

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HOPE VALLEY COLLEGE**

Hope, Derbyshire

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number:112942

Principal: Mr Bernard Hunter

Lead inspector: Michael Merchant

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 258665

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 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students 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. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**).*

*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 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 in which pupils attained similar standards at the end of Years 6 and 9.*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	553
School address:	Castleton Road, Hope Hope Valley, Derbyshire.
Postcode:	S33 6SD
Telephone number:	01433 620555
Fax number:	01433 620054
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Sophie Nunn
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hope Valley College is a much smaller than average comprehensive school, educating 553 girls and boys aged 11 to 16. There are slightly more boys than girls on the school roll, which has grown steadily since the time of the last inspection. The attainment profile of students when they enter the school is broadly average, although the literacy skills, especially reading, of many boys are slightly below average. Very few students join or leave the school other than at the usual times. The overwhelming majority of students are of white British origin. There are no students who have English as an additional language. The proportion of students with a special educational need (18 per cent) is broadly average. The range of special needs include: dyslexia, social, emotional and behavioural, moderate learning, profound and multiple learning, hearing impairment and autistic. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average and the socio-economic background of most pupils is above average. The turnover of teachers over the last two years has been very high: 13 teachers have left and 14 have joined the school.

The school was awarded Artsmark, Sportsmark and Investors in People status in 2003, a School Curriculum Award in 2002 and a Schools Achievement Award in 2001. The school became a specialist technology college in 2000.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27368	Michael Merchant	Lead inspector	Citizenship
13786	Susan Walsh	Lay inspector	
27984	Alan Whitehall	Team inspector	Mathematics
31135	Rachel Hobson	Team inspector	English
23188	Jenny Maunder	Team inspector	Science
15051	Lynne Kaufman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology
15320	Arthur Penn	Team inspector	Art and design
30215	Helen Feasey	Team inspector	Geography
15462	Cliff Blakemore	Team inspector	History
31449	Richard Marsden	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	Music
22042	John Challands	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
19066	Jane Brooke	Team inspector	Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

ISIS

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Hope Valley College is a **very good college**; it provides a very good quality of education for its students and is a happy, harmonious community of learners. The college is an orderly place in which to learn because the very good leadership of the principal and other key staff, well supported by governors, has ensured that all students, including those with special educational needs and those designated as gifted and talented, achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good in all years, and there is much that is excellent. The college provides very good value for money.

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the college with much that is excellent, **which** means that students achieve very well and attain standards that are well above average overall.
- The very good leadership of the principal has provided the unremitting drive to push up standards.
- Students' behaviour is good throughout the college. Attitudes to learning are good because staff give students the confidence to learn.
- The college makes intelligent use of assessment information to both evaluate its work and set clear targets for improvement for its students, and supports its students very well.
- The college has forged very effective partnerships with its parents and other schools and has excellent links with the community, which contribute to its success.
- In a very small number of lessons, learning is sometimes held back by the challenging behaviour of a small number of students.
- The marking of students' work is not consistent in some departments.
- Inadequate accommodation is holding back standards in some design and technology and science lessons.

The college has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Students' achievement has improved and is now very good. High standards have been maintained in Years 7 to 9 and have improved to be well above average in Years 10 and 11. There is now far more good and very good teaching and learning. Students' attitudes and behaviour remain good and the college continues to be very well led and managed. The key issues of increasing pace and challenge in lessons and to improve the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning have been fully met, but there is still inadequate time for religious education in Years 10 and 11.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all colleges			similar colleges
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	A*

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*For Year 11, similar colleges are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

*\*This means that the college is in the top five per cent of similar schools in the country.*

**Students' achievement is very good.** From overall average attainment on entry to the college, students achieve very well to reach standards that are well above average overall by the end of Year 9, and Year 11. Students' English language and literacy skills are above average as is their competence in mathematics. Students' skills in information and communication technology are well above average. Gifted and talented students and those with a special educational needs achieve as well as other students in the college.

Personal development including students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is good, as is punctuality. Attitudes to learning and behaviour across the college and in lessons are good. The college is an orderly and pleasant place in which to learn, however, there are

isolated instances of the over-familiar, and occasionally rude, behaviour identified in the previous report where a small minority of students take advantage of the very comfortable relationships between students and teachers.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The college provides a very good quality of education for its students.** Teaching and learning are very good overall as is the use of assessment. This is a very real reflection of the college's ethos, which incorporates a relentless drive to improve achievement. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that capture students' interest so that they are eager to learn. The breadth of curricular opportunities is good and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and is holding back standards in some subjects. The college has effective care and guidance systems that support students very well. The college has excellent links with the community and a very good induction programme helps new students settle well into college life.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the college are very good** and the leadership of the principal and his deputy is very good. The governance of the college is good. The principal is well supported by his senior staff, who provide very good leadership. Together, they ensure that the effectiveness of management is good. The principal, senior colleagues and governors have created a clear vision for the college, with a strong focus on the college at the heart of the community.

### **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE**

**Most parents who returned the inspection questionnaire were happy with the college.** A significant minority had concerns about behaviour and bullying at the college. The inspection evidence does not support these views. The college works effectively to deal with any occurrence of bullying although occasionally, in some classes, a very small number of students take advantage of informal classroom relationships and behave inappropriately.

Students are very happy with the college. When interviewed, students felt that the college deals with issues such as bullying or poor behaviour fairly and effectively.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the college should do to improve are:

- Improve the accommodation for design and technology and science.
- Work hard to ensure a consistency of approach to classroom management.
- Ensure that the marking of students' work is consistent in all departments.
- Improve the arrangements for assessment and co-ordination in citizenship.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Take steps to ensure that a daily act of collective worship takes place.
- Ensure that adequate time is available for religious education in Years 10 and 11.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

**Students' achievement is very good.** From overall average attainment on entry to the college, students achieve very well to reach standards that are well above average overall by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Students' English language and literacy skills and competence in mathematics are above average. Skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average. Gifted and talented students and those with a special educational needs achieve as well as other students in the college.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards, overall, are well above average and students' achievement is very good.
- Teachers prepare students very carefully for tests and examinations.
- In all years the achievement of students with special educational needs is very good.
- Effective use of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and good use of ICT in lessons is helping to push up standards.
- In a small minority of lessons, learning is impeded by teachers' inconsistent management of the challenging behaviour of a minority of boys.
- Poor accommodation is holding back learning in some lessons.

#### **Commentary**

1. Work seen confirms the high standards evidenced in the test and examination results; standards overall are well above average and students' achievement is very good.
2. Standards in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average compared with all schools nationally and very high compared with similar schools. This placed the college in the top five per cent of similar schools in the country. These results were slightly better than the 2002 results and a continuation of the improvement seen over the last three years.
3. Students enter Hope Valley College with average standards of prior attainment and the full attainment range, typical of a comprehensive school, is seen. However, students' literacy skills, in particular their reading, are slightly below average and the college has worked hard to improve this. The well above average standards attained by students at the end of Year 9, therefore, represents very good achievement. This is a reflection of very good teaching overall and careful preparation of students by their teachers for the demands of these tests.
4. Standards achieved by girls were higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally. Students of all levels of attainment achieved very well and there were no significant differences between groups of students. This is because teachers are sensitive to the needs of all students.



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

Standards in:	College results	National results
English	36.5 (34.3)	33.4 (33.3 )
Mathematics	39.5 (40.4)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	36.9 (36.6)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 104 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- GCSE results in 2003 were well above average compared with all schools and very high compared with similar schools. As in the National Tests taken at the end of Year 9, the GCSE results placed the college in the top five percent of similar schools in the country. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C in 2003 was well above average compared with all schools and very high compared with similar schools. The college has pushed up standards relentlessly in Years 10 and 11 (this was the focus of their improvement plan) and they have continued to rise year on year in line with the national trend.
- The achievement of students in Year 11 in 2003 was very good in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Value added information provided by the college shows that in relation to their average levels of attainment on entry to the college in Year 7, these students achieved very well overall. The college met its challenging targets in 2003 at Year 9 and Year 11.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003**

	College results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	69 (72)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	41.0 (42.1)	34.7 (34.7)

*There were 105 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- The GCSE results in 2003 were average in both English and English literature and they represent satisfactory achievement for those students. Mathematics results were well above average. Standards have been consistently high and achievement was very good. The science results at GCSE were well above average and represented very good achievement.
- Work seen confirms the high standards evidenced in the test and examination results. In Years 7 to 9 standards overall are well above average and students' achievement is very good. The core subjects of mathematics and science are at the forefront of this drive to push up standards. Standards in these two subjects are well above average and students are achieving very well. This is because teaching and learning are consistently very good in these subjects, often with much that is excellent. In mathematics, the excellent leadership and management of the subject has provided an inspirational drive to continuously improve student achievement.
- In English, standards are not quite as high. They are above average and students achieve well. This difference in standards between English and the other two core subjects partly reflects students slightly below average literacy skills when they enter the college but is mainly due to inconsistencies in the way some teachers manage the challenging behaviour of a minority of students.
- The core subjects of English, mathematics and science have been effective at introducing the Key Stage 3 Strategy into their teaching. The focus on sharp lesson introductions, use of ICT

and the implementation of a highly effective whole-college approach to developing students' numeracy skills, have all helped to drive up standards and achievement. In this respect, the college is meeting its specialist college status aims well. In all three core subjects, teachers prepare students very carefully for tests and examinations.

