth running of the department. The development plan is good. There is a focus on raising standards and there are specific academic targets. Curriculum time in Years 8 and 9 is only four per cent at the present time and this has an impact on the progress that pupils make. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the areas of teaching, lesson planning and pupil achievement.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good leadership and management have led to an effective and common approach to lesson planning.
- The consistent implementation of a multi-part lesson strategy including effective starters and plenaries has improved attainment and progress by improving concentration and clarity of objectives.
- Relationships and class management are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The department needs to develop pupils underlying grasp of the inter-related nature of geographical questions and to improve their ability to give of their best under time pressure.
- The department should consider looking closely at how best to share resources to convey complex criteria and concepts during the main part of lessons.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to promote learning and progress.
- OHT and video replay equipment is inadequate.

180. Standards of attainment are just below national expectations in Year 9. Given their starting points this represents good progress and achievement. It also represents an improvement on attainment at the last inspection.

181. GCSE results have been broadly in line with national averages for the past two years. Based on work seen and lesson observations, standards in Year 10 are broadly in line with national averages and overall standards in Year 11 are just below national averages. This also represents a significant improvement since the last report.

182. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils can, with direction, describe and explain both human and physical processes. They can make appropriate links between a range of factors and some can show how they interact to produce distinctive characteristics. The more able pupils can also explain orally how values and attitudes can lead to different judgements on for example environmental issues. They can work through structured investigations in a reasonably mature way working effectively in both pairs and groups. Conceptual language is reasonably well developed. They have a reasonable working grasp of zoning and modelling. However, their underlying grasp of fundamental geographical questions is weak. They do not have a well developed sense of what questions must always be asked of any location nor of how they fit together to formulate a geographical enquiry. This means that when instructed to do so they can explore climate, topography, resources, population and economic development reasonably well, however they do not grasp how they necessarily fit together and enable an enquiry to take place. This limits their ability to pose their own questions and develop their own lines of enquiry. They can produce well-reasoned answers given time and a structure, but are weaker under time pressure.

183. A similar picture emerges in Years 10 and 11. Analysis of the most recent results at GCSE, carried out by the new head of department, shows clearly that pupils did well in coursework and the decision making exercise, but performed poorly in the terminal examination. This partly

relates to their underlying grasp of geographical questions, so that they tend to learn information on case studies by rote, rather than as part of a coherent process of geographical enquiry. It also relates to insufficient practice at providing answers under real time pressure, both oral and written.

184. Teaching is nonetheless good overall at both key stages. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. There are good relationships, good behaviour management strategies, clear objectives for individual lessons and generally good questioning techniques linked to good subject knowledge. All teachers make productive use of multi-part lessons, which aids concentration, learning and progress. There is also frequently good and productive use of groupwork. All teachers make good use of starters and plenaries, some examples of which are excellent as with a lower Year 9 set, where all pupils were actively involved in a debate addressing complex concepts. The head of department sets a good example in terms of having an unremitting focus on conceptual development across all year groups.

185. Learning seen in lessons, in terms of the clear objectives set, is generally good across Years 8 to 10, although a little more variable in Year 11, where one class lacks the motivation and concentration of the others despite well organised teaching.

186. The department could improve effectiveness by looking at ways to develop pupils underlying grasp of the inter-related nature of geographical questions and to improve their ability to give of their best under time pressure. The department could also develop and share common resources more effectively to convey complex criteria and concepts during the main part of lessons where sometimes complex concepts are explained orally, without the visual reinforcement that the department uses so effectively at the start of lessons. Both OHT and video replay equipment is currently inadequate to make best use of such resources. ICT is not used sufficiently to promote learning and progress nor is it currently available within classrooms as it needs to be..

187. Assessment is good overall and is characterised by an accurate analysis of the levels at which pupils are operating. Teachers' marking is a little variable but is generally at least sound and sometimes good. The department has an agreement on a realistic approach to formative marking which is increasingly being implemented effectively.

188. Leadership and management are good. After a thorough analysis of departmental performance, the new head of department has made good progress in instituting common and productive approaches to teaching and learning. The department makes a good contribution to the development of attitudes and values by its treatment of environmental issues. The three teachers work together well as a team. Resources other than those mentioned above are adequate. Teachers clearly care deeply for their pupils and their subject. Relationships are generally good. The department is well placed to make further progress.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management are good and have resulted in the establishment of effective strategies for improvement.
- Teaching is good and challenges pupils to think more deeply about the subject matter and to consider effective examination technique.
- Assessment practice is very good and teachers offer their pupils extensive advice on how they may improve the quality of their work.
- Standards are rising at a good rate and pupils' skills in the analysis and evaluation of source material are becoming more sophisticated.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results have been below average for three years and in 2002 were well below. Pupils are under-represented at grades A and A*.
- The department should consider further research into the many different ways in which their pupils learn, in order to inform future teaching methods more closely.
- ICT is underdeveloped as a learning tool.

190. In work seen during the inspection, standards of work are below average at the end of Year 9. However, because pupils enter the college with well-below average levels of attainment, achievement is good and there are examples, in both years, of pupils performing at levels which are better than expected. Many pupils find the understanding and use of historical terminology difficult and their analysis of source material is underdeveloped. Nonetheless, literacy is improving and extending writing, in particular the slave diaries completed by pupils in Year 9, is a strong feature.

191. GCSE results have been below average for three years and were well below in 2002. However, because of very good teaching, constant challenge, high expectations and the effective use of teacher-prepared resources, standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are much better than past examination performance indicates and are now in line with those expected nationally. Achievement is very good and pupils have a secure knowledge of the nature of evidence and of the questions to ask of it, in order to come to convincing conclusions. They defend their views with skill and their examination technique is improving at a rapid pace. The comments made by pupils in Year 10 on the reasons for the outbreak of the Second World War and the contributions by pupils in Year 11 on the New Deal in America are well considered, balanced and rooted in objectivity.

192. Teaching is good overall and is very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers work within a consistent framework but display flexibility and individuality. They have secure subject knowledge, very good classroom management and are invariably concerned to involve all their pupils actively in what the subject has to offer. Paired and group work are features of all lessons and pupils thrive on being given responsibility for their learning and progress. The pace of lessons is often electric and pupils rise to the high levels of challenge and expectation by demonstrating a real willingness to contribute and also high levels of engagement in the subject-matter. Teachers place great emphasis on literacy and work hard to create an almost tangible sense of audience before their pupils deliver their presentations. In a very good lesson on the problems facing Black Americans in the 1960s, for example, pupils were beside themselves with enjoyment when their classmates read aloud, sometimes in American accents, extracts from speeches by Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Pupils respond very positively to the approach and are grateful for the variety of methods delivered by their teachers, of whom they speak highly. Furthermore, the fact that pupils present their assignments with such care demonstrates just how much pride they have in their work.

193. Assessment of pupils' performance is very good and is characterised by an accurate analysis of the levels at which they are operating. Moreover, teachers' marking is often outstanding and gives pupils extensive advice on what they need to do to improve their work. As a

consequence, pupils are well aware of their strengths, know their weaknesses, and can explain exactly what they must practise if they are to reach the next level. This understanding of where improvements can be made is reinforced not only by teachers' advice on effective examination technique, but also by the many opportunities which pupils have for self-evaluation.

