

INSPECTION REPORT

ROUNDHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Thurmaston, Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120249

Headteacher: Pauline Munro

Lead inspector: Michael Lovett

Dates of inspection: 2–5 February 2004

Inspection number: 258747

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11–14
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 733

School address: 997 Melton Road
Thurmaston
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Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Margaret Gray

Date of previous inspection: 18 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Roundhill Community College is a mixed comprehensive with 730 students aged 11 to 14. The proportion of boys and girls is about equal. The college has achieved a Healthy Schools Award, Schools Achievement Award and Investors in People. It is the venue for a wide range of community education provision and many adults use the buildings. The college provides Initial Teacher Training in conjunction with Leicester University.

The college serves the north east of Leicester and draws students from several areas that are on the edge of the city, the most local being Thurmaston. Two thirds of students are from a white British heritage and about a quarter are from an Asian, Indian heritage. A small number of students have a Black Caribbean background. Although the proportion of students whose first language is not English is above average, they are mainly from families who are fluent in the use of English. Relationships between these different ethnic groups are harmonious. Students' socio-economic backgrounds are broadly typical of England generally. The proportion of students on the special needs register is average, with a slightly above average number who have statements. Attainment on entry has been slightly below average in the past but is rising. The current Year 7 students' attainment in national tests at the age of 11 was average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education – examinations taken normally at the age of 16.
ICT	Information and Communication Technology, including work with computers.
IEP	Individual Education Plan
Key Stage 3	The stage of education for pupils in Years 7 to 9, when they are aged eleven to fourteen years.
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSAs	Learning Support Assistants
PE	Physical Education
PSHCE	Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education
RE	Religious Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
Year 7	Pupils in their first year of secondary school, aged eleven to twelve years
Year 8	Pupils in their second year of secondary school, aged twelve to thirteen years
Year 9	Pupils in their third year of secondary school, aged thirteen to fourteen years

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The college is fairly effective, with many high quality aspects. Standards are average, but achievement is good overall, and is very good in science and mathematics. It is below average in English, French and design and technology. There is very good leadership by most key staff, but also some weaknesses. The college gives good value for money.

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good provision for mathematics, science, history, geography, art and specialist ICT.
- A high proportion of very good and excellent lessons.
- Very good behaviour and attitudes of students in many lessons.
- Unsatisfactory standards in English.
- Very good leadership by the principal.
- Very good care and welfare of all students as individuals whilst at college.
- Unsatisfactory leadership by a small proportion of middle managers.
- Insufficient use of data to monitor performance, analyse achievement and set targets.
- Follow-up of departmental reviews not rigorous enough.
- Insufficient feedback from Social Services over child protection issues.

The college has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection in 1998. Standards and achievement are higher in history, geography, art and ICT and high standards have been maintained in mathematics and science. There has been a decline in English, French and design and technology, but most of this can be attributed to difficulties in securing sufficient specialist teachers. Teaching overall has improved because there are more high quality lessons. Teacher appraisal has been addressed fully by implementing the performance management system. Moderate improvement has been made in providing for spiritual development, but collective worship still does not meet statutory requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good. Standards are average. Overall, the results of 14 year olds in national curriculum tests are average for their age. However, achievement is very good and standards are good in science and mathematics, but achievement and standards are unsatisfactory in English. Achievement in science in 2003 is in the top 5 percent for similar schools across the country. The most able students do particularly well in science and mathematics. Results in English have been average in previous years, but fell sharply in 2003. Too few students gained a higher level (level 6) in English. In other subjects, achievement in French and design and technology is unsatisfactory, but it is good, or better, in art, history, geography and religious education. It is satisfactory in music and physical education. Students with special needs do well. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys, girls and students from different ethnic backgrounds, though students from an Asian-Indian background get slightly higher test results.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Social and moral development is good. Provision for spiritual development remains a relative weakness, though there are some effective contributions in history and religious education. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. They are very good in many classes, but students easily become disruptive when control is less than firm. Attendance is good. Some students dawdle unnecessarily between lessons, affecting otherwise good punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The college provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good overall, resulting in good learning. An above average proportion of lessons is very good or excellent, though there are some weak areas. The college is highly inclusive, seeking to do its best for all students. It is at the heart of its community, and links with other colleges are effective.