11. Standards in ICT are above average and students achieve very well. This is because teaching and learning are very good. Since becoming a Specialist Technology College, the College has made good use of its additional funds to improve ICT equipment around the school and this has greatly helped to raise standards. However, two of the ICT rooms have such poor accommodation that learning sometimes suffers.
12. Amongst other subjects, standards are well above average in design and technology and music and achievement is very good. Here, teaching and learning are consistently very good. In physical education, standards are average but achievement is good in relation to students' below average standards on entry to the college. Standards are average and achievement only satisfactory in citizenship because of weaknesses in assessment and co-ordination of the subject across the curriculum. In other subjects, standards are above average and all students, both boys and girls, are achieving well because of the overall good teaching.
13. The pattern of overall above average standards and very good achievement is also seen in Years 10 and 11. The accumulative effect of students attaining above average standards leads to well above average examination results overall. Very good teaching overall is fostering exciting learning and rapid gains in knowledge in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, geography and music. Standards are average and achievement only satisfactory in citizenship because of, as in Years 7 to 9, weaknesses in assessment and co-ordination of the subject across the curriculum. In all other subjects, standards are above average and achievement is good. Standards achieved by girls are higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
14. In all years the achievement of students with special educational needs is very good because teachers are sensitive and responsive to their needs. An appropriate mixture of support in lessons and individually from teaching assistants, plus a very good appreciation of these students' problems from most teaching staff, are critical factors in their progress. These students are frequently provided with very effective support in lessons, which ensures that their progress is very good. Progress is also very good overall, when support is not available, as teaching staff are aware of students' needs and work extremely hard to ensure that appropriate strategies and resources are utilised.
15. The students who have Statements of Special Educational Need also make very good progress. Many of these students experience difficulties with literacy skills. A significant number also have difficulties related to behaviour. Inevitably the majority of these students tend to perform below the level of other students in their year group with regard to basic skills and in particular speaking, listening, reading and writing. Their difficulties also affect their ability to progress in other areas of the curriculum. However, support from teaching assistants is very effective and teaching staff are aware of their needs and work extremely hard to ensure that appropriate strategies and resources are utilised.

## Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Personal development including students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **good** as is punctuality. Attitudes to learning and behaviour across the college and in lessons are **good**.

### Main strengths and weakness

- Many students are very enthusiastic about learning and this promotes very good achievement.
- Involvement in enrichment activities is very good.
- Provision to encourage social and moral development is very good.
- A minority of students take advantage of the easy relationships between students and staff, become over-familiar and develop inappropriate attitudes to learning.
- There are missed opportunities for developing students' spiritual moral social and cultural education in tutor times and assemblies.

### Commentary

16. Students have good attitudes to learning; exciting teaching fires their enthusiasm.
17. Students like college and appreciate the warm and friendly atmosphere. There is very good involvement in activities such as sport and music. Despite the long distances students travel, students are keen to stay after college. This also reflects very strong parental support. For example, over 30 students were involved in the swing band and had a terrific time playing exciting lively music, their attitudes were excellent. The majority of students have good attitudes to learning; exciting teaching fires their enthusiasm in subject areas such as design and technology. Students co-operate well in groups and relationships between other students and with teachers are often very good. Higher attaining students are especially enthusiastic and hard working and this promotes very good achievement. There is a very small minority of students, identified mainly in Years 7 and 10, who have developed too casual an attitude to learning and this depresses their achievement.

### Attendance

#### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
College data	7.2	College data	0.3
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

18. Attendance rates are good. Most students have good attendance records and this promotes good continuity of learning. This is because most students enjoy college and want to be there and the majority of parents strive to ensure that their children attend college as often as possible. However, there are a few students who take too many odd days off college. The college's monitoring of attendance is improving through the recent implementation of a computerised system of registration.
19. At present this computerised system is not fully developed and methods of effectively analysing patterns of attendance and attendance rates within different year groups are not secure. Contact with the education welfare service is effective and students with significant attendance problems are identified and are well supported.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of students*

Categories used in the Annual College Census
White - British
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani

### *Exclusions in the last college year*

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
527	21	0
1	0	0
1	0	0

20. Behaviour in lessons and around college is usually good. Many teachers are very skilled at managing behaviour and insist on high standards. Behaviour outside classrooms is more casual but still orderly. The number of fixed-term exclusions has increased since the previous inspection but is still relatively low. However, there remain instances of the over-familiar, and occasionally rude, behaviour identified in the previous report where a minority of students take advantage of the very comfortable relationships between students and teachers. Not all students behave consistently well in lessons. Students and parents express some concern about low-level bullying including name-calling. Bullying issues, however are quickly identified.
21. Students with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to lessons and this is particularly the case in lessons when learning support assistants provide support. Here these students are confident they will succeed because they have good and effective support and because both learning support staff and teaching staff are generally aware of students' specific needs. Students have very good relationships with other students and with members of staff.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are very good, as is the college's use of assessment to drive up standards. The breadth of curricular opportunities is good, and opportunities for enrichment are very good. The college cares for and guides its students very well.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** and the use of assessment is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good overall with much that is excellent.
- Lessons are characterised by a clear focus on well-structured planning, pace, challenge and innovation.
- Students are fired up with enthusiasm as a result of teachers' quick-fire, probing questions and excellent use of current, topical material that brings the lesson to life.
- Methods used by most teachers are imaginative, diverse and entirely succeed in retaining students' interests and motivation.
- The teaching of students with special educational needs is very good.
- Learning is occasionally held back by the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of students and by inadequate accommodation.
- Assessment and its use to raise achievement have been a successful focus for improvement.

## Commentary

22. The consistent strength of teaching and learning is a very real reflection of the college's ethos of a relentless drive to push up standards.
23. The college has not only succeeded in maintaining the high quality of teaching and learning seen at the last inspection, it has surpassed it. There are examples of outstanding practice, the overwhelming majority is very good or good and in no lesson is teaching and learning unsatisfactory. The consistent strength of teaching and learning is a very real reflection of the college's ethos of a relentless drive to push up standards. Students are made to think and learning is exciting because lessons are characterised by a real focus on well-structured planning, pace, challenge and innovation. Energetic teaching encouraging all to work at full pace is the norm. In this way, learning is extended and standards driven up significantly.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 85 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (5%)	32 (39%)	22 (26.9%)	24 (29.2%)	0	0	0

*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.*

24. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology and music. They are good in all other subjects. It is the imaginative and dynamic teaching, seen particularly in mathematics and design and technology and to a lesser extent in science and English, which excites students to learn. This is the real driving force behind the college's success at reaching such high standards and achievement. This is complemented by a picture of universally good teaching in the foundation subjects (subjects other than English, mathematics and science), often with much that is very good, which provides the additional push to maintain high standards.
25. The picture is equally strong in Years 10 and 11. Again, teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology, history, geography and music. In no subject is teaching or learning less than good. This remarkably consistent pattern of highly effective teaching and learning is down to the very good leadership and management of the principal, his senior team and heads of department. Great care has been taken to put in place and nurture proficient teams of imaginative and energetic teachers who are completely immersed in Hope Valley College's ethos of high aspiration and achievement.
26. In English, where teaching and learning is good overall, teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject and they challenge students effectively to think deeply and work productively. However, in a very few lessons, the challenging behaviour of a minority of boys brings learning down. Mathematics teachers, under the excellent leadership of the subject head, have consistently high expectations of students and promote high standards. They provide students with consistently challenging work, with lessons taught at a brisk pace. Science teachers use their very good knowledge of the subject to engage students' interest and to ensure that learning takes place progressively and at a good pace. In ICT, very effective assessment procedures are helping teachers to identify need and so improve the learning of all.
27. In nearly all lessons, students are fired up with enthusiasm as a result of teachers' quick-fire, probing questions and excellent use of current, topical material, which brings the lesson to life. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan interesting, imaginative and extremely challenging lessons. Beginning with a strong focus on what students are expected to learn, lessons begin with crisp introductions that set the scene for the learning to come. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been put into effect with much success in English,

mathematics and in science in Years 7 to 9 and has done much to structure and refine very effective practice.

28. The methods used by most teachers are imaginative, diverse and entirely succeed in retaining students' interests and motivation and thus moving them quickly on. In many lessons, students easily and readily move into short brainstorming sessions in which individuals share their ideas and then present these to the class. Teachers of mathematics, ICT and design and technology are particularly adept at using methods like these to move learning on at a very quick pace. Students are at ease and confident when working in pairs and co-operate and collaborate when working in small groups, as in history and geography lessons. Independent learning has been very effectively fostered by these methods and, as a result, students progress at a very rapid rate.

***Example of outstanding practice***

**Electronics and food technology illustrated why technology is inspiring learning at Hope Valley.**

Planning and group dynamics are the starting point. Students are important partners in the learning process. Teaching styles work on the principle of accelerating learning through high quality resources that encourage creativity, students taking a leadership role in sessions such as consolidation and feedback to the group and an element of competition to reach the target set. In lessons well-planned peer discussion focuses on solving problems as a group but working to a specified time scale. A 'Eureka' style outburst from one group in electronics signified they had found the solution to a circuit problem in the fastest time, which gave impetus to the rest of the class. In food technology where students had explored the interesting aspects of lifestyles in different cultures a lively, 'true or false' quiz, conducted by one of the students, consolidated the interest and information students had gained, as well as lifting the self-esteem of the student leading the session. The whole approach to focusing on students' personal development is a technique the department are perfecting which is having a significant impact on attitudes, self-confidence and so raising attainment.

