

INSPECTION REPORT

BROCKINGTON COLLEGE

Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120302

Principal: Mrs V Hood

Lead inspector: A Briggs

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 258584

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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Terms used in this report

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils of all ages at school.

At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14.

Inspectors judge the standards reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The judgements about pupils' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those whose pupils have similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	11-14
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	817

School address:	Mill Lane Enderby Leicester Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE19 4LG

Telephone number:	0116 286 3722
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Dunnett

Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

Brockington College is a voluntary controlled secondary school for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. It is smaller than most other secondary schools and there are slightly more boys than girls. The college serves the communities of Enderby, Narborough and other villages south of Leicester. Pupils come from areas which, overall, are average in social and economic measures compared to the national average. The pupil population is stable with few leaving or joining part way through the year. The attainment of pupils coming into Year 7, as shown by their end of Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science, is above average. Their attainment in other subjects ranges from below average to above average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are hardly any whose home language is not English. A lower than average proportion of pupils have identified special educational needs although the proportion with statements of need is above average. Most pupils are on the register for specific and moderate learning difficulties and a small proportion have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a higher than normal proportion of looked-after pupils. The school gained the Investors in People award in 2000 and the School Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2002. Community provision is strong with around one hundred adult classes per year. The school is housed in buildings that require constant maintenance and are scheduled to be replaced.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15208	A Briggs	Lead inspector	Music
9053	V Phillips	Lay inspector	
23487	P Kitley	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
1503	T Browne	Team inspector	Mathematics
30433	C Corp	Team inspector	Science
25073	S Jordan	Team inspector	Geography; history
32367	J Pike	Team inspector	Art
27226	R Cribb	Team inspector	Religious education; special educational needs
32785	W Allt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
32590	R Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology
33242	S Wall	Team inspector	French
23307	N McDonough	Team inspector	Citizenship; physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school providing sound value for money. Pupils join the school having done better than expected by the end of Year 6 and reach standards which are above average by Year 9. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with enough good teaching to ensure that pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' attitudes are good throughout the school. The leadership and management of the school and its governance are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Strong results in national tests at the end of Year 9 over recent years
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science, art, physical education and religious education but underachieve in music and modern foreign languages, and in ICT in Year 9
- Management is not rigorous enough in tackling weaknesses in teaching
- Pupils with special educational needs do well
- Attendance is high and pupils enjoy coming to college, where they are well cared for
- The community education programme successfully encourages some reluctant learners to want to do well

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Above-average standards have been maintained. Curriculum developments have taken place and a number of awards have been gained, including Investors In People in 2000 and the School Achievement Award on two occasions. Most issues raised by the last inspection have been successfully tackled. Weaknesses remain in the coordination of information and communication technology across the curriculum, and the setting of useful targets at an individual level.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	C	E
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	A	B	A	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

Pupils' standards when they come to the college are above average. **Their achievement overall is satisfactory** as they broadly maintain these high standards throughout their time in college. Results in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 have been consistently higher than the national average over recent years. In 2003, significantly fewer pupils reached the higher National Curriculum levels in English than in mathematics and science. Overall, results were lower than in 2002 with improvement in science and a significant drop in English. Over time, improvement has been in line with the national rate. Current standards in Year 9 are above average overall. Achievement is satisfactory for most pupils and good for pupils with identified special educational needs, who receive consistently good support. The only underachievement seen was when there were specific weaknesses in teaching or the curriculum.

Pupils' personal qualities and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is satisfactory in nearly all lessons. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

This is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils learn well in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, information technology, physical education and religious education because lessons are interesting and challenging. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory with the exception of French where it is unsatisfactory and music

where it is poor because of poor behaviour management. Overall, assessment is satisfactory, but pupils do not always know how to improve their work and achieve their target levels in tests.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Extracurricular activities support and enhance subject learning well. Good attention is given to the care and welfare of pupils, with good support for those who need help because of clearly identified behavioural difficulties, child protection concerns or other personal circumstances. However, behaviour management across the school is inconsistent. Pupils' receive good personal guidance through effective pastoral teams, but advice to help them reach their learning targets is weak. The good partnerships between the college and the community and with other schools make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and their achievement. Community programmes and related services are very good and support pupils learning very well. Partnership with parents is satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The principal provides a clear vision for the future and sound leadership. The leadership and management of other key staff are satisfactory. Day-to-day management ensures the school runs well but the systems for ensuring consistency in the college are not fully effective. Governance is satisfactory; governors support the senior staff well and generally understand the strengths of the college but are not aware of all the weaknesses. They have worked very hard in ensuring a secure future for the school with the new building plan and proposed change in status, but do not challenge the work of the college rigorously enough.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

The college is popular and oversubscribed. Parents' views are quite positive. They feel their children are taught well and make good progress. They have concerns about behaviour and the way in which the college keeps them informed about their children's progress. Inspectors agree that both, though satisfactory, could be improved. Pupils are positive and think this is a good school to be at as they are taught well and expected to work hard. They share their parents' concerns about the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils. Inspection evidence showed that this is not an issue of general misconduct, but linked to the quality of teaching and systems for dealing with behaviour. Older pupils feel unfairly treated when teachers punish the whole class for the way a few behave.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the college should do to improve are

- Deal with weaknesses in teaching so that
 - Work matches accurately the different needs of pupils
 - Activities are interesting, exciting and varied
 - Assessment information is used effectively to check how well pupils are doing and identify and share with pupils the next steps in learning
- Focus leadership and management more sharply on raising standards further and improving provision in music and French

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Results in national examinations are above average. Pupils' standards on joining the college are above average and these standards are maintained so that by the time they leave Year 9 their standards are above average and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national testing at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average and continue a trend of above and well-above average results
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science, art, physical education and religious education because of effective teaching
- Standards in Years 9 are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall
- Pupils underachieve in French and music because of weak management and teaching
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve better than expected because of the very good work of the support team

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.8 (35.5)	33 (33)
Mathematics	37.8 (37.6)	35 (35)
Science	36.0 (35.0)	34 (33)

There were 263 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average overall. They were well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Mathematics results are strongest while those in English are weakest. Comparatively fewer pupils reach the higher levels in English than in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, that is schools whose pupils gained similar end of Year 6 test results, results in science and mathematics were average. Results in English were well below average. Overall, results were below average but have been improving at a rate that is broadly in line with the national trend. Boys and girls results were similar in English and mathematics but girls did much better than boys in science.
2. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average in mathematics and science. In art, religious education and physical education standards are above average. They are average in all other subjects with the exception of music where they are well below average. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science, art, physical education and religious education because of the good quality teaching they receive. They achieve satisfactorily in all other subjects except French and music, where they underachieve because of unsatisfactory or poor teaching. In ICT the good standards being reached in the discrete course in Years 7 and 8 are not matched by those found in Year 9 where ICT is taught within other subjects. As a result, pupils in Year 9 underachieve because they do not build on their skills. Overall, standards in the college are above average and the relative differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls are similar to those found nationally.
3. Pupils have satisfactory literacy and good mathematical skills. Pupils' competence in ICT is satisfactory because they use computers regularly in Years 7 and 8.
4. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Where planning is good and effective use is made of the very good individual education plans, achievement in lessons is very good, as was seen in history and science lessons. When planning and support are less effective, particularly in music and French lessons, pupils' achievement suffers. The achievement of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is satisfactory. They progress at a rate that matches that of other pupils. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are provided with some opportunities to really

excel such as studying GCSE music courses a two years early and being involved with very good national projects with local universities. Overall they achieve as well as their classmates. However, in a few lessons they are not stretched enough because teachers do not modify work to ensure they are always achieving the highest of which they are capable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is high, punctuality good and attitudes to learning generally good and so pupils are well placed to be successful while at the college. Their behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils' personal qualities reflect satisfactory provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In general, pupils want to do well, but occasionally they struggle to manage their frustration with lack-lustre lessons and disappointing teaching
- Behaviour is not always as good as it could be because it is not consistently managed to best effect
- Pupils enjoy chances to show initiative with their work and take an active role in college life, but do not have enough, regular, high-quality opportunities to develop first-class personal and social skills
- Pupils get on well together so the chance to meet with and enjoy time with friends is an important factor in their willingness to come to college, which reflects community spirit well