Arrangements for health and safety are very good. The college provides well for the care and welfare of students, but the monitoring of their achievements is unsatisfactory. Students' views are widely canvassed and valued as part of the college's improvement strategy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal provides very good leadership, and she is supported well by other members of the management team, the student development managers (heads of year) and a majority of the subject leaders. Leadership in other subject areas is unsatisfactory. Annual reviews of subjects are not followed up rigorously enough. Governance is unsatisfactory. Although governors are very supportive and know the college's strengths and weaknesses, they do not do enough to hold the management team to account for the college's performance, monitor progress or check its work against that of similar colleges.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

Most parents are satisfied with the college. However, a significant minority are critical: they raised issues about behaviour and homework, would like more opportunities to express their views and more information on students' progress. Inspectors found the reporting system does provide such information, but the students' planners could be used more to improve communication. Students are mainly positive and appreciate the good teaching and how helpful staff are. They enjoy good relationships with peers and appreciate interesting lessons and clubs. The strict enforcement of the dress code and one-way system cause older students some irritation.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards achieved in English;
- improve leadership and management by curriculum leaders in English, French and design and technology;
- use data more thoroughly to analyse achievement, monitor performance and set targets;
- follow up departmental reviews rigorously by documenting outcomes, agreeing effective action and monitoring progress closely;
- build better links with outside agencies to monitor and support students referred for child protection concerns;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Students achieve well. Overall, standards are average for their age in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests. They do much better in mathematics and science than they do in English, especially in the most recent test results. Students with special needs achieve well. The most able students achieve well in maths and science but under-achieve in English. Boys' reading skills are under-developed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in mathematics and science is very good compared with schools having a similar intake. Mathematical skills are developed well across the curriculum. Achievement in history is very good.
- Students' literacy and ICT skills are sound. However, achievement in English is below average compared with schools with a similar intake and, given their ability, fewer than expected students gained a high level in the 2003 national tests.
- Achievement in art, geography and RE is good, but it is unsatisfactory in French and design and technology.
- Students with special needs achieve well.
- Although boys' reading is under-developed, boys and girls achieve equally well across most of the curriculum. This contrasts with the national picture of higher attainment by girls.
- Students from different ethnic backgrounds achieve almost equally well. Those from an Asian-Indian cultural heritage get slightly higher test results.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.9 (32.7)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.1 (35.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	35.1 (35.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 266 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year 2002

1. Results in the national tests for fourteen year-olds have been about average for the last two years. However, this masks the fact that results in mathematics and science were much higher than in English, especially in 2003. Results in mathematics and science were well above average in the 2002 and 2003 national tests. English national test results were average in 2002, but declined sharply in 2003. More students than average reached the higher levels in mathematics and science, but fewer than average did so in English. Boys and girls achieved similar overall results in these tests. This is in contrast to most other schools where girls tend to out-perform boys. The results of students from different ethnic backgrounds were broadly similar but the Asian-Indian students did slightly better than others.

Standards of students in the school

2. Standards in the lessons and work seen during the inspection matched closely the 2003 national test results for English, mathematics and science. Students' work is above average for their age in mathematics and science. Very high quality work by individual students is

evident. Mathematical skills are good and are used and developed effectively in a range of subjects. Students have sound ICT skills and use these well in history, music and mathematics. Standards in English are below average and the reading capability of boys is a particular area requiring improvement. Literacy skills are sound across the school because several subjects make a strong contribution through the use of subject vocabulary and development of writing skills. Attainment is well above average in art and history. Standards in design and technology are below average because activities are too closely directed by teachers and do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to make designing and making decisions.

Students' achievement

3. Compared with results in schools where students had similar attainment on entry to Year 7, the Year 9 science and mathematics results are well above average. The proportion of students achieving the higher levels is outstanding. Students' achievement in recent English national tests has been broadly average, although relatively few achieved the higher levels. Over the last three years, science and mathematics results have improved steadily in line with the national trend. English results lagged behind maths and science but still improved at a reasonable rate until 2003 when they declined sharply. Staff shortages have been a barrier to improvement in English. Achievement is good, or better, in history, geography, art and religious education, and sound in citizenship. Achievement in music is sound despite the limited time available for students to achieve higher levels and the good progress they often make in lessons. Achievement in French is unsatisfactory because, although some students achieve reasonable levels, too many students do not make enough progress between Year 7 and Year 9. Achievement in design and technology is below average in Year 9 because their work lacks the independence required.

Achievement of students with special educational needs (SEN)

4. Across all year groups, almost all students with special educational needs make good progress overall and achieve well in relation to their specific needs. This is due in the main to the good level of supportive teaching they receive when taught in small groups and when they are in mainstream lessons across the college.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Attendance is good. Punctuality is satisfactory overall. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory. Students' personal development, including the moral, social and cultural development, is also satisfactory overall, though provision for the spiritual aspect remains a relative weakness.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is above the national average.
- Behaviour in many lessons is good.
- Too many students are taken on holiday and some parents do not give education the greater priority.
- Spiritual development and meeting the collective worship requirements were key issues at the previous inspection and remain unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.9
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.