29. In a small number of lessons, learning is occasionally held back by the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of students who sometimes challenge teachers' authority. In ICT, students in the old ICT suite, frustrated by the inadequacy of the resources, sometimes display negative attitudes. Although teachers generally mark students' books regularly, they do not always consistently provide evaluative comments to indicate how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
30. The teaching of students with special educational needs is very good. Students' needs are well known by teachers and a wide range of teaching activities and resources are used. Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of students with special educational needs are good and meet statutory requirements. Individual education plans are increasingly used by staff to set appropriate subject-specific targets and the special educational needs co-ordinator regularly monitors and reviews the progress of students. Procedures for identifying students are thorough. Support from education care officers is a significant factor in the very good progress made by these students. These officers are very well informed and very effective and work very well with teaching staff to ensure that students make appropriate progress.
31. In a minority of lessons, where there is no support, achievement of those students with special educational needs is restricted. Support for those students whose basic literacy skills are well below the national average is provided through very good arrangements in the English department and progress of these students is generally good. Other students who are experiencing significant difficulties in developing literacy skills are withdrawn from lessons and are involved in a very structured programme of support using ICT, and make very good progress. Inadequate accommodation in some design and technology lessons holds back learning.

32. Assessment and its use to raise achievement have been a successful focus for improvement. Assessment is very good throughout Years 7 to 11. A real strength is the very good use of data to set targets, track individual students' progress and to indicate where a student is not matching previous performance and is underachieving. Teachers generally mark work regularly. Much marking is very good and provides helpful informative comments, both oral and written. Marking is not consistent in some departments and the college policy is not always applied. The college reports National Curriculum levels to parents at the end of Year 9, as required. Target grades are given in reports twice yearly in Years 7 to 9 and termly in Years 10 and 11. This ensures that parents are kept fully informed of students' progress. In citizenship, the assessment of students' work and progress is not co-ordinated effectively enough across all subjects.
33. Many subjects are making increasingly effective use of assessment data to encourage students, to indicate to them how well they are doing and to set suitable targets for improvement. A clear system for notifying learning mentors, and tutors, of students who are causing concern helps teachers to counter underachievement. The deputy principal holds meetings to discuss any such students with appropriate staff. The whole-college database for assessment operates separately from those held by individual departments. This separation makes it difficult for records to be updated efficiently.

## The curriculum

Curricular opportunities are **good** and improving. Support for learning outside lessons and for enriching students' experience are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **unsatisfactory** overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior management team has a very clear vision for the future development of the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all students.
- Links with other colleges and schools within the community provide valuable opportunities for broadening the curriculum.
- Curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is very good.
- There is very good support for students' learning outside lessons.
- Opportunities for students to participate in activities that enrich their learning are extensive.
- The curriculum is not yet sufficiently broad to meet the needs of all students in Years 10 and 11.
- The college does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

## Commentary

34. The college is enthusiastic in grasping new initiatives and in planning more flexible forms of study.
35. The principal and senior managers are committed to the provision of a broad curriculum appropriate for the wide range of students' needs both within the college and for their future studies or employment. They are acutely aware of the difficulties that this poses for a small college in a rural location. Nevertheless, they are enthusiastic in grasping new initiatives, of exploiting the opportunities presented to them by specialist technology status and in planning more flexible forms of study in order to enrich the college's traditional curriculum.
36. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 fully meets subject requirements and is enhanced by the inclusion of drama lessons incorporating the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Students speak highly of this course and its positive impact on improving their self-confidence. An innovative ICT programme in Year 9 helps many students to study a second modern foreign language and also supports learning in other subjects.

37. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum has been made more relevant through, for example, the introduction of expressive arts, electronics and engineering. The college acknowledges that this is a vital area for further development, particularly in its efforts to motivate and encourage students for whom an academic course is less appropriate. A vocational qualification in ICT is now available and all students enhance their ICT capability through a key skills programme. A well-established work-related learning course is a popular alternative for some students who undertake a variety of more practical activities within a nationally accredited scheme. The college has made a very good start in the development of programmes designed to extend the performance of its more gifted and talented students.
38. Established links with partner schools and with local colleges of further and higher education help students to be well informed in their choice of future studies. Opportunities for contacts with local businesses and tutors within the community are broadening the possibilities of training both at college and within local places of work.
39. The college's provision of activities to support learning and to enrich the curriculum is very good. Many opportunities exist for students to extend their learning outside lessons. The library is very well used for research, homework and breakfast clubs. Departments provide workshops for completing course work assignments and teachers give a great deal of individual support to students throughout the college day. Two days in the autumn term are set aside for curriculum enrichment activities appropriate to each year group. Year 11 students are able to visit colleges and make informed decisions about their future studies. Others follow a variety of courses relating to health and wider citizenship issues.
40. Many students participate in a wide range of sporting and other activities outside lessons. Highlights include the activities organised by the design and technology department, often involving local businesses and community contacts, and the excellent opportunities provided for dramatic and musical activities and productions. An extremely popular activities week towards the end of the summer term encourages many outdoor pursuits and European travel.
41. The college does not provide consistent opportunities for students to take part in a daily act of collective worship, either through assemblies or through tutor time at the beginning of the college day. Time allocated for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is insufficient to cover the required programme of study. Both these omissions are unchanged since the last inspection.
42. Provision for personal social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 PSHE is taught through drama. The overall effect of this arrangement is positive but there are some drawbacks for both subjects. Curriculum time is reduced and the programme of work in Year 7 is narrowed by the time that has to be spent on developing drama techniques. However, overall, the programme of lessons is well developed in Years 7 to 9 and pays good attention to contemporary issues. In Years 10 and 11 there is a rotation of careers, PSHE and religious studies, which is not sufficiently monitored or evaluated. Sex and drugs education is well addressed and meets statutory requirements.
43. Students are well prepared for the next stage of education or employment. Students leave college confident and articulate with very well-developed key skills. Preparation for work experience is very good and good links with local employers make students aware of the expectations in the world of work. Students have high aspirations and are enthusiastic about their futures.
44. Provision for students with a special educational needs is very good. Students with Statements of Special Educational Need receive very good support as do all others on the college register of students with special educational needs. Support from teaching assistants is very good for students with special educational needs. All students receive their basic curriculum entitlement.
45. Accommodation is unsatisfactory for the demands of the curriculum in some subjects. Humanities subjects suffer from rooms that are dingy and draughty and are not suited together.



The subject with severe problems with accommodation is design and technology. Although achievement here is very good, learning is sometimes depressed in food technology. This is because it is housed in an area where independence is curtailed by the layout of the teaching space and there are some health and safety issues. These have been reviewed by the local authority and deemed safe. There are too few laboratories in science.

46. There is heavy, successful use by the community, which is part of the college's mission statement. Much has been done to improve the learning environment. The internal spaces have been decorated and an overall display policy has improved the appearance of corridors and classrooms. Good quality display is used in teaching. The college has given good attention to the needs of non-ambulant students. Lifts have been installed and humanities lessons relocated to ensure access for all.
47. Resources are adequate for the curriculum and students' needs. There has been a significant improvement in the library. Increase in library space and the deployment of computer equipment enhance provision for research and communication, which is helping to raise standards. Access to books, highlighted in the previous inspection, has improved. A recent ICT development, as part of a new building with state-of-the-art computers, has improved the computer access in the college. However, there is still inadequate, though improving, access in ICT lessons where shared equipment sometimes holds back learning. Areas where interactive whiteboards have been located, as part of the college's use of specialist college money, are having a good impact on learning.
48. Teaching staff are well qualified and mostly teach their specialist subject. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years and the college has an unusually large proportion of part-time teachers. However, induction procedures are detailed and thorough so that good practice is shared and disruption to students' education minimised.

## Care, guidance and support

The college makes **good** provision in order to ensure students' care welfare health and safety. Support, advice and guidance for students are **very good**. The college makes **very good** arrangements to ensure that students are fully involved in its work and development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The house system and mixed-age tutor groups promote very high quality pastoral care.
- Vulnerable students and those who are underachieving receive very high quality support.
- Students' views are well considered.
- Tutor periods are often not used constructively.

## Commentary

49. Relationships between students and staff within the small close-knit community of the college are very good. Students hold their tutors in very high esteem.
50. Students report that they enjoy the friendly supportive atmosphere of the college. They feel that they are well known to staff within the small close-knit community of the college. Relationships between students and staff are very good and older students hold their tutors in very high esteem. The house system ensures very good continuity of care. Induction procedures are good and excellent links with primary schools ensure that new students who are already very familiar with college staff and the building have high levels of confidence and very few concerns about starting college. A generous time allocation for tutor periods promotes high quality care and relationships but too often these periods lack structure and are used as a time for a casual chat.