194. Leadership and management are good and, following a detailed analysis and evaluation of departmental performance, have established effective measures for improvement, which are already having a positive impact on standards. The GCSE curriculum has been modified in the light of pupils' preferences, there is now more emphasis on source work in Years 8 and 9 and the department has recognised, quite rightly, that improved literacy is one of the keys to future success. Classroom display is outstanding and pupils' work is a predominant feature. Teacher-prepared resources are of the highest standard and they are used very effectively to support pupils in their search for the truth. Teachers care deeply for the welfare, both academic and social, of the pupils in their charge and are currently looking at methods to elicit more exactly the different ways in which learning takes place. Teachers are talented, industrious and committed to improvement. The department is, therefore, well placed for future development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

195. Overall provision for ICT as a subject and across the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is mostly good and often very good
- Teachers' relationships with pupils are good.
- Monitoring of teaching within the department is very good.
- Provision of relevant coursework such as building a website.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment and the use of this and other data to improve standards.
- Ensuring full coverage of the national curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- The use of ICT in all subjects.
- Monitoring of the overall performance of the department.

196. In 2002, teachers assessed pupils' standards as well below average at the end of Year 9. Work seen during the inspection was better than this and standards are broadly average. This is a result of better planning, the positive attitudes of the pupils and good teaching.

197. Pupils in Year 8 are competent users of the Internet making good use of a web browser to collect information on weather in different countries. This is organised to produce a PowerPoint presentation. In Year 9 pupils set up folders for a website and use web authoring software to create this. These pupils are also able to model a cash flow in a hotel using a spreadsheet, create a room booking database and mail-merge using a wordprocessor.

198. Overall results for 2002 represented an improvement on previous years' results. Forty per cent of pupils taking the GCSE examination achieved the higher A* - C grades in 2002. However, all 20 pupils who sat the GNVQ examination passed at this level. This gives an overall average of 56 per cent of pupils gaining the equivalent A* - C grade. Girls have achieved more highly than boys in the GCSE examination. The practice of including special needs pupils in ICT lessons ensures that these pupils make good progress and at the same time, intervention by the extra person in the room has a positive effect on the achievements of other pupils.

199. Evidence from the pupils' work and observation of lessons shows that in Years 10 and 11 they are achieving average standards. These pupils evaluate the effectiveness of web pages on the Internet and use the information to improve the quality of their own work, which is to provide an information source for people with twins. Pupils are able to create macros for a booking system

using a spreadsheet. They are also familiar with the layout of different forms of business documents and the creation of templates using a wordprocessor.

200. Although all pupils in Years 8 and 9 have good access to a programme for the development of ICT capability through lessons in this subject, there is insufficient opportunity to use computers in other subjects. The booking system for the computer rooms, and other observations during the inspection, show that only in English, food technology and science has there been adequate usage. Teachers in the school have now completed their New Opportunity Fund (NOF) training in the use of ICT and this is expected to lead to an increased use of ICT by other subject areas.

201. In the lessons observed during the inspection the teaching was mostly good or very good. Teachers' management of pupils and expectations of their behaviour are good. Lessons start briskly with the pupils quickly on task and responding to well thought-out questions from teachers who demonstrate good knowledge of the subject. This enables effective teaching and learning to take place. Good levels of individual support are provided and this, together with the structured support provides a good framework for pupils' learning. It is particularly supportive of low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Marking and other assessment procedures do not provide pupils with the information they need to enable them to improve. Homework is relevant to the classwork, which it supports, and is a regular feature of ICT lessons.

202. Overall, the learning during the inspection was good at both key stages. The gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, because of their not being taught the full programme of study in Years 8 and 9, make learning unsatisfactory over time at this key stage. Pupils develop their computer skills, remember what they have previously been taught and learn to use their computer programmes with increasing independence. They work at a good pace and show interest and good concentration throughout the lessons observed. Overall, their attitudes and behaviour are good, but are best for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils respond positively to the structured approach being used and engage enthusiastically with the tasks set. Good attention is given to the improvement of literacy through an emphasis on understanding and being able to spell the vocabulary associated with ICT.

203. The department's improvements since the last inspection are unsatisfactory. There has been insufficient monitoring of standards and pupils have been unable to realise their potential in lessons in Years 8 and 9 because they do not cover the National Curriculum. Areas neglected include the use of ICT to measure, record and control events, as well as planning, testing and modifying sequences of instructions as might be seen for example in Logo. Computer facilities are better than the national average for secondary schools yet usage by most subjects is still a weakness.

204. Overall, management and leadership of the subject are unsatisfactory. The department makes good use of the accommodation and resources. The monitoring of the teaching of ICT has been thorough and has had a positive effect. However, there is a lack of awareness of standards and National Curriculum requirements in Years 8 and 9 and consequently what needs to be done to make improvements. This has resulted in standards being lower than they should be.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are rising, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are positive as is behaviour.
- Leadership and management are good.

Areas for improvement

- Planning more closely to the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Use of ICT.
- Extension activities for higher attaining pupils.
- Monitoring of teaching to disseminate good practice.

French and German

206. Standards are below average. In 2002, French GCSE results were significantly below the national average for grades A*-C. All passes were at grade B or below, but the total number of pupils entered was large. Results were significantly below those of other subjects and girls performed better than boys. Some low GCSE results are owing to the college mistakenly following the short course; the target group for that examination is the more able linguist. On entry to Year 8, attainment is below average, with little attainment beyond Level 2. This inspection reveals that standards are rising. The introduction of a new French course is already leading to an improvement in standards at the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils can understand and use past tenses to express themselves in heavily teacher-directed tasks. However, many make serious errors of construction.

207. The quality of teaching is good. However, it varies too widely between satisfactory and very good. The college's policy of monitoring teaching is not fully in place. Most lesson planning is good, but sometimes insufficiently detailed to provide an insight as to precisely how objectives are to be achieved. Teaching is sometimes too focused on the content of the newly introduced textbook and not enough on the statutory programme of study.

208. In the very good lessons, teachers refer to previous learning, summarise very clearly the aims of the current lesson and confirm this with outline on the board for pupils' use. In the same lessons, there is a good balance of skills and adequate use of a variety of teaching resources. There is an effective mix of whole-class, individual, paired and occasionally, group work. Teachers are developing pupils' independence. Pupils make spontaneous use of dictionaries, glossaries and the helpful wall displays. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher asked pupils to work out for themselves a grammatical rule, a useful opportunity for formative assessment. Pupils generated some very clear explanations, helpful to themselves and peers. The relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and contribute to the often excellent management of pupils. In the better lessons teachers ensure progress. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils achieved average attainment when they were encouraged to extend their application of reflexive verbs. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils received copies from a French teenage magazine and had to infer meanings of new and sometimes colloquial language. This engaged them, broadened their vocabulary and helped to consolidate their grammatical knowledge. The process fulfilled GCSE and national curriculum requirements and raised attainment. One teacher reminded pupils to consider the many consistent changes between French and English, for example: "romantic" becoming "romantique". In a further Year 11 lesson, the teacher transformed potentially mundane GCSE rôle plays into an engaging exercise simply by asking participants to adopt a characteristic such as: "impatient(e)" or "calme". The very good lessons end with adequate time devoted to an essential appraisal of what has been learned in the lesson and setting a focus for future sessions. Support staff work effectively, but there is a lack of strategies to extend the knowledge and skills of higher attaining pupils within some lessons.

Teachers promote self-esteem through consistent application of the rewards system, principally focusing on achievement. This makes a major contribution to pupils' confidence and motivation.