6. Although the attendance rate is well above average, holiday-taking accounts for a significant amount of absence and, despite the college's good efforts to discourage this, almost a third of students take holidays during school time. Recording of attendance has improved recently. Absences are now properly coded and unauthorised absence recording has become accurate. The unauthorised absence rate is average. Punctuality on arrival at school is good, spoilt only by a small number of regular latecomers. However, timekeeping and punctuality to lessons is often unsatisfactory. This can waste up to ten minutes of some lessons when some students, particularly younger ones, dawdle between lessons and have little sense of urgency to arrive to class on time.

Attitudes and behaviour

7. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall. In their questionnaires, students confirmed that they enjoy college, they are taught well and almost all students feel that they work hard. Students were most worried about the standard of behaviour. Attitudes and behaviour in many classes are good, and are often very good in geography, history, science, mathematics, ICT and music. The high quality teaching inspires students to achieve well and be respectful to staff and to peers alike. In lessons when there are temporary or inexperienced teachers, a minority of students are not co-operative and some disrupt learning by causing nuisance. The assertive discipline program works well and students see it as a firm but fair method of behaviour management. Students feel confident that miscreants will be removed from lessons and not hinder their learning. The college deploys student support workers effectively to manage this process.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	489	37	1
White – any other White background	25	6	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	164	4	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	3	0

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

8. Outside lessons, behaviour is good when supervised, but in less visible areas some occasional unruliness occurs. A minority of students are cheeky to adults, and occasionally insolent. The exclusion rate is high, but has declined over the past three years. The school is taking action to support those students at risk of exclusion and has made some modest progress. Bullying and racism occur, but at a low level and are dealt with well.
9. The behaviour of most students with special educational needs in one to one, small groups and whole class lessons is generally good. They relate well to teachers and learning support assistants, work well and are usually keen to make progress. Where students have emotional and behavioural difficulties they are well managed by staff and actively helped to overcome their difficulties and improve their behaviour.

Students' personal development

10. The provision for students' personal development is satisfactory. Spiritual development is often planned across the curriculum and is occasionally very good in some subjects such as art, history and religious education, but is not apparent in the majority. The "thought for the week" is delivered inconsistently in tutor time and was not mentioned in some. The requirements for collective worship are not met. Moral development is good when expectations for behaviour are made clear and assemblies instill good values and convey strong moral messages. Social development is good and is enhanced by the activities week and participation in clubs, sports, charity work and in citizenship classes. Cultural development is satisfactory. Students share their ethnic heritage and experiences with peers in assemblies, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons to enliven learning in an open and effective way.
11. The special educational needs co-ordinator and her team provide very good and well targeted support. A good feature of this is that subject staff receive very good information on these students' needs and are able to match work to meet the targets set. All pupils with individual education plans have these written into their planners and know well the targets towards which they are working.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE

The college provides a good quality of education. Much of the teaching is very good or excellent though there are some weak areas. The college is highly inclusive, seeking to do its best for all students and providing well for their care and welfare. It is at the heart of its community and links with other schools are effective.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and students learn and achieve well in most lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high proportion of lessons are very good or excellent.
- Teaching and learning are of high quality in mathematics, science, ICT, geography, history and art.
- There is unsatisfactory teaching in some English and French classes, and occasionally in other subjects.
- A very good range of teaching and learning activities helps students learn well in history, geography and PSHCE.
- Homework is set and used inconsistently.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 120 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11 (9%)	32 (27%)	44 (37%)	25 (21%)	5 (4%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)

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

12. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is good there are contrasts. The amount of very good and excellent lessons is unusually high and in many subjects there is great consistency in good or better teaching across the department. In both English and French there is some very effective teaching but it is inconsistent across the department, which makes the overall position in those subjects unsatisfactory. Occasional unsatisfactory lessons occur in design and technology, PSHCE and mathematics.
13. Outstanding features of the best teaching and learning are the relentless pace injected by the teacher and the very well thought-out sequence of activities, often seen in mathematics, history and geography lessons. Teachers create an instant sense of intrigue and fascination and follow this up with learning activities that engage students in listening and thinking, exploring various resources with their classmates and debating possibilities or practising skills and presenting findings. Most of the best lessons conclude with a summary that focuses on what has been learned. The positive impact of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is plain to see, most noticeably in history, geography, ICT and art.