51. The procedures for monitoring of students' academic achievement and personal development are very thorough. This ensures that any students who are having difficulties are quickly identified and supported. Students and parents appreciate the high quality support that comes from a very wide range of sources, including form tutors, subject teachers and learning mentors. There is a very good range of revision classes and students appreciate the extra academic support offered by the librarian. These very effective systems, together with very high quality care and support, have a very significant positive influence on achievement. Careers education is satisfactory overall. There is a well-established taught element in Years 10 and 11 and students have good access to careers information. Arrangements to visit colleges are very good.
52. Statutory requirements regarding health and safety are, in the main, met. Provision is generally safe but students regard the accommodation as shabby and there are areas that would benefit from better housekeeping. Procedures in the science department need to be tightened up in order to ensure that all equipment is regularly checked and kept in working order. Arrangements for looking after students who have had accidents, who are sick or take regular medication are very good. Reception and office staff have a very nice manner with students and contribute well to high standards of care and the supportive atmosphere of the college. Procedures for child protection and the care of vulnerable students are of a very high quality. The college works well with a range of external agencies to ensure that students' needs are met.
53. Students know that their views matter. They feel valued and they know that they matter. The student council and lower school forum are appreciated and respected, as students know they are having a positive impact on the college. Students' views are considered regarding many matters ranging from the quality of food to the appointment of staff.
54. Links between departments in the college and the learning support department are good and are generally effective in ensuring that most staff have an appropriate understanding of the specific learning needs of those students with special educational needs. Individual education plans provide appropriate information and are being increasingly used by departments to set subject-specific targets. This was an issue identified in the last inspection report. Liaison with primary schools is good and forms the foundation for initial assessment, which is then developed through testing of students on entry. This provides relevant information that helps the college to make decisions about the level of support and the appropriate setting arrangements for all students. Learning mentors provide good support for students who are significantly underachieving and for those with serious behavioural problems. This is an inclusive college and significant progress has been made to ensure that all students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and have access to the whole curriculum.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The college has **very effective** links with parents. The quality of links with the local community is **excellent**. The college has **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of their children's education and this promotes high levels of achievement.
- There are extensive curriculum links with local primary schools.
- Links with the community are excellent.

### **Commentary**

55. The college has developed extensive high quality curriculum links with its partners in the community.
56. The college has very effective partnerships with parents that support students' learning. Parents are very supportive of their children's learning and want them to achieve well. Parental support for extra-curricular activities is commendable and parents are very willing to transport their children over large areas. Parents are very supportive of the college's disciplinary procedures and encourage their children to work hard. Very strong parental support is an important contributory factor to the very good progress that students make. Information to parents about the work of the college is very good. Parents are generally well informed about their children's progress. However, annual progress reports for students in Years 7 to 9 focus too much on students' attitudes to a subject and sometimes contain insufficient information about what students know, understand and can do. There are few clearly stated strategies for improvement. Reports for students in Years 10 and 11 are of a higher quality, constraints of examinations encourage teachers to be clearer about students' achievement and ways to improve standards are made explicit. The college has moved towards tutor-based evenings for students in Years 7 to 9. Tutors are provided with good quality information to feed back to parents and students. Many parents appreciate this slicker system but others miss the opportunity to speak directly to the teachers with subject expertise.
57. Despite being physically isolated, the college has been determined not to become isolated in the educational forum. The college has developed extensive high quality curriculum links with feeder schools, many of which are small in size and also physically isolated. These links are very successful at enriching the curriculum for primary-aged children, and in ensuring that these children are very familiar with the college staff and buildings before they start at Hope Valley College. The college is very active within the Peak area and makes a very good contribution towards raising educational standards. For example, the design and technology department has been instrumental in organising a technology forum for primary and secondary schools whose focus is on improving practice.
58. The college has a very well developed understanding of the educational and wider needs of the local community and works very well with local partners to meet those needs. The local community makes very good use of the college's facilities including having good access to library and information technology facilities. There is a good range of daytime and evening classes run in conjunction with Derbyshire Adult Education Service who have a base in the college. This long-standing and mutually supportive partnership has been very successful in securing funding to improve the college's technology accommodation and the new facilities have helped to raise standards of students in Years 7 to 9 and those who are taking design-based GCSEs. Students' learning and personal development are very successfully enhanced by extensive involvement in local musical events, very good involvement in local sport and very good use of local cultural opportunities. The community is very supportive of the college, which has benefited from extensive sponsorship from local companies. The Parents Teachers and Friends Association runs very interesting events, such as professional performances in the college, which enhance the cultural opportunities for local people. With the support of the local community the Parents Teachers and Friends Association has been able to raise substantial sums of money for the college.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is **good**. The principal provides **very good** leadership and is very well supported by his senior staff who provide very good leadership. Together, they ensure that the college is well managed.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal, senior colleagues and governors have created a clear vision for the school, with a strong focus on the college at the heart of the community.
- The governing body fully carries out its role as a critical friend.
- Middle managers are effective and have created a strong ethos for sustained improvement in their subjects.
- There is an effective improvement plan, the key focus of which is to nurture high standards.
- The effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and intelligent use of assessment information have contributed greatly to the college's high standards.
- The strong linkage between the college's development plan and its financial planning enables the college to fully evaluate its spending.

## Commentary

59. The principal and his highly effective deputy, with good critical support from a well-informed governing body, have been highly effective at developing an extremely clear vision for the school. This vision, which is outward-looking and sees the college at the heart of the local community, is driven by a clear focus on the individual student and an appreciation of the pivotal importance of teaching and learning as the motor that drives up standards. The principal has succeeded entirely in sharing this vision with the entire college community and has won their total support in helping him realise it. The college's vision is very well expressed in the college's improvement plan, which is entirely appropriate with its key focus on nurturing teaching and learning as a means of sustaining high standards.
60. Under the very good leadership of the principal, the college has developed into an ambitious, open, outward-looking, yet self-critical institution. It is completely devoid of complacency and sets itself adventurous targets. The principal's superb interpersonal and very real coaching skills have contributed to all staff, many of whom are new to the college and in the early years of their careers, having a great belief in themselves and in the college. Effective systems have been put in place by the principal and his deputy, which are having a powerful effect on pushing up standards. One such system is the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. This is one of the reasons why the inspection team found no unsatisfactory teaching. The principal, with very strong support from his highly effective deputy, has succeeded in fully meeting the aims of a specialist college in establishing a college which is at the heart of learning in the Hope Valley.
61. The overall quality of leadership and management of subjects across the curriculum is good. Leadership is excellent in mathematics and design and technology, very good in ICT, history, geography and music and good in all other subjects, except science, where the head of department is newly in post. Most heads of department have established a clear educational direction for the work of their departments. This practice is slightly uneven, however, and standards are rising fastest in subjects where the head of department motivates colleagues, carefully monitors the quality of teaching and spreads good practice. These have been important factors in creating high standards in mathematics and design and technology. Where relative weaknesses exist, the monitoring of the work of the subject is informal and department policies and procedures are inconsistently applied, as in science. The leadership and management of citizenship, however, is unsatisfactory, because of weaknesses in assessing citizenship skills and in co-ordinating the subject across the curriculum.
62. The effectiveness of the governing body is good and has played an influential part in creating a strong strategic direction for the college. Governors clearly understand the challenges facing the college and have a very good knowledge of the college's strengths and weaknesses. Although governors are very proud of the college and what it has achieved, they are constantly striving for improvement. Governors give freely of their time and they have developed highly effective, frequent formal and informal contacts with staff at all levels. They are aware that the college fails to meet statutory requirements for collective worship and have appropriately ensured that this is identified as an area for improvement. They are unable at the moment to meet the requirement for collective worship because of accommodation restraints.

63. The management of support for learning is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed good links with departments who are, in turn, very well informed about students' special educational needs. There is a clear policy and a good and developing range of information for staff. A large team of support staff has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and their deployment is very well organised. Procedures for the recording of the progress of individual students are good and involve both students and parents in setting and monitoring targets. Liaison between learning mentors and the special educational needs department is still developing. The governing body fulfils statutory requirements for special educational needs and a named governor, who is also a support assistant, is very well informed and supportive.
64. Good financial planning helps the school achieve its educational priorities, which are raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning. The costs of development are clear to the school and it budgets systematically for all expenditure. The allocation of money to departments is not always a transparent process, however, and some heads of department are unclear as to the rationale behind the allocation of the budget. The principles of best value are well applied in all areas of expenditure, at whole-college and team level. Financial control and administration are very effective. Grant funding is very well targeted to meet the needs of pupils.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,869,831
Total expenditure	1,881,453
Expenditure per student	3,445

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	nil
Balance carried forward to the next	48,229

# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning.
- Teachers prepare students very well for national tests and examinations.
- There is very good support in lessons for students with special educational needs.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to challenge students effectively to prompt them to think deeply.
- In some lessons, resources and teaching methods are not used as well as they could be to aid learning.
- In a minority of lessons, some groups of students disrupt learning by challenging the teachers' authority.