209. The quality of learning is good. It varies between satisfactory and very good. Pupils are motivated, conscientious, co-operative and can maintain concentration. Behaviour observed is very good. Pupils respond enthusiastically to creative and imaginative tasks, where set. Relationships with each other are good. However, boys and girls tend to work separately. Pupils demonstrate very good social skills as they listen attentively to each other, trust and offer positive, critical support. They strive for accuracy and can work without over-dependence on the teacher. Pupils respond well to open-ended tasks where they can exercise imagination and creativity.

210. The college offers a German "taster" course for higher attaining Year 9 groups and an after-college German club. To date pupils have lacked the confidence to study German at key stage 4, preferring the security of continuing French started at middle school. There are annual visits to France. Pupils have opportunities to attend after-college classes and prepare for GCSEs in heritage languages other than French.

211. Leadership and management are good. The head of department post is a job-share. The department is small, but the four (of a total of five) teachers observed follow similar practice. The quality of marking is variable and does not always follow the college's policy. There are good, common displays in the classrooms. Displays support learning and celebrate pupils' achievement with examples of work, some of which is produced using ICT. Displayed work often meets national expectations. The department lacks adequate ICT facilities; consequently, opportunities for downloading authentic teaching materials and potential contacts with native speakers are lost. Teachers make regular use of an additional specialist room containing a very small number of computers and other electrical equipment.

212. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress. To improve further: planning should emphasise implementation of the statutory programme of study; there should be greater awareness of equal opportunities issues within the classroom; provision of more creative and imaginative work; teaching should be monitored to ensure consistency and disseminate good practice.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The high standards which pupils achieve at the end of Year 9, often from a low starting point.
- The standards achieved by pupils in GCSE are high with A*-C grades more than double the school average.
- Teaching is very good; teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are excellent; the best teaching is inspirational, motivating pupils to achieve high standards.
- There is excellent teaching of singing and high standard of performance is achieved by the school choirs.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is inadequate for the demands of the curriculum, including access to computers for pupils in Years 8 and 9.
- Staffing, with less than two full time music specialists, is currently insufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum.

214. Standards in music are high. Pupils across the ability range achieve well in music. Many pupils come to the school with little prior experience of music. They make very good progress from a low base and by the time they are 14 their attainment is at least in line with national expectations. By the time they are 16 pupils following the GCSE course show high levels of achievement.

Examination results show significant year on year improvement with 72 per cent of pupils attaining A*-C grades in 2002 compared with 57 per cent in 2000. All pupils in the option group are entered and all have passed in the last three years. The number of A*-C grades is more than double the school average. There is an equal number of boys and girls following the GCSE course. Boys across the school participate with enjoyment in musical activities, they are extremely well motivated and achieve well. The department has continued to provide the high quality of musical education for all its pupils that was noted in the last report.

215. The high standards achieved in music are the result of consistently high quality teaching which ranges from good to excellent. Music lessons are characterised by a sense of purpose and a belief that musical activities are enjoyable and worthwhile. Lessons are very well planned and structured very carefully so that pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding progressively. All lessons provide good opportunities for them to develop their skills and confidence as performers, whether on classroom percussion instruments, keyboards or singing, they rehearse intelligently in order to refine their performances. In the best lessons there is a successful balance between challenge which motivates pupils and support which enables them to make progress. This was seen to work extremely successfully with a Year 9 group, which included a high number of pupils with learning difficulties, who were preparing for a composing project. The pupils listened in a very focused and disciplined manner in order to build up increasingly complex ostinati, using percussion instruments to add layers of sound, building up more and more intricate rhythm patterns to achieve an excellent effect. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are excellent and pupils know and respect this. Teachers have high expectations and the best teaching is inspirational, motivating and enthusing pupils to achieve high standards in their own compositions and performances. The main teaching room is used creatively as a flexible learning space which is adapted to enable a wide range of strategies to be used – whole class singing, small group performances, paired composing and the creation of a circle for aural response activities, for example. Strategies such as 'jigsawing', in which each pupil has responsibility to feed back to the group an aspect of what has been learned, are used well to help older pupils to develop independence. Teachers employ effective assessment for learning strategies, monitoring pupils' progress in lessons, giving constructive feedback and setting clear targets for improvement. Pupils are involved in evaluation and assessment of their own compositions and performances and those of their peers.

216. The teaching of singing, both in lessons and extra-curricular groups, is a major strength. There is a strong focus on achieving musical quality through careful attention to dynamics, breathing and posture and meticulous attention to style. The breadth of the choral repertoire which pupils experience is excellent, ranging from sixteenth century motets to Georgian, Shaker and South African music and twentieth century Pop. The school choirs achieve outstanding performances. There are excellent local and international links, opening up very good opportunities for pupils to develop a breadth of experience, through taking part in concerts, productions, radio broadcasts and educational visits abroad. Pupils lead music workshops in local middle schools.

217. Music makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension of human experience is developed through experiences of performing with others to realise the composer's intentions, for example, Year 11 pupils studying the motet 'Tuam quam ad latronem' by Victoria, explored the significance of the words which express the experience of Jesus on his arrest in Gethsemane, before performing it with sensitivity. Moral development is very well supported through the consistent reinforcement of teachers' expectations in the department. Teachers are strong role models. Pupils show fairness and respect for others and are mutually supportive. Music provides very good opportunities for pupils' social development through co-operative pair and group work, and performing with others. There are excellent opportunities to develop social skills through working with adult performers in a local choir and a visiting American choir. Pupils' cultural awareness is extended through the breadth of the music repertoire which they study and perform. They are learning to value and celebrate the cultural heritage of others beyond the white, Western traditions.

218. A Musical Instrument Regeneration Project, which aims to increase the number of pupils learning musical instruments, has been set up to address the issue raised in the last inspection.

There has been good progress on this issue with 85 pupils now having instrumental lessons and participating in lunchtime music clubs which gives them opportunities to experience a range of instruments. The foundations have been laid for further development.

219. Music is managed very well within the creative arts structure. The head of department provides excellent leadership, a clear sense of vision and commitment to music education in its widest sense. There is effective monitoring and support within the department. Staffing, with less than two full time specialists, is currently insufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. Very good specialist support is provided by the department's accompanist who is also deployed to support pupils in key stage 3 lessons.

220. The department is well resourced. There is an excellent range of CDs, sufficient good quality key boards and headphones and a good range of classroom percussion instruments. High quality teaching materials developed by the head of department are used to support pupils' progress in singing and composing. Other ICT resources are good and sufficient for Year 10 and 11 pupils but inadequate for pupils Years 8 and 9 to have regular access to computers. Although the very best use is made of the available space, the accommodation is no longer adequate for the music curriculum and the number of pupils involved in music. The school's pianos are in a lamentable condition!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good quality of teaching.
- A wide variety of extra-curricular activities.
- Strong leadership of the departments.

Areas for improvement

- Introduce the Community Sports Leaders Award for sixth form pupils.

222. Pupils arrive at the school with varying levels of physical education skills. They respond very enthusiastically to the good quality teaching, make good progress, and by the end of Year 9 most are attaining levels that are in line with national expectations. The levels of attainment of most pupils at the end of Year 11 is also in line with national expectations with some pupils, particularly those in the examination groups, doing even better. In the most recent GCSE physical examination the number of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grade passes was better than the previous year, but below the national average. However, the number of pupils gaining the wider range passes of A*-G was better than the national average. These results compare very favourably with the results achieved by the same pupils in their other subjects and this represents sound improvement on the position reported in the last inspection at both key stages.