Example of outstanding practice

History – lesson on French revolution

A Year 8 class benefited from an inspirational history lesson. The teacher's love of history was evident from the start as she helped students understand the significance of a painting of the Storming of the Bastille by Cholat. Her reading from the Tale of Two Cities was captivating, enthusiastic and passionate. It certainly captured the interest of students. They were attentive, listening with wonder as events unfolded, questioning the unimaginable horror of what was happening. They gained a lot from this and other sources, which showed various interpretations of events. The entire lesson made an important contribution not just to students' historical education, but also to their wider understanding of their world.

14. In the many effective lessons, students' learning is uninhibited because behaviour is usually very good. This results not just from the teacher's sense of purpose, the firm management of issues such as where students sit, how and when they speak, but also from the students' willingness to cooperate and learn when the lesson offers them something they can accept as interesting or worthwhile. The consistently good quality planning of lessons, often by teachers working together, and the good work of classroom assistants are significant contributory factors.
15. The college's approach to equality of opportunity for all students is supported by a policy of seating pupils in class so that ethnic groups mix and boys work with girls. Teachers often re-arrange the seating plan helpfully for particular purposes, for example to create mixed ability working groups or to give groups different work or levels of adult support according to their capability.
16. Where teaching is less than satisfactory in English, the main factor is that some classes do not have a regular specialist teacher with sufficient knowledge of the curriculum. Lessons do not build up a progression in learning and students are sometimes given activities they have done before. There is insufficient emphasis on sustained writing and students get little feedback on the work they do. In otherwise satisfactory lessons in English there is sometimes too little to challenge the more able students to achieve their best. Although French lessons

are planned meticulously, the main weakness in unsatisfactory teaching is that the way activities are presented to students does not ensure sustained attention by students or good learning conditions. Students are unclear about how what they are asked to do leads to actual gains in learning. This results in poor behaviour, calling out and an uncontrolled atmosphere. Lack of a clear purpose that is understood by students was a feature of one unsatisfactory mathematics lesson, with similar poor response by students. In design and technology, the weaker lessons included insufficiently demanding tasks. Low achievement in Year 9 results from projects that are too closely directed by the teachers, so students do not make the design and making decisions required at the higher levels of achievement.

17. Students respond very well to the good quality teaching. They show immediate interest, cooperate fully and immerse themselves in the process of the lesson with enthusiasm and commitment. Effective learning is easily achieved in these circumstances. On the other hand, where the teaching has one or more weak features, a significant minority of students in the class take advantage by being uncooperative, showing little respect for the staff or the needs of other students. This reveals that some students have not developed sufficient maturity or self-control, and their behaviour adversely affects others by getting in the way of their learning.
18. Homework is used inconsistently across the school. It is very effective in mathematics and history and good in science. Students and parents generally approve of homework in principle but report that it is set sporadically and the timetable is rarely kept to. Some also state that the work is not marked or otherwise used in subsequent lessons. This is more of a problem when classes do not have a regular teacher. The way teachers assess students' work is also inconsistent. In subjects such as geography, history and science, teachers use regular tests, or key pieces of work, to determine students' current levels of attainment and let them know if they are on track to achieve future goals. They also have systematic approaches for letting students know what they have to do to improve and how their teachers can help. The process is very successful, is highly regarded by students and makes a significant contribution to high achievement. In ICT, students are given good feedback on how well they have done and how to improve. There are subjects, such as English, where these good practices are not sufficiently developed and large numbers of students, especially in Years 7 and 8, are confused about their targets and do not know how well they are progressing towards them.

Special Educational Needs

19. The teaching of special educational needs students is good overall with some strong features. The special educational needs staff have very good understanding of individual students' needs. All subject teachers know who the children are who have special educational needs and are aware of their targets. In most cases they take these targets into account and organise different tasks and materials to meet these needs.
20. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are attached to subject areas and this has both built on the skills LSAs have and created more effective partnerships between LSAs and teachers. Where LSAs are well briefed by the subject teacher on the work they are going to do with the whole class their support is effective. Learning support assistants often provide intensive support in order for students to understand the work, make progress and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills. Support in class is targeted well at those students who need it and in subject areas where students' weaker literacy skills would otherwise prevent them from accessing the curriculum effectively.
21. Special educational needs staff make good use of ICT, such as the Success Maker integrated learning programme, in a planned way to support and improve students' literacy and numeracy skills and enhance their learning and self esteem.

22. The college's assessment procedures for students with special educational needs are good. There are good systems for identifying and assessing students, which start with good liaison between the college and its contributory primary schools. After students transfer, further diagnostic tests are undertaken and the results are used to determine Individual Education Plans, set future targets and identify any further support required.