#### **Commentary**

65. The Year 9 National Curriculum test results in 2003 were well above average compared with all schools nationally and also with similar schools. Students achieved very well. Results in English were below those in mathematics and science but were considerably higher than those of the previous year.
66. The GCSE results were average in both English and English literature and they represent satisfactory achievement for those students. These results dipped after two years of above average standards. There were a number of students in the year who failed to complete coursework, and this had an impact on the results. GCSE results in English were lower than those in mathematics and science. Standards achieved by girls were higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
67. Current standards are above average in Year 9, and all groups of students are achieving well. The department has experienced some staffing difficulties during the academic year that has had an impact on learning in some groups. Most students can write accurate, extended pieces, using paragraphs and punctuation correctly. Highest attaining students write in a range of ways very effectively. One very confident piece of writing seen was a letter to an MP discussing the student's views on the question of random drug testing in schools. They also write interesting, imaginative pieces, both in prose and poetry. All students understand and can use the basic vocabulary of literary criticism, and higher attaining students can analyse a literary extract confidently, showing perceptive insights into writers' intentions. Lower attaining students write shorter, less-developed pieces and make more spelling and punctuation mistakes. All students use computers well to produce a variety of leaflets, reports and letters and also to draft essays.
68. In Years 10 and 11, standards are above average and students are achieving well. There is little difference between the achievement of girls and boys. Students are introduced to an appropriate range of literature and can explain aspects of characterisation and plot well. Some perceptive writing on 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' was seen, exploring characters' actions and motives. Higher attaining students write essays that are well-structured and of appropriate

length, often confident and stylish. Some explore different genres, often with humour and obvious enjoyment – for example, writing a short story in the style of Enid Blyton. Middle attaining students produce good thorough work; they can analyse a piece of literature effectively, but they write shorter, more straightforward pieces and sometimes fail to appreciate underlying themes. Lower attaining students follow the entry level course. They use computers a lot for drafting purposes and can express their ideas reasonably clearly.

69. In all years, students with special educational needs and those designated as gifted and talented, achieve as well, as other students do. This is because they receive very good support in lessons from teaching assistants, and teachers plan effectively to support their learning. The great majority of students can express their ideas in discussion fluently and confidently, although they often use a lot of colloquial expressions and vocabulary.
70. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject and they challenge students effectively to think deeply and work productively. They teach skills of literary analysis carefully, building up students' knowledge and understanding from Year 7. Teachers also prepare students very carefully for tests and examinations. Work is marked helpfully, with comments indicating clearly how students can improve. All these features are contributing to good learning for most, along with students' own positive attitudes. Not all, however, behave consistently well in lessons. Sometimes students challenge teachers' authority. In both Year 10 and Year 11 lessons seen there were groups of students, often boys, who were confrontational. Their behaviour brought learning down at times. Computers are used very well for drafting course work and producing leaflets and newspaper articles. The department now has two electronic whiteboards and there are exciting plans in place to develop these as a tool for learning. There are some lessons when resources are not used as effectively as they could be, for example, in projecting text for teachers to demonstrate analysis.
71. The department is well led and managed. The head of department is focused on raising standards and achievement. There are effective procedures in place for monitoring teaching and learning and the head of department uses information on students very well to track progress and target under-achievement. Additional curriculum provision for the most gifted and talented students is at an early stage of development. The department has made good improvement since the previous inspection. GCSE standards have risen, as have the quality of teaching and the leadership of the department.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

72. Literacy skills are above average across the college. Students write accurately, usually spelling words correctly, and using punctuation appropriately. Most departments focus on correct use of technical vocabulary and in many subjects students get varied opportunities to write in different styles for different purposes. For example, in design and technology, teachers encourage extended writing and in ICT students use computers to improve their writing by using editing features of the programs. In music and drama, too, students write quite detailed evaluations of performances and pieces that they have heard and seen. Some subjects do not, however, have a policy for consistently correcting spelling and grammar mistakes. Oral skills are well above average, and most students discuss issues confidently, using a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. Geography is a case in point. In a Year 9 lesson seen, students were considering the global fashion industry; in discussion, one student expressed the opinion that there are aspects that are 'an affront to human rights'. The English department does a good job in targeting students early on who have weak literacy skills and these students get good additional support. They are withdrawn from tutorial sessions to follow a programme for literacy development, using materials produced nationally.

## Modern Foreign Languages

Provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 11 are above national averages in French and well above in German.
- Teachers' careful planning and classroom management ensure that students achieve well.
- ICT is well used to promote achievement and raise motivation.
- All students take a foreign language to the end of Year 11, far more than is the norm.
- Procedures and standards vary too much between different teachers.

### Commentary

73. Standards show an upward trend. GCSE results in French in 2003 were above national averages and well above in German: the proportions of students gaining grade B (in French) or grade A (in German) were more than double those found nationally. However, the proportions gaining grade A\* were below national figures in both languages, and were also lower than those of most other subjects in this college. Girls' standards are higher than those of boys', in keeping with the national picture.
74. Work seen during the inspection shows students' achievement to be good. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average. Teachers plan very carefully and make high demands so that achievement over time is also good. Teachers' careful monitoring and record keeping ensure that students meet the expectations placed on them. Students with special educational needs progress satisfactorily although the availability of learning support assistants to aid their achievement is patchy. By the end of Year 9 the highest attaining students can understand French which they hear or read which includes reference to past and future events. They write accurately and can take part in conversations using different tenses. Most other students can understand passages made up of familiar material and can, with support, take part in brief structured conversations.
75. In Year 11, standards are above average and this group of students is achieving well. The highest attaining students write accurately in the foreign language and have a good grasp of vocabulary. Teachers' careful monitoring and record keeping ensure that students meet the expectations placed on them. Boys and girls make equivalent progress. Students with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented achieve well, as other students do. This is because students get good support in lessons from teaching assistants and teachers plan effectively to support the learning of all students.
76. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Lessons proceed at a good pace and contain a variety of activities to motivate students. Visual aids, group work, pair work and competitions feature prominently, as well as solid preparation and practice for examinations. In many lessons, the imaginative and creative use of ICT to promote learning is particularly impressive. Teachers use the foreign language well, not just to create 'atmosphere' but to raise the level of demand placed on students. The department is well resourced, and there is a small but up-to-date supply of reading and listening materials in the college library to promote independent work.
77. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the subject. Teachers make very good use of students' assessment information to ensure that teaching is tailored to the needs of the individuals. The subject leader monitors the work of other teachers and good practice is shared. This is especially important because the many recent staff changes have adversely affected the progress of some classes. However, standards and procedures still vary too much from one teacher to another. Where



weaknesses have been identified, for example in the achievement of boys, action has been taken to address them.

78. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards remain high, as at the last inspection. Shortcomings in the provision of audio-visual resources have been addressed, although classrooms are rather shabby. Relationships between teachers and students are still good. The subject is well placed to improve further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and consequently achievement is very good.
- Teachers have high expectations as to what their students can do and provide them with an appropriate level of challenge.
- Excellent leadership and management provide the structure for success.
- Assessment procedures enable realistic but challenging targets to be set.
- ICT is used well to consolidate mathematical ideas.
- The lesson summary reviews the lesson content but does not provide a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the learning.

### **Commentary**

79. Standards at the end of Year 9 in the national tests in 2003 were well above average and very high compared with similar colleges. Consequently achievement was very good. Standards were also higher than standards in English and science. The attainment of girls was better than that of boys but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally. Results for the last few years have improved at the same rates as the national trend.
80. Results of the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above the national average and higher than results for English and science and higher than the results of similar colleges. The performance of girls was better than that of boys. Standards have been consistently high and achievement therefore was very good.
81. Students enter the college with standards at the national level. The standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are also well above national standards and so achievement in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 is very good. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Students with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented achieve very well, as other students do. This is because students get good support in lessons from teaching assistants and teachers plan very effectively to support the learning of all students.
82. Students in Years 7 to 9 are able to explain their mental strategies for solving problems. Basic ideas in all areas of the curriculum are understood well with data display and analysis particularly strong. They understand the techniques involved in mathematical investigations. Students with special educational needs make similar progress. For example in Year 9 they explore planes of symmetry in solid shapes. Higher attaining students also make very good progress. Students in Years 10 to 11 experience more advanced concepts than usually found in the GCSE course. The standard of their investigations is good. ICT is used in every year to consolidate students' knowledge using a range of ICT techniques.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and is a major factor in the very good achievement of students. Teachers have high expectations and promote high standards. They provide students with consistently challenging work with lessons taught at a brisk pace. Most

students respond positively and show an interest in mathematics. The quality of presentation in students' notebooks is disappointing; they do not reflect this interest. A small group with average attainment is less responsive. High attaining students in Years 10 and 11 are moved on to pre-advanced level work. Classes are managed well and are presented with a wide range of learning strategies. The learning support assistants very effectively support students with special educational needs. The National Numeracy Strategy is securely in place, however, lesson objectives are not made explicitly clear and the plenary<sup>1</sup> session does not use the review of the lesson to assess the effectiveness of the learning. Assessment procedures record the results of tests on an effective database producing realistic targets. The use of past papers provides valuable experience and identifies any underachievement.