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	1.1

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Commentary

5. Pupils of all backgrounds come into college ready to work, expecting lessons to be interesting and to inspire them to learn. Pupils enjoy the chance to try things for themselves in the best lessons in art, science, technology and mathematics. They relish active, physical education lessons where they can practise and improve individual skills. They work hard and do their best in good lessons where expectations are high, and get on with their work conscientiously, even when lessons are uninspiring. Interest wanes when lessons are dull and pupils spend too long sitting passively with not enough to do. When repetition and boredom are too much to bear pupils resort to messing about rather than listening to information that seems meaningless to them.
6. Most pupils behave reasonably well most of the time in and out of lessons, particularly where adults set a positive example and take time to praise rather than criticise. Sometimes, individuals behave badly because teaching is poor or adults mismanage behaviour. In lessons with weak teaching, poor classroom control and little learning, pupils see unruly behaviour as 'fair game', if only to provide a spark of interest. Pupils do not value rewards or respond constructively to sanctions that are used inconsistently. Pupils and parents are unhappy with the unfairness of whole class detentions and unpredictable access to particular trips. Teachers do not always deal effectively with interruptions in lessons. The process whereby teachers seek help to deal with disruptive pupils is too long-winded to be useful in restoring a good climate for teaching and learning. The college does not always check on whether pupils are deliberately doing the wrong thing or, in fact, showing signs of emotional or other difficulties, which require specific help. Once bullying is reported, it is usually dealt with firmly. The rate of exclusions rose last year, partly with a general rise in anti-social behaviour locally, but also with teething problems in changes to behaviour management.
7. The college provides opportunities for pupils to become form representatives and college council members. Other pupils feel that their views are not taken seriously, including their reaction to rules, rewards and sanctions. Pupils feel that too many assemblies over the past months have involved 'having a go' at everyone in a group or year. They are clear that many assemblies are dull. The exceptions are stimulating assemblies taken by visiting clergy. As lessons are surprisingly short of awe-inspiring moments, pupils' sense of being valued, their capacity to reflect and their spiritual

awareness are not being developed as well as they should be. Celebration of pupils' qualities and successes is more low-key than in many comparable schools, for example, there are fewer scintillating displays in foyers and halls to show what pupils have achieved and act as inspiration for others.

8. Racial harmony is good because of the college's welcome for all and the contribution of subjects such as art and religious education to cultural awareness. The college is at the heart of the local community, not least as many parents and even grandparents are ex-pupils and in some cases, still attend adult education classes. This sense of community helps pupils to feel well cared for and positive about the college, but is not yet harnessed to ensuring that pupils achieve all of which they are capable.

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 – any other Asian background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
Parent/pupil preferred not to say
Information not obtained

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
741	28	1
1		
8		
5		
1		
12		
10		
22	1	
1		
1		
1		
3		
11		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE

The college provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with much that is good. The learning opportunities provided for pupils through the curriculum are satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Pupils work in a safe and caring environment where they are well supported and guided. The college works well with other schools and colleges and the community to support pupils' achievement. Links with parents are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

With a balance of strengths and weaknesses, teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and leads to sound learning. The way in which teachers assess pupils' work and the use they make of this information is inconsistent across subjects, but is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, physical education, religious education and in Years 7 and 8 in English and ICT. It is unsatisfactory in French and poor in music resulting in significant underachievement
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and skills in preparing pupils for examinations help to raise standards
- Teachers talk too much in some lessons so pupils become bored, and misbehaviour is not managed effectively
- Planning of lessons does not always take enough account of the full width of capabilities in the class
- Some aspects of assessment and marking of pupils' work are unsatisfactory

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 106 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	17 (16%)	48 (45%)	31 (30%)	8 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

9. Within the overall satisfactory teaching that was seen there were differences between the subjects. Pupils learn well in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, information technology, physical education and religious education because teaching is consistently good. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects except French where it is unsatisfactory and music where it is poor.
10. A clear strength in the teaching is the good knowledge and understanding of the teachers. They use their expert knowledge to give clear explanations of the ideas and concepts in their subject, to respond readily to pupils' difficulties and questions and to plan many lessons which gradually develop pupils' own knowledge and understanding. Teachers in mathematics and science use their expertise to prepare pupils really well for national tests. Teachers work hard to establish good relationships in lessons which create an environment within which pupils can learn and achieve. Most lessons are well planned and incorporate a variety of interesting high-pace tasks to ensure progress is swift and enjoyable. However, although planning is a strength in subjects such as science and mathematics, it is a weakness in French.
11. There are several areas of teaching that, despite being satisfactory, could be much better. Some lessons are a bit dull and mundane, particularly when pupils have to spend long periods sitting listening to the teacher talk. In these lessons pupils deliberately misbehave and teachers do not manage behaviour well; support from senior managers is not always effective and as a result learning is disrupted. This is particularly common in, but not limited to, French and music lessons. In many lessons, the demands made of pupils are appropriate, but could be that little bit higher for the higher-attaining pupils so they could really excel. Many teachers modify work well so that all pupils achieve as well as expected, but in some lessons such as French and music this is not the case. In fact, for almost all aspects of teaching there are examples of both good and unsatisfactory practice in the college.
12. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small group sessions is very good and they learn very well. When teachers plan carefully and the work matches pupils' needs, they achieve well in full class sessions. In most lessons, pupils are given work that helps them to achieve in line with other pupils. Teachers break down the work into a variety of different tasks and this enables pupils to keep concentrating. Lower-attaining pupils learn satisfactorily because of well-matched support from learning support assistants who make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal as well as academic development. In unsupported classes of pupils with learning difficulties, progress is slower and on occasions unsatisfactory.
13. The quality of everyday assessment of pupils' work and the information about how well they are doing are satisfactory. Assessment has improved since the last inspection but still has some weaknesses. Marking of pupils' work, in some subjects, is helpful and gives clear guidance on how the work could be improved, and in others is inconsistent and provides little help towards

improvement. In English and art, for example, pupils receive constructive individual feedback, but this is not yet consistent across subjects. Pupils generally know the level they are at and what they are aiming for, but they do not know in detail how to improve. Pupils are little involved in rigorous self-assessment. As recognised by the college, teacher assessments in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not accurate enough and have resulted in overgenerous evaluations of standards. Not all teachers make effective use of assessment information when planning. Assessment is weak in music, French and information technology, where pupils have little idea of their standards or of any targets for improvement. However, the careful assessment of pupils with special educational needs provides much useful information that helps teachers plan appropriately and monitor progress well. The college now has systems for tracking the progress of pupils, reporting this to those who need to know and identifying where extra help and guidance is needed.

14. The National Strategy has been implemented successfully in English, mathematics and science. Many teachers use the three-part lesson structure effectively. There is not yet a consistency of practice amongst all teachers in other subjects and the strategy has not yet made enough improvement in standards.