223. The formal assessment by teachers at the end of Year 9 indicates that standards in physical education are in line with national expectations. This judgement is confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils are able to apply the techniques, skills and competitive rules to a range of activities of the physical education curriculum, most notably in soccer, basketball, hockey and rugby. Basic skills are well developed, and provide a sound platform for future developments. Pupils show a growing awareness of tactical play and make good progress in improving their marking techniques. In gymnastics pupils perform a wide range of balances and turns using small and large apparatus with an increasingly competent ability to link them together. They understand the necessity of warm-up exercises, and some pupils are able to lead their classes in effective routines at the beginning of lessons.

224. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 in the non-examination classes reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally. They have well developed skills and are able to apply these well in

games situations. Attacking and defence strategies are understood and many pupils act confidently as officials and coaches in a range of activities. Pupils in the physical education GCSE groups are developing an understanding and expertise in the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. They are producing course work folders that are generally well presented and detailed.

225. The small group of sixth form pupils taking the AS level in physical education are producing work that is carefully researched and analysed. They are confident in the use of technical language in their written work, and enter into lively, informed debate in lessons.

226. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. They gain much support and encouragement from both teaching staff and other pupils and achieve well relative to their capabilities. There is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. A few individual pupils achieve high standards in district and Sussex competitions in soccer, cricket, basketball and athletics. A Year 10 girl is the current national 100 metre athletic champion in her age group. The attainment of these talented pupils is well above the national average, and they benefit considerably from the opportunities offered by their teachers.

227. The overall quality of teaching is good, and in a significant number of lessons is very good. All lessons begin in an orderly manner and objectives are clearly stated, thus helping pupils to understand what is expected of them, and how to improve. Lessons are well organised and conducted at a brisk, demanding pace, achieving an appropriate balance of activities, and offering pupils a range of challenges. Pupils respond very positively to this high quality teaching and involve themselves in lesson activities with enthusiasm and commitment. Teachers expect that pupils will work hard and behave well, and generally these expectations are met. Their enjoyment of their lessons is very evident.

228. The curriculum on offer, which is meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, allows pupils to take part in a wide range of activities, and supports the learning of pupils with special educational needs. All pupils in the sixth form have the opportunity to take part in timetabled recreational activities. The departments might consider extending this curriculum offer to include the Community Sports Leader Award. This award is a starting point for young people who wish to develop their sports leadership skills. Staff give very freely of their time to provide a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are very well supported by large and enthusiastic groups of pupils.

229. These are two very well-led and well-managed departments with a strong ethos, and a clear sense of direction and purpose. High quality documentation covers all aspects of the work and helps the delivery of the subject. Displays of the departments' work and photographs of pupils taking part in sporting activities are around the college and effectively stimulate interest in the subject. Talented teachers work together effectively as a team, sharing a commitment to the improvement of the departments and are very supportive of each other.

230. The profile of the subject has risen considerably since the previous inspection. Members of staff have acquired ICT skills, which are used to improve teaching and enhance pupils' attainment. Cam and digital recordings are used to help pupils analyse and improve performances. A revised system of assessing pupils' attainment is in place, which enables them to know at what National Curriculum level they are working at, and what they need to do to bring about improvements.

DANCE

231. Overall the provision for dance is **very good**.

Strengths

- Good quality teaching.
- Good examination results.
- Wide range of extra curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the accommodation for the subject.

232. During the last few years pupils have consistently gained GCSE successes that have been above the national average and in the most recent examination this high standard has been maintained. In July 2002 a small number of pupils gained pass grades in the A2 and AS examinations that were well above the national average.

233. Pupils arrive at the school with only very limited experience of dance, but quickly respond to the high quality teaching, and by the end of Year 9 most girls and many boys are able to demonstrate good patterns of movement and gesture which are performed with fluency and clarity.

234. During Years 10 and 11 dance is not a compulsory subject but pupils have the opportunity to take a GCSE in the subject. Enthusiastic and able groups of pupils have taken up this offer. The attainment of these groups is at least in line with that expected nationally, with a significant number demonstrating an ability to compose and perform accurately and expressively at levels which are better than that seen nationally.

235. In all year groups levels of attainment show a steady improvement with most pupils expanding their technical knowledge and consolidating their skills and levels of performance.

236. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject. They work hard to develop their technique and readily accept opportunities to practise, refine and consolidate their skills. Their ability to plan and choreograph is developing alongside their ability to critically appraise their own and others' performances.

237. The quality of teaching is at least good and often very good. The lessons are well planned and content is well matched to pupils' interest and level of attainment. The teacher is constantly demanding high quality work and very often these demands are met. She is enthusiastic about her subject and is able to pass on this enthusiasm to her pupils. The subject benefits from clear leadership. Detailed course structure and curriculum planning are a strength.

238. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in many extra-curricular activities that are enthusiastically taken up by large groups of pupils. Pupils have been to the Brighton to watch the Ballet Rambert perform and pupils themselves have performed at the Hawth Theatre in Crawley as well as taking part in many college productions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching.
- The contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The use of support staff and resources.
- The progress made by pupils with special needs and by those whose English is limited.

Areas for improvement

- Standards should be raised, including examination results.
- The statutory curriculum must be made available to all pupils.
- Greater use should be made of ICT.

240. The first GCSE examination results in religious education from the college were in 2002, so no comparisons can be made with national averages or with previous attainment here. 17 candidates took the full GCSE course, and nine of them achieved the higher grades, A*-C. There were also 21 candidates for the short course, and six of these gained grades A*-C. Similar numbers are taking these courses in the present Years 10 and 11. It should be noted, however, that over three quarters of the pupils in these year groups do not study religious education as a separate subject. This means that, as at the time of the last report, the college is failing in its statutory duty to provide religious education for all pupils. This also applies to the sixth form. There are religious education modules within the citizenship course, which are well chosen and relevant as far as they go, and in the integrated humanities GCSE course, but the provision, particularly in the former, is insufficient to meet the requirements of the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus. The requirements are met, however, in Years 8 and 9.

241. Standards in Years 10 and 11, where pupils are taught discrete religious education, are just below the national average level of attainment overall. Pupils on the short course were seen struggling to develop an understanding of the differing views held by Christians on abortion. Those on the full GCSE course have a fairly rudimentary overview of Christian attitudes to marriage, although there is a wide range of attainment within the groups. Some of the pupils with learning difficulties are achieving well because of the good support they receive in class. Overall, most GCSE pupils make satisfactory achievement during the course they are on.

242. The overall standards in Years 8 and 9 are also below average. Few of the white majority pupils have a religious background, which shows in the understanding they show of religious concepts. They do, however, have a reasonable grasp of the significance of some of the festivals of world faiths, whether Diwali, Eid or Hanukkah. The more abstract concepts, such as Buddhist attitudes to being, are not easy for them to grasp. A large proportion of the pupils are hampered by their limited literacy skills; some are not good at listening. A wide range of attainment is found in each year group, though all make satisfactory achievement given their starting point. Pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language make better progress than most because of good support.

243. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory; in some lessons, a positive attitude prevails, but in others one senses a lack of total commitment to the subject. Even amongst Year 11 pupils, there is not a huge enthusiasm for the courses. The smaller numbers in Year 10 are, overall, more positive. Those in Years 8 and 9 are largely co-operative with their teachers, and are prepared to ask questions when something catches their interest.

244. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, and is sometimes good. Both specialist teachers have joined the college since the last inspection and are beginning to make their mark. At times, their subject knowledge is a little insecure, but lessons are planned satisfactorily and resources are used well, whether video film, acetates, books or worksheets. Appropriate teaching methods are

employed, so that pupils have sound learning opportunities in lessons. Where teaching is good, teachers plan well and employ a range of worthwhile activities. An example of this was in a Year 8 lesson on the Hindu festival of Diwali, where a video, coursebooks and differentiated worksheets helped all pupils to learn effectively: the teacher had a good grasp of the significance of the topic, which he related well to the Ramayana, and held the attention of the pupils, who went on to design Diwali cards showing their understanding of the subject. Where pupils are given challenging tasks to do, they often rise to the occasion, as in a Year 10 class on Christian attitudes to marriage. The pupils, some of whom had learning difficulties, were able to put their findings on acetates and present them to the class quite effectively. In other lessons, however, tasks that were too challenging were given to pupils: a Year 9 class found the arguments for arranged marriages in Hindu cultures too difficult to analyse without extra support. The pace of some lessons is rather slow; with only two lessons a fortnight for most pupils, there is little time to spare. But homework is used well to support learning, and written work is well marked and accurately assessed. Pupils work to targets, even though there are as yet no national levels of attainment for religious education outside the GCSE courses.

245. There is now a head of religious education, who joined the college last year as a newly qualified teacher and is proving to be a sound subject leader. His specialist knowledge is an asset to the department. He is assisted by an experienced colleague, whose timetable includes religious education. Some classes, unfortunately, have to be shared, with the result that pupils see each teacher only once a fortnight. This does not contribute well to their progress. Other aspects of management work better: there is a good system for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and this is being applied well. The head of religious education has clear ideas about how the department can be developed, including making more use of ICT, which is not yet used as much as it might be. Other resources are good, and the teachers have their own rooms, allowing for displays of posters and artefacts. Limited use is made of visitors from faith communities; these, and visits to places of worship, could be further developed. But the work done at the moment on world religions makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

246. Changes in staffing have meant that little actual improvement has occurred, overall, since the previous inspection. The most significant progress has been in the appointment of an additional teacher able to contribute to religious education. The department is in a transitional stage, as the GCSE courses bed down and the confidence of pupils is regained. The most serious deficiency is still the lack of provision on the curriculum for religious education for all pupils in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus.

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

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

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Music	1	100	84	0	29	3.00	2.41

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	4	0	87	0	43	0	5.8
Biology	4	25	88	0	34	0.5	5.25
Art and design	7	100	96	86	46	8.57	6.57
Music	4	100	93	25	35	6.5	5.74
English	9	100	95	33	37	5.56	5.91

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good with many excellent features.
- The attitudes of students are very good, they are willing to work hard.
- The schemes of work are developing well.
- Text-book resources are good, and well used.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of students and standards in external examinations are too low.
- There is insufficient development of the use of computers.
- The number of students choosing to study A level mathematics at lfield needs to increase, especially those with higher GCSE grades and particularly girls.

248. Standards at A Level have been poor over many years. 2001 saw no A Level passes, and no AS entries. The four candidates for A Level in 2002 obtained one B and one D grade, but two were ungraded. Ten students entered the AS examination in 2002, two obtained a D grade, one an E and seven no grades. Some students left the school at the end of Year 12, and three decided to repeat the AS course. Many students with higher GCSE grades leave lfield for employment or education elsewhere.

249. In lessons standards were observed to be below national expectations for A Level, but above those obtained in external examinations. The three Year 13 students also attend many of the Year 12 lessons, to consolidate knowledge and understanding, and to re-take those AS modules at which they were less successful. All students have excellent attitudes to their studies, are willing to work hard and attend extra after-school sessions. At present Year 13 are working on the Pure Mathematics Module 2, to be taken in January. They showed a good understanding of differentiation and integration, although with some confusions which were dealt with well and promptly by their teachers. In solving trigonometric equations they followed the teacher's method as he worked through problems on the board, although this was at the pace of the middle ability students, too fast for the least able and with insufficient extension work for the most able student. The other teacher observed with Year 13 however, the new sixth-form mathematics co-ordinator, matched work well to each student, expecting different quality of answers and speed of working from each, and even setting different homework.

250. The AS Pure mathematics lesson started with a revision of methods of differentiation and integration, to check on understanding and accuracy of methods, before moving onto an excellent description of how volume of revolution of curves about an axis was derived. This took the process through each step so that by the end of the lesson all students could understand the principle and complete quite complex calculations. This teacher stressed the meaning and use of new terms, developing students' literacy. The very good plenary at the end of the lesson showed students the practical application of theory. The AS Mechanics lesson concerned resolving forces on a small body, catching students' interest with a ball-throwing introduction. All students were very attentive, listening carefully, following the examples and producing some very good diagrams themselves. The teacher kept up a fast pace, going through text-book questions verbally, but allowing the better students and Year 13 to progress at their own rate. The planned plenary, however, was rather rushed and interrupted by the end of day bell.

251. Basic numeracy errors occurred, which could have impeded the higher concept development, but which were quickly noticed and corrected by teachers or the students

themselves. One student even stated that the square root of one quarter was an eighth, and several times students preferred to write answers as decimals when 'surd,' 'pi' or 'e' form are more exact. Students tend to see complex questions as more difficult than they were, and to complicate the necessary working out. The presentation skills of teachers helped them, either by the use of different coloured pens on the whiteboard, or well-prepared overhead transparencies. The text-book examples and answers also helped students correct their own errors or misunderstandings.

252. Teaching overall was good, with many excellent features such as the detailed planning of lessons, including starters and plenaries, and a variety of teaching and learning activities. A particular strength is the very good method of questioning students, open-ended and giving time for them to think or re-phrasing questions when necessary. Marking of work is good, with detailed corrections and constructive comments. The newly introduced 'front page' to students' homework enabled students to reflect on their own learning, and teachers to feedback. Relationship between teachers and students are very good, and interaction between students is good, especially in the larger group. There are only three girls in the Year 12 class, and these tend to be less confident, with lower GCSE grades. All Year 12 students found the jump from GCSE to AS Level difficult to handle, but are progressing well now.

253. Leadership and management of sixth form mathematics are good, and have changed this year with a new, young, but very effective co-ordinator of A Level, as well as a new overall head of department. Few comments were made in the last inspection about A Level classes. Although the provision and use of computers is still insufficient, improvement overall is satisfactory.

Biology

254. Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured and good use is made of available resources;
- Students learn well and build up their knowledge and understanding well;
- Biology is well led and there is a commitment to improve standards.

Areas for improvement

- Levels of attainment in examinations are low;
- Guidance on the organisation and management of students' own notes.

255. Students start the sixth form course in biology with attainment that is below expectations. This is partly because the school allows students to start the course with a GCSE grade lower than a C. Students progress broadly as expected during the course and their results at the end of the one year AS course and two year A Level course are still below the national average. In 2002, results were well below average overall but this also includes one student who gained a B grade. Students' results in A Level biology have been low over the last three years. There is no significant difference between the results for boys or girls. In general students have an appropriate knowledge of the important ideas. In a lesson on inheritance, for example, students demonstrated appropriate knowledge of how conditions such as Cystic Fibroses are inherited. In another lesson, students understood about Darwin's work on the evolution of different species. There were several occasions where students showed gaps in their knowledge or understanding. In a Year 12 lesson, for example, they lacked familiarity with important technical words. In a Year 13 lesson, students had difficulty in recalling particular knowledge about hair cells and plants.