84. Excellent leadership and management make a significant contribution to the very high achievement. It is focussed on maintaining and improving high standards. Students are faced with consistently challenging work and very well supported, especially in the weeks before external tests, in class time and time outside normal college hours. The setting arrangement<sup>2</sup> allows students with special educational needs to be taught in small groups. The department is now staffed fully with specialist mathematics teachers. There is effective monitoring of teaching and learning and results are analysed in depth to identify areas of comparative weakness. Teachers cooperate fully and there is a strong sense of teamwork. The accommodation is satisfactory and the recent installation of two interactive white boards has added another teaching and learning strategy.
85. Mathematics has made very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have continued to rise, accommodation is much improved and the department is fully staffed with specialist teachers.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

86. The National Numeracy Strategy is fully in place. There is a policy for co-ordinating numeracy across all areas of learning. Students' numeracy skills are developed in many subjects with display and analysis of data particularly strong in most areas. Students have the mathematical techniques to undertake calculations successfully. A whole-college policy on the use of mathematics across the curriculum has been effectively introduced. The ideas in the National Numeracy Strategy are also extended into lessons for students in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics. New materials are proving especially useful in helping students to think about space and shape. Students are working at levels above national averages.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in the National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are well above average.
- Staff work very well together and are committed to raising standards further.
- The very good teaching in Years 7 to 9 helps students to achieve very well.
- Students' very positive attitudes and good behaviour enhance their learning.
- Marking and assessment do not give enough guidance to students about how to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

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<sup>1</sup> The summary at the end of the lesson where the various aspects of learning are re-capped.

<sup>2</sup> The placing of students in classes based on their prior attainment in mathematics.

87. In 2003, results in the National Tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average. They indicated very high achievement, overall. The dual award results at GCSE were well above average and represented very good achievement. Results in both National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations were not as good as they were in mathematics but were better than those in English. Girls' performance was better than boys', both in test and GCSE examinations but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
88. Standards are well above average by Year 9 and achievement of students is very good, including those with special educational needs. The department is providing a very helpful study pack and is improving its pre-test preparation programme to prepare students for the National Tests. In Years 7 to 9, most students make very good progress in their knowledge of life and living processes and in their understanding of materials and their properties and of physical processes. Higher-attaining students use their knowledge of the structure of bacteria and viruses to explain the differences between them. However, students' skills in scientific enquiry are not as good as their knowledge and understanding of science. They have many opportunities to experience practical work but more often than not these require them to follow lists of instructions rather than designing, planning and carrying out their own practical investigations.
89. In Years 10 and 11, students' standards are well above average and achievement is very good. By Year 11, students understand the electronic structure of atoms and explain how ionic and covalent bonds form in compounds. In the best lessons in Years 7 to 11 students are beginning to manipulate abstract ideas capably and relate learning in science to their own experience. However there are relatively few opportunities for students to research appropriate information, think critically about it and produce original extended writing.
90. In all years, students with special educational needs, those designated as gifted and talented and boys and girls achieve equally highly. This is because they receive very good support in lessons from teaching assistants, and teachers plan effectively to support their learning.
91. Teaching and learning are very good overall. They are slightly better in Years 7 to 9 where most teachers are implementing the National Science Strategy well and some very well. The strategy has not yet fully influenced all teaching in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use their very good knowledge of the subject to engage students' interest and to ensure that learning takes place progressively and at a good pace. The best lessons have a well-planned and structured range of stimulating activities that engross students in the work and motivate them to work very hard. Teachers' very high expectations and the level of challenge offered means that students grasp new ideas quickly and make very good progress in lessons. Very good use of resources, including projectors and the interactive whiteboard, enable teachers to provide further support and encouragement for students learning.
92. Where teaching is occasionally less than very good, mostly in Years 10 and 11, the lessons are more ponderous, students have fewer opportunities to think for themselves and the usual crispness in lessons is missing. Although teachers generally mark students' books regularly, they do not consistently provide evaluative comments to indicate how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
93. Leadership and management of the department by the new subject leader are currently satisfactory. Leadership and management enable teachers to work closely together. As a result, all staff share a commitment to improving standards further. The new head of department has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This has already resulted in some changes and an appropriate future plan that will drive the department forward. A lot of developmental work is taking place, particularly with regard to the multi-part lesson and to the more practical-based approach required for the National Science Strategy. The new schemes of work being produced reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum, but need further refinement to include provision for higher and lower attaining students.

94. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because standards and the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 7 to 9, have improved. The department is currently looking at alternative provision in Years 10 and 11, where achievement could be better. However, the need remains to develop students' investigative skills in Years 7 to 9 and there are too few laboratories in science. Reports to parents, although containing detail about students' attitudes, do not give sufficient detail about their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding, or how these can be improved. Several health and safety issues were drawn to the attention of the college, which were being actioned as the inspection ended.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well in lessons taught by specialist teachers.
- Accommodation in the old ICT suites hampers teaching and learning.
- The introduction of an applied vocational GCSE is entirely appropriate to students needs.
- Data and assessment are used very well to target improvement.
- There is insufficient curriculum time to cover all modules and tests for the GCSE.

### **Commentary**

95. GCSE examination results in 2003 were below average at A\*-C. In response to the results the college has modified the option choice for ICT at the end of Year 11 to an Applied GCSE ICT to match new requirements for vocational qualifications.
96. Students arrive at Hope Valley College with varied experiences of ICT. Work seen by the end of Year 9 is above average and all groups of students are achieving well. Strong assessment and evaluation features make students take responsibility for their learning and ensure teaching matches need. However two of the ICT rooms have poor accommodation so that learning sometimes suffers. In these rooms some students share equipment which diminishes their time on the computer. Students are keen to use ICT. They navigate successfully within the Internet and have effective methods of communicating through email; they combine text, images and data handling to illustrate the findings of their research.
97. Good use of individual education plans enables students with special educational needs to achieve well and they express pride in the work. The very small number of minority ethnic students have a good command of English and work well on computers.
98. The new course in Years 10 and 11 is proving to be a challenge. Students are coping well to reach standards that are above average. This represents very good achievement for most of the students who have opted to take this course.
99. Teaching and learning overall are very good and this is why students throughout the college are achieving very well in ICT. Teaching and learning in the new ICT suite from specialist teachers is consistently very good. However, teaching by the non-specialists, who often teach in the older suites and have inadequate resources and limited space, is more variable. Planning is very good overall although non-specialist teachers require more support. Very effective assessment procedures are helping teachers to identify need and challenges the learning of all. Behaviour is good overall but Year 7 students in the old ICT suite, frustrated by the inadequacy of the resources, sometimes display negative attitudes.
100. Leadership and management are good overall with the strength in leadership. The head of ICT is responsible for teaching subject skills while the deputy headteacher covers the planning and monitoring of ICT taught in other subjects. Trouble-shooting by the new head of department

supported by the effective network manager has solved most of the previous ICT problems. The team has spent personal time installing the new room and system. Broadband connection for the valley is a major restriction on developments planned. Time allocation for monitoring non-specialist teaching is limited and causes inconsistencies, compounded by the lack of a succinct handbook to support all staff teaching ICT.

101. Very good improvement from the previous inspection has been in 'leaps and bounds' because of the strong support from governors and the line manager.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

102. This area of the whole curriculum is monitored by the deputy headteacher. Since the previous inspection there have been major advances in ICT taught in other curriculum areas and its impact on achievement is good. There is a need to improve the monitoring and co-ordination of the application of ICT competence in all subjects across the curriculum. Students are building up their personal files where they store ICT records from other curriculum areas. Important contributions to ICT are made by mathematics, English, science, modern foreign languages, design and technology, geography and music, which is helping to maintain standards in these subjects. Areas such as art and design and religious education have limited opportunity to use computers because their access is restricted. In physical education and history the greater use of ICT is an area for development. Broadband connection across the valley is a problem of local importance championed by the college. At present this issue confines development of ICT as a tool for communication with parents, industry and the wider world.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of work are above average.
- Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 enables students to achieve very well.
- Very good day-to-day marking and assessment procedures highlight students' achievements and show them how to improve.
- Very good leadership of the department promotes innovation and maintains high standards.
- There is not enough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9.

#### **Commentary**

103. In the GCSE examination in 2003, results were above the national average, maintaining recent standards. Girls' results were better than those achieved by boys but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
104. Standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are above average. Achievement is good overall as students have average levels of geographical knowledge when they enter the college. Through good teaching they make rapid progress in using map skills, in understanding the processes that shape landscapes and in widening their experience of their own and more distant environments. Standards are well above average in lessons where students are encouraged to explore and debate challenging topics such as the global fashion industry. Students with special educational needs achieve well in lessons, particularly when tasks and resources are adapted for them.

105. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 are well above average. Achievement is very good, particularly in Year 10, because teaching is very good and students are keen to succeed. They are able to discuss their work in detail and write fluently about topical issues such as coastal defence systems. All students have a very clear understanding of examination techniques and through detailed marking of their work they know how to use their knowledge effectively. High quality course work using ICT skills boosts examination performance. Students with special educational needs do particularly well in completing their individual studies because of their own determination and the very good support which they receive.
106. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. Common features of the best teaching are expert subject knowledge and very good planning. The inclusion of a wide variety of learning styles challenges and sustains most students' interest. Where learning is satisfactory rather than good in some lessons in Years 7 to 9, this challenge and variety is missing and the rate of learning is lower. Systems for assessing students' work have improved since the last inspection. Marking is very thorough and shows students how well they are doing. The results of assessed tasks, shared with students and parents, record progress over time and national levels reached. In this way students are encouraged to improve their performance.
107. The leadership of the department is very good. There is a sustained desire to improve the quality of all students' learning experiences and to maintain high standards. Practical ideas for raising achievement in course work have been introduced. The use of ICT to support and extend students' learning has increased significantly and helps students to analyse their work and to create high quality displays. The department is managed efficiently and well but current teaching arrangements do not provide sufficient time to monitor lessons in Years 7 to 9 to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **History**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well above average standards because of very good teaching.
- The very good assessment systems enable teachers to monitor and support students very well.
- The leadership of the subject is very good and leads to high morale among students.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to participate in fieldwork.