The curriculum

Pupils have access to a satisfactory curriculum that is supported by a good range of enrichment activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme has been well structured
- There are many clubs and other activities available outside the school day
- The lack of ICT lessons in Year 9 results in pupils not building on their skills gained in Years 7 and 8
- The design and technology curriculum hinders pupils from achieving the highest levels
- The English Speaking Board Examinations are very popular

Commentary

15. The curriculum has significant strengths, but some weaknesses in planning and coordination. In Years 7 and 8, pupils have discrete ICT lessons and as a result achieve well. In Year 9, ICT is taught through other subjects and the quality and management of this is uneven resulting in pupils underachieving because they do not improve their skills and knowledge. The college is aware of this problem and has plans to tackle it in the very near future. The PSHE programme meets the needs of the pupils well through a well-designed series of relevant topics.
16. There is a good range of extracurricular opportunities, including sporting, cultural and academic activities. The college also provides many opportunities for pupils to gain extra help with their subjects outside the college day. Take-up is high for the good range of sporting activities, training sessions and competitions. Almost all subjects are enriched by educational visits such as those to the Forest of Dean to support geography and history and regular theatre visits to support learning in English. A wide range of cultural exchanges is offered to pupils but there are not enough musical events or visits to concerts. In addition, a range of clubs and leisure opportunities is organised including chess, karaoke, skiing and visits linked to the college's reward system. Pupils are able to take the very popular English Speaking Board Examinations and many return from the upper school to take the higher levels of these examinations.
17. The design and technology curriculum has some weaknesses. Pupils are unable to achieve the highest national curriculum levels because the curriculum time is divided up in a way that restricts the highest-attaining pupils from achieving their full potential. Pupils do not use computers in music and do not do enough composing and singing. In modern foreign languages, although the time allocation is satisfactory there is not enough curriculum time for all pupils to learn a second language. In English, pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality poetry, fiction and plays. In physical education, there is good use of the lesson structure recommended by the national strategy and curriculum time is well used.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum and extracurricular activities. When withdrawal of pupils from lessons takes place, it is based on a clear rationale that shows benefit to the pupils involved. There are excellent

arrangements for pupils who require physiotherapy to enable them to take a full part in the curriculum. However, the provision of suitable activities and support material for these pupils in some lessons, where learning support assistants (LSAs) are not available, is unsatisfactory. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory but uneven. These pupils are supported by additional guidance in some lessons as well as events outside the college day. This enhances their experience and raises standards but it is not consistent within all subjects. Musically talented pupils in Year 9 can follow the GCSE examination course at the partner upper school. The college also promotes national events using links with local universities to challenge the gifted and talented and increase their motivation.

19. Learning resources satisfactorily meet the needs of the curriculum. The numbers, qualifications and experience of teaching and non-teaching staff are appropriately matched to the curriculum in all subject areas. The main college building dates from the 1950's and was designed for a short life span and for a much smaller number of pupils. The college manages its accommodation problems well. The college library is small but best use is made of the space available and it is well run and inviting to the pupils. Plans are well advanced for the replacement of the school buildings.

Care, guidance and support

The college ensures the care, welfare and health and safety of its pupils well. The tutorial teams and support staff are committed to providing good care for pupils. Support advice and guidance is satisfactory. Academic monitoring, and giving pupils opportunities to make a contribution to the shape of the college, are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils get good advice in lessons, but marking and target setting are not linked sufficiently to raising achievement
- The college has good procedures to ensure the health and safety of all
- There are good induction and transfer systems to ensure that pupils smoothly move between the different stages of education
- Pupils views until recently were not considered sufficiently

Commentary

20. Effective systems ensure all staff are well informed of their duties of child protection and are regularly updated on their responsibilities. Part-time and temporary staff receive useful condensed guidance. The college has a good internet filtering system that protects children from unwanted and offensive materials.
21. Good procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all users of the college. Health and safety management is taken very seriously and there are clear roles and responsibilities. There is good monitoring by teachers, site managers and technicians who have all been suitably trained. Although all major checks are fully documented, the daily and weekly inspections in science and design and technology are not recorded formally.
22. Wherever possible tutors stay with the same group of pupils throughout their time in college. This gives good opportunities for pupils to discuss any problems and concerns. Further good support is available through the college counsellor, nurse and community services. Parents feel and inspectors agree that the college responds well to pupils and parents concerns.
23. The quality of marking and assessment is patchy. Good advice is given verbally in most lessons. There is good support and guidance in English, science, technology, and history, but mathematics and ICT have some weaknesses and monitoring and guidance is unsatisfactory in French and music. Often the marking of written work does not give enough detail on how to improve. Pupils set their own targets that are monitored regularly by tutors. These do not focus sufficiently on raising academic standards because pupils and tutors are not aware of the requirements from each subject. Systems for managing data are not effective in providing an efficient flow of information on pupils' progress because computers are not being used well enough to ensure consistency. The college has a good range of awards and merits that celebrate achievements.

24. There are good induction arrangements from primary schools and later transfer to the upper school because of the work done by teachers who visit schools. They transfer information to enable a smooth integration for all pupils. Vulnerable pupils are given extra induction time to the upper school and there is good bridging work between Years 6 and 7, and Years 9 and 10. The higher than normal proportion of looked-after children are supported well because of the sensitive circulation of information that allows teachers to be better aware of their particular circumstances.
25. Careers education is good and pupils have access to a package of lessons, events and advice supported by the Connexions services in the autumn term of Year 9 and before transfer to the upper school. Parents and pupils are given good advice before optional GCSE subjects are chosen when the teachers from the upper school present a special information evening.
26. Many pupils feel that their views have not been sufficiently taken into consideration. The recently formed college council is addressing these criticisms and pupils now have satisfactory opportunities to influence the curriculum and shape the college.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is satisfactory and with the community and other schools is good. Linked community programmes and related services are very good in supporting enjoyment of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good community education programme helps to make more people, both in the local community and within college, feel that learning is rewarding
- The local community values the college, so various local organisations, particularly the clergy, contribute very positively to its daily life and to pupils' personal development
- Links with the 'local family of schools' are strong and ensure smooth transition from one stage of education to the next
- The quality of information for parents, though usually clear, is not lively enough to stir parents to take an active interest in college life and their children's achievements
- The college works well with parents of pupils with special educational needs but is less successful and active in building strong working relationships with other groups of parents

Commentary

27. The community programme and related links are very well managed to meet the needs of local people for a wide range of courses, including those in basic skills. As a result, the programme attracts pupils of all ages and backgrounds, drawing in family members and ex-pupils for everything from 'computing for the terrified', to Indian head massage, and advanced language courses. Present and past pupils have a rich range of opportunities to enjoy active sport, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and specialist interest groups such as Spotlight Youth Theatre and the cartoon drawing class. At times, youth work programmes and volunteer work are of particular benefit to pupils who have struggled with school but enjoy working successfully with others and make great strides with their own skills. A few current pupils help out with specific courses and support people with special needs, which is a significant factor in the development of their own personal qualities such as understanding and awareness of others' views and problems.
28. The college aims to enrich the curriculum and support pupils' spiritual, social and moral development through charity fund-raising, trips and visits, and specific links such as those with a school in Tanzania. Clearly some pupils are lucky enough to be involved in many of these experiences, but others, who are unable to go on college trips for whatever reason, do not benefit from them. Local partnerships are strong but those with communities beyond the immediate area, including those made possible by the Internet, are less well established but adequate. The college welcomes visitors from the local community, particularly for the contribution from churches and youth workers to its Christian ethos in their work with pupils and through regular, uplifting assemblies.
29. Good links with other schools and colleges ensure pupils benefit from a settled start to Year 7 and a smooth transition to Year 10. The focus is on pupils' welfare and managing the curriculum to avoid repetition. However, there is not enough emphasis given to raising pupils' aspirations and achievement.

30. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their individual child's learning, behavioural, emotional or specific learning difficulties. They are encouraged to work closely with the college to address issues that arise. The college works hard to help parents support their child's learning. They are also invited to comment upon their children's individual education plans. All this works well.
31. Parents think that the college is doing a reasonable job but have a few concerns about inconsistencies in teaching quality, behaviour management and communication. These are supported by the inspection. A few parents query how well pupils are doing, whether the college expects enough of them, and whether everyone gets a fair deal. A small number of parents do not think that their concerns are taken seriously and others feel less well informed and involved than they would like because information varies in quality. The curriculum booklet gives a clear idea of what is happening, but other items, such as the governors' annual report to parents, have nothing written from the pupils' perspective to interest families. Reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. They give a good outline of how much effort has been made, but not with precise detail on whether the individual is doing well enough for someone of that age and capability, nor exactly what steps to take to improve. Overall, targets are far too general. Often they take the form of appeals to 'keep up the good work' instead of precise goals and related skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the principal is satisfactory. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory, as is the college's management. Governance is satisfactory but governors do not challenge the work of the college enough. Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled, but further action is needed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal is well supported in her tireless drive to improve the college through changing status and acquiring new buildings
- The college's self-evaluation process is not effective and leads to an inaccurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the college
- New appointments of middle managers and extending the leadership team have strengthened leadership and management
- The strategic plan is not sufficiently focused on raising standards and improving achievement and is not underpinned by rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning
- Effective structures are now in place to manage the curriculum and pastoral care

Commentary

32. The principal has a clear vision for the future of the college. She has invested much time and effort into working towards a change in college status to a voluntary aided school, as well as acquiring new buildings. She sees these as key strategies for improving the college. The principal has ensured that the college has made satisfactory progress with tackling the key issues from the previous inspection, but there are still some important aspects remaining.
33. Governors fully share the principal's vision, and work very hard in driving this forward. Relationships between governors and senior staff are good. Individual governors are linked to subjects and other aspects of the college. Governors do not always ask searching questions. As critical friends, they do not challenge enough and are not fully aware of all the weaknesses of the college. The governing body has a healthy mix of expertise, with experienced and less experienced governors. There are appropriate committees that meet regularly, but much of their time has been used to deal with the proposed new building plans and change in status and this has resulted in some neglect of other responsibilities.
34. Leadership and management by other key staff are satisfactory. The leadership group has clear roles and responsibilities, and work well together. There are appropriate teams to oversee the management of the curriculum and pastoral care. These are significant improvements since the previous inspection. However, whilst management is sound, the college's self-evaluation processes are not regular, rigorous or accurate enough. Each subject department carries out an annual review, and this helps to inform the college's strategic plan. Regular, formal monitoring of teaching

does not happen in every subject. The senior managers review three subjects a year. The review, although based on the previous Ofsted criteria, is not frequent or rigorous enough to be able to identify strengths and weaknesses, or judge the impact of improvement strategies. Important weaknesses in teaching have been identified, such as those in music, but not enough action has been taken to deal with the problems. The strategic plan is not a fully effective document in helping the college move forwards, because it is not focused sufficiently on raising standards and improving achievement. Outcomes are not always linked firmly to a measurable impact and weaknesses are not accurately identified.

35. Leadership and management of pastoral teams are good and contribute greatly to the care of pupils and their high attendance. Regular meeting of heads of year ensures that important information is communicated effectively resulting in well cared for happy pupils. However, the work of the pastoral team is not sufficiently linked to raising standards.
36. Leadership and management of subject areas are variable. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good as is leadership in science. In English, history and religious education, leadership is good. However, in French, ICT and music, leadership and management are unsatisfactory or worse. Subject department plans generally link well to the priorities of the college strategic plan. Where leadership and management are good, there is a strong focus on raising achievement, reflected in appropriate priorities. Managers have introduced effective use of new initiatives, such as the national strategy, to improve the quality of teaching and learning but its full impact has yet to be seen.
37. Performance management is well established but not fully effective. Teaching observations follow set criteria and targets for improvement are linked to college priorities, and monitored by the principal. All staff development is closely linked to individual targets and development aspects of the college's strategic plan. However, the process for monitoring the impact of professional development is vague, and not evaluated. There has not been sufficient training for teachers in accurately assessing pupils' work at the end of Year 9 and so many subjects are over generous in their assessments. The leadership group is aware of the shortcomings and is in the process of analysing the effectiveness of performance management.
38. The induction of newly qualified and new teachers to the college is good. The college benefits from a successful initial teacher training partnerships with De Montfort University and Leicester University Schools of Education. This process also provides the college with recruitment opportunities.
39. The college has good systems for its financial management. The recent audit report identified the college as very good in terms of local financial management. The college's management and governors apply the principles of best value satisfactorily to all financial issues but comparison with other schools is unsatisfactory because the schools own self-evaluation is not accurate. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,130,816
Total expenditure	2,130,816
Expenditure per pupil	2,650.27

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5,942
Balance carried forward to the next	38,699

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGE 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is satisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results have been erratic because of years of staffing disruption
- Standards for pupils in Years 7 and 8 have improved because of consistent teaching and curriculum changes to meet the requirements of the national strategy
- Leadership is focused on raising standards and is meeting with success
- There is not enough emphasis placed on literacy within other subjects

Commentary

Examination results

40. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above the national averages but well below average compared with similar schools. Pupils did not do as well in English as they did in mathematics and science with far fewer gaining the highest levels. Results have been erratic for several years and dropped significantly in 2003, but the evidence from lessons observed is that the decline has been arrested.

Standards and achievement

41. There has been significant underachievement in English over the last few years. The reason for this is massive disruption in management of the subject over the last five years. Since the last inspection there have been five different changes to management. The department had not kept up sufficiently with changes in the national curriculum and a lack of monitoring meant that inconsistencies in teaching were not identified and tackled. A focus on boys' achievement has succeeded in improving their participation in lessons and their results. Work seen in Years 7 and 8 indicates that positive change is taking place. The department has introduced extra activities for gifted and talented pupils and booster classes for pupils who are not meeting their target grades resulting in above average standards and better than expected achievement for pupils in Years 7 and 8. These initiatives have not yet had full impact on the standards and achievement of the current Year 9 pupils. The college places a high priority on reading and pupils are provided with a wide range of high-quality fiction, poetry and plays. Pupils have good language skills and are able to express their ideas orally and in writing. Handwriting is fluent and work is well presented. However, some average and lower-attaining pupils when writing independently, use unsatisfactory spelling and grammar. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language progress at a rate that matches that of their classmates.

Teaching and learning

42. Teaching is better in Years 7 and 8 because the targets of the national strategy have been fully incorporated into lessons. The impact is less obvious in Year 9 where teaching is satisfactory. The best lessons have clear learning objectives and activities that are interesting and capture pupils'

imagination. In a minority of lessons, some pupils lose interest if teachers talk for too long. Teaching that breaks lessons into manageable chunks helps maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their ICT skills to their work. Most group work is well organised to help pupils write fluently and with confidence. However, there are inconsistencies in teaching. The use of worksheets and writing frames can limit opportunities for extended writing. As a result, average and higher-attaining pupils in some groups have fewer opportunities to compare poems or write formal letters in as much depth as pupils in other classes. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and they enjoy sharing their work with others in attractive displays. Marking in books is thorough and helps pupils to understand what they need to do in order to improve. It involves pupils in setting relevant targets and shows that writing is valued.