256. Teaching is good and lessons are well structured. There is a prompt start to lessons with teachers working hard to obtain responses to questions. Often these are designed to make students think about previous work and to provide a good basis for the current lesson. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of biology and use this well to promote learning. At the end of each lesson, for example, there is a useful summary by the teacher which reinforces learning provides a check on students' understanding. Wall displays in rooms reflect important

aspects of biology and show that teachers value the work produced by students. Teachers make good use of accommodation that is just adequate.

257. As a result of the good teaching, students learn well. Good use is made of available resources including the overhead projectors to support learning. Photocopied sheets provide information that supports concepts in the lesson and these also include questions that test the students' understanding. The biology department has a good range of books that provide opportunities for extended reading in the subject. In one lesson looking at the relationship between predator and prey animals, students used a computer programme on population, interpreted information from graphs created and answered questions to test their understanding. Students show a willingness to answer questions and the feedback they get from teachers helps them make improvements to their learning. Comments by teachers in students' books are supportive and provide useful advice on how to improve but students' notes are not always organised in a way that will help them revise for their examination.

258. The good teaching and learning is because biology is well led and managed, and satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. There is a clear vision for further developments, courses are well organised and documented and there is very good monitoring of teaching and the curriculum. Staff are well qualified and meet the needs of the course. They work well together and have a commitment to improving standards.

Chemistry

259. Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good subject knowledge and commitment of teachers and their very good relationships with students.
- The positive response of students to learning which leads to good achievement.

Areas for improvement

- Sharing ideas for approaches to effective questioning that develop higher order skills.

260. Standards in chemistry are improving since the previous inspection and are now beginning to approach good in the work seen at A2. However, they are still only satisfactory at AS in terms of the students' awareness of how individual pieces link to broader subject aspects. Although the numbers taking the GCE A-level examination have been very small, students have generally achieved the grades expected based on their earlier performance at GCSE. In both 2001 and 2002, results were in line with national averages. Results at AS-level have been average or below, but historically have improved in the second year. This was illustrated by a significant improvement in confidence in the subject in observing AS and A2 groups. The current Year 12 AS class, with 10 students, is much larger than chemistry groups in previous years.

261. At present overall standards are satisfactory (as would be expected given their starting points) but students in both years are developing their knowledge and understanding and standards should improve in future years. However, the knowledge and understanding demonstrated by students during the inspection was variable. For example, a Year 13 student had an understanding of acidic and basic properties related to periodic trends in his practical work, but lacked confidence at times in applying this knowledge in more difficult situations, for example to explain the reasons behind the changes he identified or to make reasoned predictions about unfamiliar compounds. The teachers should seek out regular opportunities for developing the higher levels of understanding related to synthesis of ideas from different areas of the syllabus.

262. Year 12 students have good safety awareness and they are developing competent volumetric techniques. They understand how to calculate the accuracy of their measurements. Following a teacher demonstration during a practical lesson all the students could competently

carry out the titration with a high regard for safe working practice and with minimal error. However a significant number of students could not relate the titration reaction to the theoretical chemistry they had done on acid base reactions.

263. The quality of teaching is good, with teachers strongly committed to helping their students to be successful in examinations. Teachers have established good relationships with their students whose confidence they have gained through their enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment. At A2 level there is a strong commitment to work and a willingness to answer questions and discuss with the teacher the chemistry involved. At AS Level there are still good teacher-student relationships but the students are not as willing to answer, and could only respond to simple closed questions. There was no evidence seen of students being able to put their own ideas forward and being able to test them against evidence. The teachers explain concepts carefully and support students effectively through a carefully structured curriculum. Sometimes, however, the student responses to questions are as a result of simple recall rather than applying the underlying scientific principles. This leads to insecurity in answering and they often give spontaneous answers that do not take all relevant factors into account.

264. Chemistry is managed well and students are given clear guidance about the course and what they are required to do. Assessment procedures are thorough and students' work is marked regularly with comments that indicate where the students have made errors and these are corrected thoroughly. Coursework is accurately marked in strict accordance to the syllabus criteria. The scheme of work is comprehensive but there was no evidence of opportunities for students to use ICT. The accommodation is traditional but there is plenty of space and good services for practical work. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

BUSINESS

Business studies

265. Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Work seen in class and in students' work is good and are now in line with national averages.
- Teaching is good overall and occasionally very good.
- Student response in class is very good.
- There is very good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Results in public examinations are still below national averages.
- There is insufficient use by students of information and communications technology to enhance learning.
- Students do not read widely. Their low levels of literacy remain barriers to even higher levels of attainment.
- The lack of appropriate in class support has a negative impact on teaching, learning and standards.

261. In both 2001 and 2002, results in public examinations at both AVCE and GNVQ intermediate levels were below national averages. However, the standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are in line with national averages for both male and female students.

262. At GNVQ intermediate level, students understand the central ideas of the subject, including those related to financial documents involved in business transactions. For example, Year 12 students, using appropriate technical terminology, demonstrated their secure grasp of the range of documents used in the whole cycle from purchase order to receipt for payment.

263. At AVCE, students attain satisfactorily, particularly in those aspects relating to the economic environment in which business operates, and they are good at applying their understanding, in order to incorporate economic theories into contextual examples. For example, Year 12 students, in their studies in marketing in which they play the role of owners of a restaurant, effectively use economic models, such as the Boston Matrix, and theories such as those concerning competitive advantage to help them make decisions which will give their restaurants competitive advantage. Students in Year 13 also attain well in their current work. For example, in their studies of customer services, students effectively analyse the roles of personal presentation in successful customer services. Students demonstrate that they had learned much not only about personal presentational skills, but also about how such skills impact on the profitability of the business.

264. Overall, students' achievement is good. The business studies department responds well to the school's philosophy of inclusion at post 16. Class sizes are therefore relatively large and classes contain a very wide ability range. The vast majority of students have low levels of attainment at entry to the sixth form. Many students have low literacy skills, particularly, but not exclusively, in writing, and they do not read widely. Given these circumstances, and given the results they attain, their progress in the sixth form is good.

265. Overall, the quality of the teaching on all courses is good, and occasionally is very good. The teachers' excellent rapport and expert subject knowledge underpin discussions and lend clarity to the explanations provided. Lessons are carefully planned, and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. Students are well supported academically by the teachers. The teachers' methodical explanations promote considerable gains in the lower attaining students' comprehension. Teaching is very well structured, dividing the course into units that clearly specify the learning that needs to occur. Teaching is particularly strong where the teachers encourage the students to become independent learners. Marking of work is mostly very detailed and helpful, using, where appropriate, criteria used by the examination board. Relationships in classes are very good.

266. Students respond very well in lessons. Their attitudes are mostly mature and they sustain interest. Although most students maintain intellectual rigour, some students are, too often, happy to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. Students rarely portray evidence of wider reading and do not take sufficient opportunities to increase their reading. Outside interests impinge on students' time and they do not always work to full capacity outside school.

267. Resources in the department are satisfactory. Students are asked to purchase their own text books, because the school supply is limited. The lack of immediate access to information and communications technology facilities has an adverse effect on students' progress and attainment. Although there is a suite of business studies classrooms, accommodation does not include an appropriately constituted business studies room, nor is there sufficient space for the establishment of a discrete subject-related library.

268. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department of business studies has a clear vision for the future of the department which sensibly encompasses plans to strengthen both the academic and the vocational aspect of the department's provision to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of future cohorts of students. Under her effective and efficient leadership, the department has produced a range of informed and informative documents that deal effectively with all aspects of the department's work. The department has forged some useful links with local businesses including Marks and Spencer's and various travel companies based at the nearby Gatwick Airport. She is very well supported by her colleagues in the department, and by the senior management of the school. Together, they provide a good role model for a department that is committed to high standards and high achievement.