## **Commentary**

108. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were above average and students did better in history than they did in most of their other subjects. Girls achieved higher than boys did but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally. The results are a decline on the very high achievement in 2002 due to staffing issues. These have now been satisfactorily resolved.
109. The standards that students reach in Years 7 to 9 are above average. This represents good achievement given their standards when they join the college. They develop a wide range of knowledge of topics, have chronological understanding and acquire skills in using sources of evidence. Many students, girls more than boys, develop their literacy skills well. Written work of a minority of students, however, is reduced by weakness in grammatical accuracy. Students with special educational needs achieve well, but occasionally work does not extend high attaining students.

110. In Years 10 and 11 students reach well above average standards and this represents very good achievement, given their standards on entry to the course. GCSE coursework is of a high standard. Many students, particularly high attaining girls produce well researched, analytical accounts. Students research topics well, including the use of ICT, and are skilled in question answering techniques.
111. Overall, teaching and learning are very good; they are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The aims of lessons are clear, and teachers manage students well so learning progresses briskly. Teachers make learning interesting and it leads to students enthusiastically researching topics such as the Romans and Tudors, but they do not make enough use of ICT. The arrangements to assess progress are very good and enable teachers to monitor how well students are doing. Students are kept well informed, but there are some inconsistencies in day-to-day marking.
112. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good and leads to very good achievement. Lessons are well planned and managed and engage students' interest and enthusiasm. In Year 11 for example, students engaged collaboratively to research and present findings on issues of the 'Cold War'. They responded well, consolidated learning and gained from the findings of others. Teachers assess and monitor progress closely so that learning needs are identified and supported. As a result, students know how well they are doing and how to improve.
113. Leadership is very good and the department is well managed. The recently appointed subject leader has identified the priorities for development and has raised the morale of students. Training needs are identified and opportunities are taken to update skills so that teachers are well informed about National Curriculum developments. The schemes of work need updating.
114. The subject has made very good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the higher standards being achieved, but resources continue to be a priority for future development.

## **Religious education**

Provision is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching offers pace and challenge and takes account of all students' learning preferences.
- Good use is made of data to measure performance and analyse progress at the end of Year 9
- Teaching is characterised by high expectations of students' work
- The time allocation in Years 10 and 11 is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus

### **Commentary**

115. GCSE results in 2003 are above the national average. Year 10 students engage actively in giving their opinions on the lifestyle of Mother Teresa and can reflect upon how attractive they find such a way of life. Year 11 students revise by deciding upon a few bullet points to summarise the lives of significant individuals, for example, Oscar Romero, and can comment upon the significance of their beliefs. Students also create games for peers to play to aid revision.
116. Standards are above average by the end of Year 9 and achievement is good. By creating a booklet, students in Year 7 have a good understanding of how different religions respect their sacred texts. Year 8 students know about the life of Jesus and can discuss the meaning of the account of the feeding of the five thousand. Students with special needs achieve well supported by appropriate individual in class support. At present, girls outperform boys in their writing by

the end of Year 9. The department is planning more active learning to raise the attainment of boys.

117. During the inspection, no core religious studies was taught due to illness of the subject teacher. The written work of students indicates that standards in Years 10 and 11 are above the national average in core religious studies. The recent introduction of an internal examination and a certificate has improved the status of core religious education. Students can write about a religious perspective on issues such as abortion.
118. Due to staff absence during the inspection, no teaching was observed. Learning, as evidenced from students' written work, in all years is good. This is due to the very good lesson planning which incorporates aspects of teaching and learning from the Key Stage 3 Strategy. The planning offers pace and challenge in lessons often having a 'bell activity' before the starter. The different learning styles of students are accommodated for by the wide range of activities planned within religious education during the year. Students' written work indicates progress is good and students achieve well due to the high expectations of the teacher and also the positive comments written in the exercise books.
119. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is planned to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus and is under constant review. Textbooks and artefacts have been purchased since the last inspection, though capitation is still low. GCSE religious studies is now taught as an option in both Years 10 and 11. The status of religious education has been raised by visits, for example, to a local church in Year 7 and celebrations, for example, a multi-cultural harvest. The religious education room has recently been decorated and has good displays of students' work, key words and assessment levels but there is still a lack of storage space in the room for resources. The slight increase in taught time in Years 10 and 11 since the last inspection still does not meet the statutory requirement and is insufficient to deliver the agreed syllabus.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

Provision is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Consistent high quality teaching that inspires very good learning.
- Excellent leadership that extends its influence to the wider education community.
- Relevant and challenging use of computers that explores thinking on screen.
- Very good behaviour and attitudes that promote independent research and evaluation.
- Poor accommodation in food technology that inhibits learning.



## Commentary

120. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. This represents very good achievement when account is taken of students' design and technology capability on entry to the college. Results in 2003 GCSE at the end of Year 11 are above average and well above average in the case of girls, this is a consistent trend. In work seen during the inspection standards were well above average and achievement was very good. Many lower attainers achieve their personal best in technology and have decided to further their studies at sixth form or college.
121. From Year 7 to 9 accelerated learning<sup>3</sup> in designing is having a distinct impact on the design and technology process. All students understand how to use the design process with flair, to explore both the material they are using and the product brief. Professional use of ICT improves the quality of design. However the lack of a free design and make task during Years 7 to 9 reduces preparation to tackle the more open challenges encountered in Years 10 and 11. Making has always been strong but now designing is an equal partner. Very good project outlines and excellent assessment strategies promote success in the subject. On occasions, two hour-long lessons challenge students, but teachers overcome this by breaking up learning into small units.
122. During Years 10 and 11, independence is the key feature that energises designing: students design for a personal interest. As they came the end of their design portfolio, students in Year 11 expressed pride that surpassed expectations. Last minute modifications with peers illustrated true design discussions. Outcomes challenge traditional ideas for the combinations of materials, ingredients and fitness for purpose of the final product.
123. Very good and often excellent teaching and learning drives students to think outside conventions and sparks off very good and excellent design and making. A young and enthusiastic newly-formed technology team have built on the already very effective quality practice in the department. They have taken the work to a new level with the introduction of high quality use of ICT. Intelligent use is made of a range of software packages to fire up students' learning. Outstanding teaching is characterised by very good relationships and a sensitive match to students' need. Teachers are excellent role models. Many opportunities for citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeate lessons. Teaching capitalises on the boost to learning offered by learning support assistants, the organisational techniques of very good departmental technicians and support from a substantial band of other volunteer adults who help to extend learning.
124. Leadership has had an outstanding impact on students' learning. The head of department has total commitment from the extended technology team. Clear strategic thinking and vision extend beyond the college to the department's collaborative role in the local Technology Forum. Valued support from the local industrial and education community combine with the management and governance of the college, to ensure a clear direction for the developing role of technology college status. Excellent management reflects the ambitious nature of the department. Procedures are comprehensive, easily understood and flexible enough to respond to need. Assessment of teaching and learning has a significant impact on the influence of technology across the college. The department is an important part of the 'Leading Edge' bid to secure future funding. However accommodation issues, especially for food technology, sometimes holds back learning. There has been very good progress since the last inspection.

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<sup>3</sup> A method of teaching which encourages students to think and solve problems.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' work is carefully assessed at GCSE and students are clear on what to do to improve.
- In all years, standards are above average and all groups of students achieve well.
- Teaching is well planned to support students' individual needs and aid their progress.
- ICT provision and resources for the study of artists are inadequate for independent study.
- Sketchbooks need a greater emphasis and more coherent use across Years 7 to 9.

#### **Commentary**

125. GCSE results in 2003 were consistently well above national averages with a high proportion of top grades. Although art and design groups have been small, students performed well in relation to their other subjects. Standards achieved by girls were higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
126. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average. This has been a strong trend for several years with no significant difference in standards between boys and girls. Achievement in all years is good. Students with special educational needs and those with talent in art make good progress because students get good support in lessons from teaching assistants and teachers plan very effectively to support the learning of all students. Students' understanding of pattern and colour is developing well and by the end of year 9 they can use bold images and good design skills. The "Picasso" paintings produced by Year 9 show a good standard across the year group. The quality of sketchbooks in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent, largely because of the practice of using loose-leaf pages that are randomly stapled and a wide variety of types of sketchbook. This variability affects the quality of students' independent study. Drawing skills need strengthening to balance the lively pattern and colour work.
127. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are above average and students are achieving well. Student folios show a good level of conscientious research and some good screen prints. Some Year 10 students are not achieving quite so highly because they lack confidence in drawing and relief printmaking and most are over-reliant on secondary images in their research and investigations.
128. Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment is a strength. In Year 11, teacher assessments give concise judgements and accurate marks matched to exam criteria followed by clear advice on what to do to reach higher grades. Teaching is highly inclusive and staff are sensitive and knowledgeable about the needs of individuals. This enables students with talent and those with special educational needs to thrive equally well. Relationships are good with frequent positive and constructive feedback from the teacher during lessons. Students respond well to this encouraging environment and work diligently and consistently with interest. Student management is sensitive and, therefore, attitudes and behaviour are very good in all classes. The Year 10 group needs tighter planning and project focus to more effectively develop media skills. The lack of sufficient provision of ICT prevents students using new technologies creatively and imaginatively. This is a significant loss to the contribution of art and design to the aspirations of the technology college curriculum. Resources for the study of other cultures beyond Western Europe are scarce and are insufficient for the development of students' engagement in the ideas and meaning within artworks.
129. Leadership and management are good and have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. The new head of department has been able to provide a clear direction with

accurate priorities to raise standards. There is, however, a need to develop better links with the community, such as regional arts organisations, local artists, galleries and museums to enrich student experience. The use of sketchbooks and resources were issues from the last inspection and remain in need of improvement.