Leadership and management

43. There is a good ethos in the department, morale is high and staff feel valued. Leadership has a clear vision based on a detailed analysis of data and a commitment to raising standards. It has identified the need for greater consistency to share expertise and good practice so that high expectations and challenge are made available to all groups of pupils. Work is planned to meet the requirements of the national strategy very well. The recent changes have had most impact in Years 7 and 8 and whilst it is clear that management has many good features the full impact has yet to be seen. Library provision has improved and is now good. It enhances pupils' wider reading choices well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Standards in speaking, reading and writing are satisfactory throughout the college but should be higher considering the attainment of pupils when they enter the school. In most subjects, key words are explained carefully and pupils use technical vocabulary accurately. Pupils write at length in English, science and religious studies. Lower-attaining pupils are well supported with writing frames and guidance in science and design and technology. Very good use of writing frames and glossary notes in art lessons help pupils to make confident judgements in their critical writing. There are inconsistencies between subjects in the quality of marking and the extent to which spelling and grammar mistakes are corrected. Listening skills are weak for some lower-attaining pupils, especially boys, who find it difficult to concentrate when teachers talk for more than a few minutes. Overall, literacy, whilst satisfactory, has not been developed enough within all subjects because planning for literacy is not promoted at a high enough level in the leadership group. As a result, there are weaknesses in the coordination of literacy throughout the college.

Modern foreign languages

The focus of the inspection was French. One Year 9 lesson of German was also sampled. In this lesson, standards were average and achievement satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching.

French

Provision in French is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is inadequate and does not provide a range of interesting activities, pace and sufficient challenge to the majority of pupils
- Teachers generally use French well in lessons to promote the pupils' listening skills
- Pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve
- Teaching and learning are not monitored rigorously and evaluated effectively to identify good practice and areas in need of improvement
- Pupils have few opportunities to develop their oral skills and use extended French

Commentary

Standards and achievement

45. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average. Boys and girls attained similar standards. However, these assessments were overgenerous.
46. Standards in written work are average. Pupils take care and pride in the presentation of their written work, but are not challenged to write independently or develop sentence structures. Listening skills are well developed because teachers use French consistently well as the language of instruction in lessons. Standards in spoken French are below average because too few opportunities are given to practise extended French or more complex sentence structures. Reading skills are also below average; pupils read hesitantly and are not encouraged to pronounce French accurately or with feeling. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory because teaching does not challenge the pupils sufficiently and therefore they make insufficient progress in their learning. The achievement of boys and girls does not differ significantly. The achievement of higher-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory; while their knowledge of necessary vocabulary is sound, they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and can produce only simple statements and sentences in French. The achievement of lower-attaining pupils is satisfactory; they are able to give short answers to questions in French and have a satisfactory knowledge of basic vocabulary because the low-level work is better matched to their needs.

Teaching and learning

47. Teachers speak French well and consistently in lessons. Lack of detailed lesson planning leads too often to a lack of clear focus and a limited range of interesting activities to motivate and sustain the pupils' interest; consequently, there is too much 'off task' behaviour in too many lessons and this has an adverse effect on learning. Pupils, particularly the higher attainers, are not sufficiently or consistently challenged in lessons and their learning is therefore too often slow and limited. Where teachers' lesson planning is detailed and the teaching rigorous, pupils' learning is good and they make good progress; but this is the exception rather than the rule. Pupils' work is not clearly related to National Curriculum levels and, consequently, pupils do not always have a clear indication of what they need to do to improve their learning. Work is not matched well enough to the needs of each pupil to allow them to make the progress in learning of which they are capable; this is particularly the case with the higher-attaining pupils. Teaching encourages the pupils to repeat words and phrases but presents few opportunities for the pupils to develop independent learning skills and mastery of more complex language.

Leadership and management

48. Teaching and learning are not rigorously monitored and evaluated to identify areas of good practice that might be shared, or areas which need improving. Work incorporating the National Strategy has started but needs much more development to have a real impact on teaching and learning. Documentation does not concentrate on strategies to raise standards and is rather 'sketchy' and unclear. Standards have not been maintained since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Year 9
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very good results because they work hard in response to the good teaching
- Pupils concentrate and produce careful, accurate written work in most lessons
- Pupils benefit from experienced, committed teachers and newly appointed leadership
- Teaching lacks variety and interest because too much is based on repetitive textbook exercises

Commentary

Examination results

49. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national averages and in line with the averages for similar schools. Results have continued to rise in line with the national trend. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

50. Pupils achieve well in the routine methods of number and algebra, and also in geometry and statistics. Carefully completed written exercises in Year 9, for example, include accurate work on Pythagoras theorem and precise use of mathematical notation. Pupils learn how to tackle and present formal investigations and statistical projects. However, pupils' skills of exploring mathematical ideas, thinking for themselves and solving problems are weak, mainly because of the teaching approaches used. Lower-attaining pupils achieve well because they receive effective help in lessons or special classes taught in small groups. Extra classes after college help the more-able pupils achieve the higher levels in the Year 9 tests. Although some pupils' progress and attitudes have been affected by staffing difficulties last term, in most lessons pupils listen attentively to their teacher and persevere with exercises, leading to a good overall standard of written work.

Teaching and learning

51. The mathematics teachers have good knowledge and experience, which ensures pupils learn facts and skills correctly. In most classes, there are good relationships and effective management of behaviour. Work is planned at appropriate levels for different sets. Lessons get off to a brisk start and time generally is used well, typically involving a starter activity, teacher explanations then textbook exercises. One very good lesson included a number puzzle at the start, which, together with the regular competitive approaches, stimulated pupils to think and discuss their problem solving approaches. Teachers generally encourage and support individual pupils and those with special educational needs receive help that is well prepared and active. The established regular testing and recording of pupils' progress are further strengths. Key words are well displayed in classrooms and teachers usually help pupils to use mathematical vocabulary correctly.
52. Despite good teaching and learning overall, there are some general weaknesses. Many starter tasks are just sets of questions, activities lack variety and are dominated by repetitive exercises, and questioning does not make pupils think or extend their ideas. Although in one lesson the pupils placed counters on a grid and stood up putting their arms to show different equations of lines, little use is usually made of practical activity or discussion between pupils to extend their understanding. Marking of written work varies in quality, with insufficient guidance about how to improve. The department also recognises the need to use computers more as an aid in teaching.

Leadership and management

53. Last term the department was without a curriculum leader, which affected the impact of leadership. Unrealistic previous development planning had slowed improvement, for example in assessment and use of computers. However, the newly appointed leadership has the vision and the support of colleagues in wanting to improve further the teaching of mathematics. Organisation is good, for example in the well-documented scheme of work and the wide-ranging handbook, the beneficial links with other schools and useful analysis of performance. Another strength is the stimulating environment created throughout the mathematics area. Since the last inspection, the mathematics courses have been improved, and standards have been maintained at well above the national average.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils make effective use of their good mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils' numeracy skills were no barrier to their learning, they confidently calculated the efficiency of energy transfer, used graphs for Hooke's law and were able to draw conclusions from data. In geography, pupils show a very good understanding of maps, graphs and data to support their learning of the subject. A thorough and helpful guidance document for mathematics across the curriculum has been provided for all staff and this adds to the overall good level of competence pupils have.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Year 9
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong, enthusiastic and well-qualified team of teachers who teach consistently well
- Leadership has a clear, shared vision and this has resulted in significant improvement
- The teachers plan and employ a wide range of teaching and learning styles that pupils enjoy and benefit from
- Sufficient emphasis is not always given to assessing how much has been learnt in lessons
- There is inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work to enable the pupils to improve

Commentary

Examination results

55. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 in national tests were well above national averages and in line with the averages for similar schools. The trend in the results has been upwards over the past few years.

Standards and achievement

56. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to report and evaluate their scientific investigations accurately and in detail that is at a standard well above the national average. Their understanding of fuels and their effect on global warming and acid rain is also well above the expected standard. The pupils enter the college above the national average and achieve well throughout their time in college. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the science department; teachers use their individual education plans effectively to produce suitably supportive resources. As a result these pupils also achieve well. Pupils who are gifted and talented are also well supported. The

department is continuing to arrange specific events to motivate these pupils further. They achieve well and obtain the highest grades possible but are not always challenged enough in lessons.