269. The department has made good improvement since the time of the previous report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT is offered at GNVQ, and AVCE. Relatively small numbers opt to study ICT, but numbers are growing and progress for students is good. The inspection focused on AVCE ICT.

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- Student progress, especially in Year 12.
- Effective individual support for students.
- Students are taught in specialist rooms with up to date equipment and software.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of achievement.
- Monitoring and evaluation of student progress insufficiently based upon systematic analysis of prior attainment.
- Monitoring of student performance targets need to be more clearly defined.

271. Standards of attainment in 2002 are low with 25 per cent gaining C grades and 75 per cent gaining E or not graded. Low numbers make statistical and systematic comparative analysis difficult. For current Year 12, out of 19 students, nine are predicted to gain A-D, four E and in Year 13 out of six students four are predicted D and two E grades. Although predictions are low they are closely related to students' previous experience and commitment to course overall. Students in Year 13 demonstrated the ability to apply knowledge skills and understanding to the given task and there was sufficient evidence that sustainable progress was being made. Courses are currently attracting larger numbers of students in Year 12, and evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that progress is good. Student attitudes are positive and students are achieving the appropriate level at this part of the course.

272. Teachers are providing very good support to individuals in classes. The attainment reflects a wide spread of standards with a skew to the lower end of the scale. Teaching is good, relationships very good and teachers' understanding of students' needs is developing appropriately. Although marking is completed, more informative comments are needed to direct future targets.

273. Students are confident in the use of computers and access to the Internet is fully available. They acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the sixth form course, however, overall knowledge is varied depending on whether ICT was studied previously. In lessons and in work seen the majority of students are making good progress achieving the appropriate level at this point in the course. They are using word processing applications and desktop publishing techniques providing documents that are attractive and well balanced, for example, producing correct layouts for memos and business letters. They understand the need to create documents for specific audiences and have an understanding of the use of spreadsheets entering data and presenting their findings in graphic form. Students are able to discuss topics such as data protection issues.

274. Students need to be given more detailed written feedback about how they can develop and improve their work and support to enable them to develop independent learning skills so that they no longer rely so much on the teacher. Students appreciate the good support given in most lessons and they work at a sound pace.

275. Staff have been responsible for the organisation of the courses for a relatively short time and satisfactory progress has been made. However, the overall impact of leadership and management on courses is not yet secure. Departmental documentation is being prepared and use

is made of computer records to monitor achievement. Use of student records to monitor achievement over time is embryonic and still an area for development.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art

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

Strengths

- Attainment is very high. Standards are well above average.
- Students are articulate and confident about their creative work.
- Teaching is very good. The teachers' high levels of subject knowledge enable them to present complex and demanding tasks in ways that students can understand and tackle.
- Assessment and monitoring is excellent and promotes high achievement.
- Students have a very positive attitude to their work.
- Accommodation is excellent. In addition to specialist studios the school has established the Sixth Form Art Studio with individual workspaces. This facility promotes high quality sustained work.

Areas for improvement

- The range of ICT is not adequate to the requirements of creative visual work. The department has a single computer in each of the art rooms for creative work. It is inadequate for groups of students.
- Technical areas of work in relation to printmaking are not as well developed as the rest of the art curriculum.
- There is little direct reference to artists' work using images, posters and other such resources to elaborate teaching points during the practical lessons.

277. Attainment in art is well above average. In 2001 86 per cent of A Level students and 100 per cent of AS Level students achieved A-B grades. All students passed the A Level exam. In 2002 56 per cent of A Level students and 80 per cent of AS Level students achieved A-B grades, and 94 per cent of students passed the examination. Boys and girls do equally well in the subject, but numbers are too small to make valid comparisons. Since the last inspection the department has consolidated its successes in the areas of fine art and ceramics, has extended the successful use of the student sketchbook journal as a mainspring of the creative process and has begun the practice of integrating digital and practical work. This will strengthen continued examination success.

278. AS Level students can develop paintings of very good quality using complex limited tonalities and ranges of warm and cool greys. Students' technical skills are very good. Students painting from observation are able to pitch their tones accurately and understand how to gradate colours and tones in order to model forms successfully. The highest attaining students are able to give their work a unity of style and design through drawing and colour handling. Excellent large-scale ceramic sculptures by AS Level students show skilled handling and a very good understanding of the physical and expressive potential of the medium. Excellent preparatory studies sheets contain a wide range of drawing and rendering techniques. Students' sketchbook journals are rich with an inventive working of media and materials used to explore visual and tactile qualities. A Level students use colour accents to unify their compositions in painting. Highest attaining students' very mature painting style uses brushwork, broken colour and wet-on-wet techniques to effect excellent results. In weaker work the composition is not as fully developed and integrated in the painting. A Level students successfully integrate digital and practical media in the creative process. Critical, contextual and personal studies work are well developed and students talk knowledgeably about the artists they have researched.

279. Teaching is very good. Teachers' high levels of subject knowledge enable them to present the more demanding tasks in ways that students can understand and tackle, and they can set higher order work for the more talented students. Teachers are skilled at giving technical demonstrations with clarity and precision. Very good planning allows students to build on previous learning and to consolidate what is learnt by work in different strands of the subject. Teachers make good use of their own artwork to illustrate teaching points and inspire their students. Lessons run efficiently and the stages of the lessons are clear and well timed. Visual stimulus materials are selected and arranged to exemplify the key learning points. However, there is little direct reference to artists' work using images, posters and other resources to exemplify practical teaching points during the lessons themselves. Assessment and monitoring is most thorough. Students' studio work is constantly monitored and reviewed. Each project is assessed against the student's target grade and additional targets can be set to further improve the student's work.

280. Students study a very good range of disciplines including large-scale ceramic sculptural work. They are able to work in the Sixth Form Art Studio to produce large-scale drawings and easel paintings directly from still life or researched and assembled elements. The more demanding technical areas of work in relation to printmaking are not as well developed as the rest of the art curriculum. Critical, contextual and personal study are major elements of both AS and A Level courses. However, opportunities to visit galleries and museums to experience artworks at first hand are infrequent. Courses allow students to build successfully on prior learning. A Level students make independent use of skills and knowledge taught in teacher-directed sessions at AS Level.

281. Students are very positive about the subject. They value the quality of teaching. They take criticism constructively and act upon advice given to improve their work. Help in preparing for further and higher education is good. A level students are pleased to receive some training in image manipulation software. However, they feel there are limited opportunities for developing these skills because of the small number of art-based computers. Students have an excellent attitude to their work and enjoy the courses. AS Level ceramics students follow their course after the end of the normal school day.

282. Leadership and management are very good. The organisation and running of all functions of the department are very sound. There is a clear educational direction based on the development of skills and the knowledge of media, with conceptual links made through the projects themselves. Effective staff deployment provides a broad range of subject expertise to all students. Accommodation is excellent. As well as specialist studios the school has established the Sixth Form Art Studio with individual workspaces to promote high quality sustained work.

283. The school has made improvements since the last inspection. The development of the Sixth Form Art Studio has given sixth form students individual workspaces to facilitate sustained study. Curriculum working practices have been extended to expand the role of the sketchbook/journal and the use of mixed media, and this has impacted very positively on student attainment. However, although the sixth form suite of computers is now available for use, the ICT provision is not adequate for the requirements of creative visual work. There is only a single computer in each of the art rooms equal to the demands of creative digital work.