## **Drama**

Drama was sampled.

130. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 learn personal, social and health education (PSHE) through their drama lessons. Three of these were sampled as PSHE lessons, and two were excellent, the other satisfactory. One Year 7 lesson was seen with the focus of the observation on drama. Students learnt satisfactorily overall, and the teacher had planned the lesson well. The learning was hindered by the behaviour of a small group of boys who challenged the teacher's authority regularly throughout. A Year 10 GCSE drama lesson was also seen. Students learnt very well about how to construct a short piece of drama conveying character, plot and emotion, as a result of the teacher's very skilful demonstrations and teaching. Again in this lesson, there were a few students whose behaviour was at times quite challenging. The department is making an excellent contribution to the enrichment of learning in the college. There are a wealth of opportunities to take part in extra curricular activities, such as theatre visits and productions and the department has very well developed links with local writers, companies and actors. Students appreciate all the opportunities that are on offer very much.

## **Music**

Provision is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good, making music an increasingly popular GCSE option
- Very good leadership and management has secured the growth of high quality extra-curricular provision to meet the demands and aspirations of the students
- Students' attitudes are very good, due to the quality of the teaching and planning of activities
- Unsatisfactory accommodation limits students' learning.

### **Commentary**

131. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above average and students achieved very well. Standards achieved by girls were higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
132. By Year 9, standards are well above average, representing very good achievement over Years 7 to 9. Many students are able performers, with a good grasp of notation which strengthens their work in composition and listening appraisal. Standards in Year 11 are well above average and students achieve very well. A well above average proportion of students take music in Year 10, a threefold increase in two years. Although girls out-number boys on GCSE courses, their standards are broadly equal. In Years 10 and 11 almost all students learn instruments and have opportunities to perform in a range of ensembles, some of which have established a very high regional reputation. One in four students learn instruments, well above the picture nationally. The culture for music-making pervades all years, contributing significantly to the ethos of the college.
133. Students with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented achieve very well, as other students do. This is because students get good support in lessons from teaching assistants and teachers plan very effectively to support the learning of all students.

134. Students learn very well overall because teaching is very good, building upon the diverse musical skills of the students and successfully encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning. Students' attitudes to music are excellent in Years 10 and 11. Overall, they are very good. Students learn very well in Years 7 to 9. Good class teaching links well with the extended tuition many receive through the very good peripatetic teaching. The curriculum, which is broad and balanced, incorporating music from around the world, is well delivered. Planning is thorough, although the full impact of some activities is lost through imprecision in timing. Students' progress is well tracked. Constructive on-going feedback and worksheets help most students stay focused on practical tasks. Standards of lower attaining students are adversely affected by occasional lapses in discipline. Encouraging students to use their own instruments in classroom activities secures very good progress by the talented and higher attaining students. More rigorous variation in the tasks set for these students is needed to raise standards further.
135. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Excellent links with the community and feeder schools through local and regional concerts, tours, the local and county music services, workshops, and Associated Board examinations, enhance provision significantly. Links with other arts subjects enhance the curriculum. Accommodation is unsatisfactory: sight of the board is obscured by pillars, poor acoustics often lead to volume levels which impair concentration, and practice rooms are insufficient for the burgeoning demand for instrumental tuition. Using laptops gives all students opportunity to compose using ICT, but their poor speakers give an uninspiring and often barely audible range of sounds. Since the previous inspection the department has made very good progress.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good and often very good teaching and learning in many lessons results in good achievement overall.
- Very good relationships between students and with members of staff make a significant contribution to the good learning in most lessons.
- Assessment is providing good information for students to help them improve especially in GCSE physical education.
- A good range of activities after college support and enrich work done in lessons.
- The time allocated for physical education for students in Years 10 and 11 is insufficient to cover the National Curriculum in appropriate depth and the range of activities is very restricted.
- The development of both evaluation and planning skills in lessons is inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

136. In the 2003 teachers' assessments of students at the end of Year 9 standards were average and were a slight improvement on the previous year. GCSE results in 2003 were also average. Students achieved at least as well in physical education in 2003 as they did in their other subjects. Standards achieved by girls were higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between the two groups is similar to that seen nationally.
137. Standards observed in the inspection by students in Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement overall during their first three years in the college, given the below average attainment of students on entry to the college. Girls in netball pass the ball accurately and have good movement off the ball, which they are able to apply to a competitive full game situation. Year 8 boys in football have above average passing and control skills and a significant minority

of boys is well above the national average and these boys have a very good range of passing skills and very sophisticated control skills.

138. Standards in Years 10 and 11 for students who are not on the GCSE course are also average. They have sound basic skills in volleyball, which many are able to apply successfully to a game situation. This represents good achievement given the standards attained by these students at the end of Year 9. This is commendable given the restricted time available for physical education in Years 10 and 11 for those students not on the GCSE course.
139. Evidence from GCSE course-work indicates standards that are above the national average. Students achieve well and have a good understanding of many aspects of the course including physiology and anatomy and the acquisition of skills. The ability of all students to observe and analyse performance is variable but in lessons where it was used it had a significant impact on achievement. Many opportunities to develop planning skills are missed. Most students have a good understanding of the need for a range of warm up activities before physical exercise.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with much that is very good. A secure knowledge of the subject is regularly conveyed to students through perceptive observation of performance; appropriate intervention and good teacher-directed question and answer sessions. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies and an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning is also a feature of these lessons. Relationships between staff and students are good and students respond with enthusiasm to most lessons. Assessment of performance by teachers in the best lessons is used to enhance teaching. Marking of GCSE theory generally provides appropriate information to help students make progress and students are well aware of how well they are performing related to GCSE assessment criteria. ICT is used in some GCSE lessons to analyse performance and to help students to research information.
141. In those lessons where teaching is not so good, individual students are not set clear targets for improvement and occasionally there are limited strategies for engaging students and for insisting on high standards of behaviour.
142. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is very good communication and co-operation between members of the department who are all good role models for the students. The day to day organisation of the department is very good. A departmental handbook provides good guidance for both teaching and departmental procedures. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Although the allocation of time for students in Years 10 and 11 is still inadequate, above average standards and good achievement have been maintained.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

The applied GCSE in ICT was inspected as part of the overall provision in information and communication technology and is reported on in paragraphs 67, 68 and 69.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is unsatisfactory

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for students to participate in citizenship activities outside lessons.

- The assessment of students' attainment and progress is inadequate.
- The co-ordination across all subject departments is inadequate.

## Commentary

143. Citizenship is taught as a discrete part of the PHSE course. Because of the timetabling of this course it was not possible to see any citizenship lessons during the inspection. The evidence is based on a small sample of students' work, on a meeting with the head of citizenship, on evidence of citizenship in other subjects and on evidence of citizenship opportunities in other areas of the college's provision. Citizenship has developed satisfactorily within the college as an identified feature. The college is in a position to develop citizenship in the college as an important and integrated element in students' education.
144. The evidence from students' written work indicates that students' attainment is average and that their achievement is satisfactory towards the end of both Year 9 and Year 11.
145. Students have satisfactory knowledge of rights and responsibilities. Students in Year 7 have a good understanding of becoming informed citizens. Students in Year 9 show satisfactory understanding of the law and crime and punishment. In a history lesson, students in Year 10 worked in groups, researching and presenting a topic, and demonstrated sound skills of enquiry and communication. In relation to their below average knowledge and understanding of citizenship when they enter the college, this represents good achievement for these students.
146. Good opportunities are provided for students to participate in activities relating to citizenship beyond the classroom. Students have practical experience of elections to the college council. The members of the council represent their electors well, and undertake presentations on issues affecting students. Many students are involved in activities linked with the local community.
147. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The teaching, by form individual teachers, is organised efficiently but there is not, however, sufficiently rigorous monitoring of the quality of the teaching and learning of citizenship. An audit has ensured that other subjects contribute to citizenship. There is, however, insufficient monitoring of this contribution, so that, whilst most subjects provide opportunities to deepen students' citizenship education, the college does not know whether these opportunities are being taken up effectively. The assessment of students' work and progress in citizenship is not co-ordinated effectively enough across all subjects.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the college</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the college is	2
How the college's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the college	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Students' achievement	2
<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the college</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well students learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets students needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-college activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for students	2
How well the college seeks and acts on students' views	2
The effectiveness of the college's links with parents	2
The quality of the college's links with the community	1
The college's links with other colleges and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the college</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the college	3
The leadership of the principal	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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