Teaching and learning

57. The teaching and learning observed was good. All teachers plan their science lessons very well using an agreed common format. They employ a wide range of teaching and learning styles involving practical work, investigations and the use of computers. The most successful lessons have good pace and engage the pupils with a range of challenging and relevant tasks. The classroom control is good but some pupils, especially boys, require the teachers to intervene and insist they complete the tasks set. The teachers are very supportive of each other and form a strong team of enthusiastic and qualified staff. They are well supported by very effective technicians who ensure all the required equipment is present when required. All lessons have a planned assessment activity for the teacher to gauge how well the pupils learn. In the majority of lessons, this was done well but in other lessons the teacher did not use suitable questioning that involved all the pupils. The pupils' work is marked on a regular basis following the college policy. A new approach to marking is being tried where teachers give specific guidance on how each pupil could improve further. This has been successful in motivating these pupils and is to be introduced across the whole department.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership provides very clear vision and direction and has been responsible for the introduction of the new course and teaching styles. The management of the department is good with well-organised assessment procedures that are used to check on pupils' attainment and achievement. There is not enough monitoring of lessons to ensure consistency and share good practice. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards have increased and the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT is taught as a discrete subject to pupils in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9, pupils' experience of ICT is restricted to other subjects and the provision is uneven.

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good in ICT lessons Unsatisfactory in Year 9

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers of the discrete ICT lessons have secure subject knowledge, their skills are effectively deployed and they work well as a team
- Lessons are well planned and up-to-date computers are used effectively
- Pupils in Year 9 rely on other subjects to cover the ICT requirements and this is not working
- Pupils' work is not consistently assessed or monitored and progress is not tracked against prior attainment

Commentary

Standards and achievement

59. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average. However, these assessments were overgenerous.
60. By the end of Year 9, pupils have not built on their skills gained in their first two years and so their standards drop to average. Standards in Year 8 are above average because of the discrete ICT lessons and good teaching. Pupils of all abilities are confident in the use of the 'Flowol' software for control technology, with higher attainers having the opportunity to extend their skills. In Year 7, pupils are able to develop a design for a logo using ungrouping and regrouping techniques and to evaluate their design. They are also able to use presentation software, although there is not enough use of digitised images to increase the standard of this work. Pupils in Year 7 are also able to use Internet searches critically. These skills are extended in Year 8. The majority of pupils in Year 9 do not use computers enough in the subjects they study because of the structure of the curriculum and consequently underachieve.

Teaching and learning

61. In ICT lessons relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Teachers know their subject well and use the available resources in a way which captivates the interest of pupils and encourages them to learn. The attitudes of pupils are good because the pace is usually fast and there is a variety of tasks. Where fewer tasks are available and pupils have to listen to the teacher for a long time they become bored and misbehave. Teachers are familiar with the software and present it in a way that is exciting to the pupils. Teachers move around the room helping and advising pupils, but sometimes boys are allowed to become dominant, demanding and receiving more attention than girls. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs benefit from the use of additional teacher support, extra work sheets and effective use of knowledgeable, well-prepared learning support assistants. Although the pupils are encouraged to improve their work in lessons, there is little feedback to individual pupils in their ICT folders to indicate their current level and what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. Teaching in Year 9 is unsatisfactory overall and is dependent on individual teachers' skills in using computers. Most non-specialist teachers have undergone training but too many have not built on this enough to be confident in the delivery of ICT in Year 9. As a result, most pupils do not have the opportunity to extend the skills they have developed through the balanced curriculum and good teaching they receive in Years 7 and 8.

Leadership and management

62. The department lacks a permanent subject leader and so there is not yet a clear-shared vision of all aspects of ICT. Management of the ICT department is sound but there is unsatisfactory coordination of the subject across the college. Assessment procedures lack a systematic approach and the good intention to deliver ICT across the curriculum in Year 9 has not been followed through by all departments. Overall, assessment of pupil work is unsatisfactory. ICT was identified as a key issue in the last inspection report and it has not been resolved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory and leads to pupils having satisfactory competence in the use of computers. Use of ICT has been mapped across subjects, but in many cases in Year 9 there is a dependence on use of ICT by pupils, rather than teaching of ICT in Year 9 to build on their skills from Years 7 and 8. ICT is used very well in science where data loggers are used effectively by all pupils to record measurements in practical work. The science department makes good use of their own ICT suite for research and revision software. In English pupils have good opportunities to apply their ICT skills. There are 13 computers in one English room and they are used with confidence by pupils of all abilities. In art computers are well used for manipulation of images. Design and technology pupils make good use of computer aided design and manufacturing. In music, new electronic keyboards have been introduced, but there are no means as yet for connectivity to MIDI interfaces. In some areas, ICT does not take place because of lack of access to computers, although in practice there are too many occasions when the computer rooms sit empty.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a good range of subject skills and use technical language confidently
- Teachers have a good command of the subject and use this to provide interesting descriptions and good resources
- High expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are not shared by all teachers so that not all pupils are challenged sufficiently
- Some pupils lose concentration and misbehave when work is set at a level that does not match their needs or abilities

Commentary

Standards and achievement

64. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were very high in comparison to national expectations. However, these assessments were overgenerous.
65. Pupils enter the college with knowledge, skills and understanding broadly in line with national expectations. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 9 matches national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. Particular strengths of pupil's learning are their knowledge of location and mapping skills, seen as Year 9 pupils constructed a topological map showing the distribution of world population. Higher-attaining pupils successfully compared the advantages of this method with others. They have a sound understanding of the places, patterns and processes studied. For example, their work on Brazil shows an awareness of the impact of change on natural environments and the importance of sustainable development. Pupils with particular learning needs make good progress as teachers know them well and cooperate closely with learning assistants to ensure the work meets pupils' needs.

Teaching and learning

66. One third of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory, however, pupil's previously completed work shows a more consistent quality of teaching. Teachers plan lessons in great detail enabling pupils to build upon existing knowledge to extend their understanding. In the better lessons, interesting activities at the start engaged pupil's interest and set the context for the lesson while revising prior work. The small classrooms limit the teaching methods that can be used. A further barrier is that the teaching of too many classes is shared between teachers. Lessons frequently include opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their literacy, number and information technology skills.
67. A weakness of the teaching is that pupils were not required to take sufficient responsibility for their learning and work is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils because they do not get enough chance to apply their skills independently. Some lessons were unsatisfactory because explanations were not clear enough to ensure the progress of lower-attaining pupils and teachers sometimes failed to counter disruptive behaviour. Time was not always available for pupils to review their learning at the end of each lesson. Marking is satisfactory but does not give pupils enough information as to how they might improve their work. Homework, including enquiry work, is used

well to support learning; pupils are encouraged to use the library and are provided with web-site addresses.

Leadership and management

68. The management of the curriculum has been good, though existing schemes of work, while adequate, require revision in the light of recent national developments. Teaching and learning are not monitored rigorously enough or evaluated in a systematic way. Assessment procedures do not accurately relate to the National Curriculum levels and so assessments at the end of Year 9 are unreliable. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained and pupils' skills and use of technical language have improved.

History

Provision in history is satisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils responded with interest and enjoyment to the good teaching in lessons
- Pupils with identified learning needs achieve well because of good individual support
- The teaching does not include enough opportunities for pupils to practice the full range of subject skills at a sufficiently high level
- Leadership has successfully introduced the national strategy and pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Teachers' marking and record keeping have improved but practice is inconsistent

Commentary

Standards and achievement

69. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average. However, these assessments were overgenerous.
70. Pupil's attainment when they join the college is average though their grasp of subject skills is variable. All pupils have a very sound knowledge and understanding of chronology. The previously completed work of Year 9 pupils shows a good grasp of the relative importance of events and individuals but they are only beginning to understand that these can be interpreted differently. Pupils can interrogate sources but have too little practice in using this information in supporting inferences and in responding to historical questions. This limits the opportunities higher-attaining pupils have to produce extended writing that is well researched and structured.