Music

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

Strengths

- Knowledge and expertise of teaching staff.
- Very good quality teaching and learning.
- Management of provision and resources.
- Courses appropriate to student needs.
- Very positive attitude of students.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation for the department.

285. Music is offered at Advanced Level GCE AS and A2 Level and this was the inspection focus. The department has recently introduced Music Technology at AS Level. In 2001 GCE A Level examinations all students entered achieved pass grades and the average point score was above the national average. Retention rates have been good with all students completing the A Level course. Numbers have been maintained over the years with an increase noted since the introduction of the Music Technology course. Although the pass rate is good, the numbers entered make statistical comparisons invalid. Owing to ongoing investigation by the exam board no published data exists for 2002. Departmental records show that students usually achieve pass grades well above personal average, and there has been a 100 per cent pass rate since 1998 with music often being the best grade achieved .

286. Work seen in lessons and in discussion with students show that standards are above the national average. The students in Year 13 have good analytical skills, they show very good musicianship through coherent compositional work and in performance especially when singing in parts. They were able to carry out research from Internet sites as well as books and information was well thought out and clearly presented.

287. Teaching is very good often excellent and leads to good learning. Marking is completed and informative diagnostic comments made to students in order that they can judge their progress effectively. Consistent use informative comments is made across all areas of the courses of which not only allows students to judge their progress but enables the department to measure student progress against their prior attainment. Targets for future attainment are shared and validated. Students are acquiring musical skills and knowledge together with the development of the qualities and attitudes needed to understand and appreciate cultural traditions. Excellent relationships are evident in all activities seen. Subject knowledge and musical skills are exemplary and teaching demonstrates high expectations of work in and between lessons. Lessons are well planned and students have been advised of course requirements; they appreciate the level of individual support available.

288. Progress have been very good. High standards previously reported have been maintained. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers are mutually supportive. There is a clear vision about the development of the subject based on effective use of assessment information. All the different aspects of music education have been considered by the school and are offered as part of a broader music entitlement. The department successfully builds on all the musical experiences students gain both from the informal and the more formal curriculum offer. The school ensures that they are maximised in a challenging and effective music education programme.

Media Studies

289. Overall, the quality of provision in media studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good.
- Students have a very positive attitude to the subject and work well.

Areas for improvement

- There were no significant weaknesses observed during inspection.

290. Students who took the AS Level examination in 2002 produced media products that demonstrated their ability to use appropriate media production techniques. Written work, particularly analysis of media texts, contained a wide use of media terminology and an understanding of basic concepts. Knowledge and understanding of audience and institutional issues and concepts was less evident and is an area of the syllabus where students performed less well in the 2002 AS examination.

291. Work currently being produced by Year 12 is of above average standard. Both written and verbal contribution shows a good level of knowledge and understanding of media concepts. Students can confidently analyse media products, particularly film, using appropriate media terminology.

292. Although the number of AS candidates is very small each year, results are improving, with all three candidates achieving a grade C in 2002. The subject is becoming increasingly popular and there are currently 12 students in Year 12. It is hoped that a good proportion of these students will proceed through to A2 Level.

293. The subject is taught to a single Year 12 class by a teacher in charge of the subject. The standard of teaching observed was very good. Lessons have clear objectives, are well structured and include a variety of activity. The participation of students, particularly in class discussion, is effective in ensuring all students are engaged and make a positive contribution to lessons. Resources, such as the use of suitable film trailers, are well chosen and maximise student interest. The teacher has very good subject knowledge, good facilitation skills and teaches with enthusiasm. Students respond well and participate confidently, often bringing their own knowledge and experience of the media into class discussions. Written tasks are carried out with enthusiasm. All students make good progress in lessons, work quickly, are fully engaged and clearly enjoy the subject.

294. The subject is well managed by the teacher in charge. She keeps up to date with syllabus requirement by attending appropriate courses. Professional development needs and appropriate Open University courses have been identified. Resources are constantly being developed, particularly in anticipation of the practical production demands of the A2 syllabus. The subject is becoming increasingly popular and the current quality of provision should form a good basis for further development both to A2 and possibly GCSE levels.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students have very positive attitudes.
- The subject is well led and managed, with the monitoring and evaluation of teaching being a strong feature.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

Areas for improvement

- More group work could be used in lessons.

296. The results of the nine A-level students in 2001 were in line with national averages; all gained at least grade E, and a third gained grades A or B. The small number of AS candidates in 2001 performed above the national average. The two of these who proceeded to A2 in 2002 maintained their above average standard. The results have been analysed to show that students at the college perform better than might be expected given their prior attainment. Only two students, however, took AS in 2002, achieving E grades. They have not continued with A2 English literature, so there are currently no Year 13 students doing the subject. There are 18 students taking AS English literature in the current Year 12.

297. Standards in the Year 12 sets are at least in line with national averages. Students have only had one term's teaching so far, but some are already working at a level that indicates they ought to expect higher grades at AS and, eventually, at A2. They are able to discuss the language used in a text as well as show a detailed knowledge of content. Sometimes their oral explanations are better than their written work, but not all students participate freely in class discussions. Their note-making skills are well developed, and they can use work prepared as homework to produce good writing in class. The best of this work was clearly above average for students at this stage of the course. Good achievement is still happening.

298. One of the reasons for this is that the students have a very positive attitude to the subject. They are very focused on their work in all lessons, relating very well to their teachers and each other. They show a real enjoyment of the tasks they are set; one girl told her teacher at the end of one of the observed lessons how much she had enjoyed the activity.

299. The good teaching also contributes to the progress being made. The teaching seen during the inspection was never less than good; some was even very good. The teachers of both the Year 12 sets were teaching the same text during the week of the inspection, namely Ian McEwan's 'Enduring Love.' Their knowledge of the text was apparent, as was their knowledge of the religious and philosophical background to the novel. It was interesting to see a variety of approaches to the same text, involving a range of activities. The teaching groups are small enough for productive teacher-led discussions, although even more variety might be possible were teachers to use smaller groups within the classes to prepare presentations. Nevertheless, students are shown how to become independent learners. One of the teachers knew he could rely on students to do the relevant homework that allowed them to draft letters in the style of one of the book's characters in the following lesson. The spiritual and moral issues in the text are faced fairly and squarely: teachers showed that they expect students to be familiar with philosophical debates and religious beliefs – ignorance of the Bible, for example, was not accepted from students tackling a text that uses Christian imagery and language as much as McEwan's does.

300. The assessment of students' written work is very good. Teachers mark thoroughly, making helpful and constructive comments on the work. Students are made very aware of the targets they have to achieve; data is kept that enables an analysis of their progress, which is reviewed by tutors. This leads to very good development of their learning skills, and is probably the single most important factor in the raising of their attainment levels.

301. There is good leadership and management of sixth-form English. The department is also responsible for GCSE English, for those students retaking the subject in Year 12, as well as for the communication components of the key skills course. Four of the specialist staff teach the A-level sets; having both teachers with each set working on the same text with their students is unusual but effective – partly because the teachers work well as a team, and share ideas and activities. They have their own classrooms, and are well resourced. Teaching is very well monitored and evaluated: the documentation proves this. Findings are discussed with senior staff and actions taken where needed to develop teaching or student learning further.

302. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have risen again, after a temporary lapse, and the lack of any Year 13 students is hopefully only temporary. Teaching and learning are now at least good and being very well monitored. Not least, the subject makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.