Teaching and learning

71. Teachers know their subject well and teaching during the inspection was good. When the evidence of pupils work over time is considered, teaching is satisfactory overall because of inconsistencies in the expectations and assessment practice of teachers together with the lack of challenge evident in the written work. In the best lessons, teachers provided rich descriptions, relating one period or event to another and revealing interesting details about important figures. Their subject knowledge and enthusiasm ensured that pupils were interested, attentive and capable of sustained concentration. Very good progress is being made to cater for different learning styles. This is important as currently, teaching is too prescriptive and there are few opportunities for initiative and independent learning. This is partly because teacher support is the most often used method to ensure the progress of all pupils in the mixed-ability groups. When learning assistants were present, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs was particularly good.

72. Through the relevant and interesting topics taught, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and citizenship. Good use is made of the library and teachers focus on the development of literacy skills, especially reading and listening. Homework extends and supports classroom learning well.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership has a clear vision for improvement, for example the department's response to the National Strategy has been really positive. The staff team has both the capacity and commitment necessary for further improvement. The new assessment and marking policy is providing more information for pupils as to how they might improve and enabling teachers to track progress more accurately. Since the previous report, the gap between the attainment of girls and boys has been narrowed, more detailed schemes of work have been drawn up and teaching and learning have improved significantly. Behaviour in lessons is now good. The need for greater challenge of higher attainers remains.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is good.

	Year 9
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall because good teaching makes them think about their beliefs and ideas, justify their own views and listen to what others have to say
- Pupils in Year 9 are not given enough advice about how they are doing and what they can do to improve the standard of their work
- Pupils enjoy work that is about issues that are relevant to their own lives
- Pupils' attitudes towards religious education are good and they behave well in lessons

Commentary

Standards and achievement

74. There was no declared teacher assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2003. By the end of Year 9, pupils have acquired a good knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and teachings of the Christian, Sikh and Islamic faiths in particular. They can analyse their ideas on forgiveness and effectively discuss the ultimate questions and debate right and wrong. The standards of a small but significant number are below expectation for their age. In relation to their attainment on entry to the college they achieve well.

Teaching and learning

75. Pupils learn well because they are encouraged to explore ideas and discuss them frankly. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this well in planning lessons. Teaching provides pupils with lots of relevant activities that make them think about their responses to religion and aspects of their own lives. Teachers continually challenge pupils to explain their opinions. In all lessons, collaborative work and listening to the views of others develops pupils well socially. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. The very clear individual education plans are well used to help these pupils. They make good progress, because the teachers prepare work that is well matched to their needs. Self-assessment is well used to develop pupils' work in Years 7 and 8. However, Year 9 pupils are less well informed because teachers do not assess work in line with the National Curriculum levels and do not give clear advice on what pupils need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

76. The commitment and hard working approach of the teaching team is strong and well led. Schemes of work are thorough and in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. Assessment procedures are being reviewed but are not yet fully effective. There is not enough monitoring of the effect of teaching on pupils' learning so that good practice can be shared. There is a strong contribution to the whole community ethos of the college including contributions by local church groups to pupils' social development through clubs held in the college.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are not reaching the highest levels of achievement in designing because there is not enough curriculum time to cover the required work in Years 7 and 8
- Experienced teachers and support staff work well together and provide good quality teaching and learning
- The teachers' assessments are too generous because they do not take into account the areas that are not currently covered within the curriculum
- The lack of networked computers and some essential resources, and the structure of the timetable hinder improvement

Commentary

Standards and achievement

77. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 was well above average. Evidence shows that these assessments were overgenerous. During the inspection, the current standards were seen to be average. This is mainly because the curriculum does not sufficiently promote the higher-level skills used in the designing and planning of manufactured products.
78. Pupils arrive in the college with varied but, overall, average experiences of design and technology from their primary school. In Year 7, pupils quickly gain confidence and new skills in the subject through a range of well thought-out practical activities using food, textiles and resistant materials. In Year 8, the folder work in textiles, food technology and systems and control show that achievement starts to level out because the curriculum is not giving pupils sufficient opportunity to gain the higher-order skills used in the more intricate design processes of the National Curriculum. Work in resistant materials is better and allows pupils more freedom to make modifications thereby gaining higher achievement in designing. By Year 9, pupils are able to do all of the things that average pupils usually achieve, but the higher-attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented are not reaching the higher levels of attainment or showing any exceptional performance. Another significant factor in pupils not gaining the higher levels of achievement is that the department lacks networked computers and equipment that would enable better use of modern designing and manufacturing techniques.

79. Standards of work in practical lessons are varied. They are above average in food technology, average in resistant materials and systems and control, but textiles standards are below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the well-prepared lessons and targeted support.

Teaching and learning

80. Teachers plan lessons well and have good knowledge of practical skills. Teachers pace the work well and give clear instructions. This leads to pupils appreciating the experienced specialist teaching, enjoying practical lessons, and working independently with tools and equipment. Pupils' attitudes are good when the teaching is firm and any undercurrents of less attentive behaviour are quickly dealt with. The additional support of an expert from industry is a valuable asset to the department. There are well-produced pupil workbooks for each module, these meet the needs of average pupils but do not extend learning for the higher attainers. Teachers use very good display resources to develop technical vocabulary and effectively draw pupils' attention to these in lessons. Marking does not give enough information on how to improve. The subject gets less time than that normally found because the curriculum allocation changes every six weeks and this has a negative impact on standards.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership is committed and competent. There is a culture of leading by example and the department has good bridging work with the upper school. Day to day management is strong. The department has sound paper-based assessment and monitoring systems that are meticulously kept up to date but teacher assessments of pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 are not accurate and this is giving an unclear picture. The curriculum plans do not link sufficiently with the designing requirements of the National Curriculum and opportunities are missed to use the influences of different cultural resources in food technology and textiles. Citizenship is not planned into lessons.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Provision in art is good.

	Year 9
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' critical studies of the work of other artists is well above average
- Pupils achieve well because teachers are knowledgeable and plan effective lessons
- Some lessons are too long and pupils struggle to maintain interest

Commentary

Standards and achievement

82. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average. These were assessed at a higher level than the standards seen during the inspection.
83. Year 9 pupils have above-average knowledge about colour theory. They made effective use of this in their clay creatures, which were decorated with attractive Aboriginal patterns. Pupils' planned designs of their creatures were not always accurately observed, and affected the final quality of their pieces. Pupils of all abilities research their critical studies of artists very well. Their written responses are frequently perceptive, and reflect a good understanding of the artists' influences and

styles. Effective use is made of computers to manipulate images, and in researching and presenting information. Achievement of girls and boys is good overall, though some boys do not produce quite the same quantity of work as the girls. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.

Teaching and Learning

84. Teachers open lessons with lively and interesting activities, which pupils enjoy. This gets lessons off to a brisk and positive start. Teachers create a positive 'can do' ethos, so that pupils feel confident to experiment. Consequently, all pupils achieve well. Teachers clearly explain what pupils will learn, and the lesson activities link well to achieve this and so pupils know exactly what is required of them. Sometimes tasks are not sufficiently broken down into manageable chunks, and this lessens pupils' achievement. Pupils like art lessons and behave well. They work hard in response to the teachers' high expectations. However, pupils find concentration hard to sustain during double lessons, and on some occasions, this leads to misbehaviour. Teachers make good use of time at the end of lessons for pupils to evaluate their own and other's work. Reading and writing skills are well supported and developed. Key words are displayed and used well in lessons. Effective information sheets and booklets help guide pupils in how to do critical studies, and results in good achievement. Pupils know how well they are doing because work is accurately marked. They are not given enough specific feedback on what to do to improve. Teaching is well supported by an experienced technician.

Leadership and Management

85. The department is well organised. The schemes of work are well balanced to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Each year group has opportunities to use computers. The staff team works closely, sharing ideas. However, formal monitoring of teaching is not in place to ensure the highest level of consistency. The lunchtime and after-college art clubs give pupils good opportunities to catch up with work or explore ideas. There are also trips and visits abroad, nationally and locally. Teachers take boys' interests into account when planning trips. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from the regular masterclass sessions.

Music

Provision in music is poor.

	Year 9
Standards	Well below average
Achievement	Poor
Teaching and learning	Poor
Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Poor
Progress since the previous inspection	Poor

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Weaknesses in teaching result in pupils underachieving and misbehaving
- Management has been disorganised and unstructured for several years
- Teachers have good technical knowledge and performance skills and use these well in practical sessions
- Important aspects of the curriculum are neglected

Commentary

Standards and achievement

86. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average. However, evidence shows that these assessments were inaccurate.

87. Pupils' skills in all aspects of music are weak. They have hardly any opportunity to sing in lessons and their composing skills are very low. By the end of Year 9 they have not used computers to help them create, refine and enhance their music and so miss out on an important part of the course. They have not sufficiently built on their skills gained in primary school. Pupils badly underachieve because work is not modified to help them make the progress they are capable of. Higher attainers are losing out in lessons because they are not stretched by the tasks and become bored in lessons and as a result are quick to misbehave.

Teaching and learning

88. Lessons are not creative enough and are rarely linked to a meaningful musical experience. They do not capture the interest of the pupils because the pace of learning is often much too slow and is regularly disrupted by groups of pupils misbehaving. Time is poorly used and teachers' expectations are too low and not informed by meaningful assessment of what the pupils have previously attained. Teachers struggle to manage behaviour effectively because they accept low-level chatting and too much off-task activity without challenge. Keyboards are used in most lessons, but, because activities are often boring, pupils misbehave and do not treat them with respect and consequently many instruments have been badly damaged over time. Questioning is not used to recall topics, find out what pupils know or consolidate what they have learned.

Leadership and management

89. There have been changes to the management of the subject and leadership now has a clear vision of what needs improving. This has not yet had impact on the provision of the subject. Teachers have received inadequate support in the development of their work, and senior college staff have managed the subject poorly. Teaching has been monitored but even though identified as requiring significant improvement not enough has been done effectively to tackle it. Standards, teaching and management were much better at the time of the last inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

	Year 9
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and give high quality demonstrations that help to raise standards
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute really well to their learning and achievement
- Not all lessons have the correct balance between practical and theoretical activities
- Pupils do not fully understand what they need to do to improve because teachers do not always make it clear
- Clear vision and a commitment to raising standards have resulted in good progress over time

Commentary

Standards and achievement

90. Pupils' attainment in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average.
91. Pupils' standards on entry are average and by the end of Year 9, their progress is better than expected. In Year 7, girls' standards are slightly better than boys because they are able to grasp and apply technical concepts more easily. They communicate actions and work better in teams.

However, boys' achievement is slightly better than girls when there is a competitive aspect to practical activities. By Year 9, standards for both are similar because of the consistency of teaching. In athletics, pupils understand how to undertake a warm up using dynamic flexibility and joint mobility exercises. Boys and girls are adept at speed, agility and quickness drills and have the knowledge and understanding of how to incorporate specific training exercises into a variety of sports. In long jump, girls are able to apply theoretical concepts into developing technique. Boys have above-average body technique when starting a sprint and good arm action when throwing the javelin.

Teaching and learning

92. In the best lessons, teaching is imaginative and challenging to pupils. Teachers are knowledgeable and are able to give good demonstrations. All lessons start with a standardised warm up and introduction of objectives. This teaching style makes good use of lesson time and develops individual learning. Teachers ensure that there is ongoing assessment during and at the end of each unit of work but pupils have a limited understanding of what they need to do to improve. In lessons where teaching is not as good, not enough time is allocated to practical activities so pupils miss out on important aspects of the course.
93. Pupils arrive to lessons prepared to work. They have positive attitudes, are cooperative and are very well behaved. Lessons are planned to take account of all learning needs through modifying activities for different pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to work in groups and are able to evaluate each others' work. They are taught key words in all lessons and there are opportunities for them to develop mathematical skills, for example when timing sprint races and measuring field events. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by the learning assistants.

Leadership and management

94. Leadership has a clear vision and a drive for improvement. The department plan is linked well to whole-school development. Performance management is in place for most teachers and is having a positive impact on standards because training needs are identified. There are appropriate policies for health and safety. Resources are used well and the internal and external facilities are adequate. Most issues raised in the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

All pupils attend tutorial lessons and PSHE lessons which incorporate a focus on citizenship. Citizenship was inspected in detail but other PSHE and tutorial lessons were sampled during the inspection. The PSHE programme is satisfactory. It is taught through the tutorial periods as part of citizenship. Tutors have undergone specialist training and are supported by a good range of teaching resources. There is valuable input from external visitors to enhance the pupils' learning.

Citizenship

No discrete lessons were seen during the inspection but pupils normally receive one lesson per week. There is evidence from scrutiny of the planning of work and the observation of citizenship elements within form tutor periods.

Provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

	Year 9
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support from the college's senior management team is contributing well to the development of citizenship
- Planning is providing a solid basis for improvement
- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is not effective
- The college council requires further development to contribute to the overall impact of citizenship

Commentary

Standards and achievement

95. There are no comparative examination results for citizenship. Year 7 pupils have average skills in understanding conflict issues but inconsistent achievement in work relating to the role of the media. Boys are more knowledgeable than girls about issues concerning national systems for recognising excellence through the Queen's Honours. In Year 8, pupils understand the role of the Houses of Parliament and issues concerning road safety. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a solid grounding in the knowledge of the subject. Girls are better than boys at completing work in their progress files. However, boys are more confident speakers.

Teaching and learning

96. None of the main citizenship lessons were observed. In allocated tutor time and assemblies, the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good. In Years 7 and 8, pupils learn about citizenship through a range of stimulating activities. The thought for the week is used well as a basis for citizenship lessons, tutorials and assemblies. In Year 7 and Year 8, teaching captivates pupils' interest, and group work and role-play provide an effective strategy in developing pupils' understanding of democracy. Some of the teaching in Year 9 is dull and as a result pupils become bored. Pupils have good attitudes towards each other and are respectful of individual views.
97. Citizenship is planned to take place in different subjects. In ICT, pupils learn about Internet security and how technology is changing the nature of employment. Issues concerning social justice and forgiveness are a feature of religious education. In English, pupils have made links with a school in Africa and letters have been written to the Prime Minister about social injustice. The schemes of work for French, music and design and technology do not contain links to citizenship and so pupils miss opportunities to develop their knowledge.

Leadership and management

98. The coordinator has successfully tackled issues concerning the introduction of citizenship. With the full support of the college's senior management there has been an audit of all subjects. The coordinator has provided training for all staff and developed a variety of resources to cover all aspects of the programme. Citizenship is a central part of the college development plan. Each year parents receive a report about their Child's progress and the college has planned for National Curriculum assessment for pupils in Year 9. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and other activities is unsatisfactory. The successful work in Year 7 and Year 8 is not yet built upon in Year 9. The college council has recently been reinstated. Its development into a democratic decision making body is showing signs of helping the growth of understanding citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the principal	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).