The curriculum

The college provides a good curriculum. Students are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum, which is having a positive impact on the quality of learning. In addition, they are offered a satisfactory range of extra-curricular opportunities beyond subject lessons. Teachers and support staff are well qualified and deployed appropriately in the large majority of subjects. However, there are significant shortages of teaching staff, which are having an adverse effect on students' achievements in some subjects. Other resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is highly inclusive and strives to meet the needs of all students.
- Preparation for the next stage of education is very good.
- There are staffing shortages in English and modern foreign languages.
- Curricular provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- The range of extra-curricular sports activities is good.
- Participation levels in extra-curricular activities are often low.

Commentary

23. The broad and balanced curriculum meets statutory requirements by covering all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. However, it does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship. Within this curriculum, music has a lower than recommended allocation of time in all three years, and this is having an adverse affect upon standards. The college has now started to work closely with Local Education Authority consultants to embed the National Strategies into teaching and learning practice within departments. In particular, the ICT Strategy has had a significant impact upon the delivery of the taught ICT lesson in each year and the Foundation Subjects Strategy has had a very positive impact on work within the art and history departments. The college is currently planning an innovative alternative curriculum for a group of identified Year 9 students, in conjunction with Wreake Valley and Brooksby Colleges.
24. All students with special educational needs have good access to the whole curriculum. The small amount of withdrawal work is well planned to ensure students are not deprived of their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.
25. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is satisfactory. Students follow a well planned programme of activities during the weekly PSHCE lesson. Other elements of citizenship work are starting to be embedded in the curriculum or are delivered as whole-day activities replacing the normal timetable. Contributions are made by well chosen visitors, for example to deliver the 'Industry day' activity for Year 9 which provides good information and guidance on careers, with the support of the Connexions service and local colleges, business and industry. Students have a positive attitude to PSHCE and are able to articulate a clear understanding of the overall purpose and content of the programme. The recording and assessment of the programme is still being developed, in preparation for the first end of key stage teacher assessment for Year 9 in summer 2004.

26. The college is highly inclusive and strives to provide equality of access and opportunity for all students. It takes full account of the cultural background of its students. This is evident, for example, in the books chosen for the library and the dance workshops organized to celebrate Diwali. The college has identified the gifted and talented students and the mathematics and science departments have made particularly good provision to cater for their needs.
27. The college prepares students well for their move to the next stage of education. Liaison with Wreake Valley Community College is very good and students spend a three day induction period at the College at the end of Year 9. In addition, the use of 'bridging projects' is becoming established within departments to assist a smooth transition to Upper School.
28. The extra-curricular programme is satisfactory. The musical productions and the range of sports have good participation levels and are the strongest elements. Students not only play in school teams, but girls in particular have represented district teams successfully in rugby. Students also have good opportunities to go on school trips and enjoy the various clubs, but participation levels in these activities are often low. Students confirmed they really enjoy 'activities week' in the summer term when there are some exciting and interesting activities that extend personal development and experience well.
29. The large majority of departments are fully staffed with well-qualified subject specialists. However, both the English and modern foreign languages departments have experienced considerable difficulty appointing suitably qualified teachers to cover for staff absence and vacancies, and this impacts on the quality of teaching and on students' achievement. The support staff enhance significantly the quality of education provided. The accommodation is generally adequate. The new and refurbished rooms provide good quality accommodation, but a significant number of classrooms are too small and restrict the range of teaching and learning styles that teachers can use. For example, the accommodation for teaching small groups of special educational needs students is cramped and does not provide sufficient space in which to teach, store resources and enable sufficient access to ICT. The ICT rooms for use across subjects are overcrowded and students are required to share computers. However, overall, levels of learning resources are satisfactory in quality and range.

Care, guidance and support

The college ensures that the care and welfare of students is effective and the arrangements for health and safety are very good. The college provides good support, advice and guidance for students' personal development, but the monitoring of their achievements is unsatisfactory. Students' views are valued and widely canvassed as part of school improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral system and the care and guidance provided for individuals are key strengths of the college. Students feel secure and well looked after and this helps them achieve.
- The management of health and safety is an example of good practice.
- Surveys and a student council are effective in gauging students' opinions of aspects of the school and in giving students one 'voice'.
- The use of assessment information to set targets for students and to track their progress is inconsistent.
- The links with Social Services for sharing child protection information are insecure.

Commentary

30. Students confirmed in their questionnaire and in discussions how much they value the close relationships they have with staff. They feel that they would always have someone to turn to if they were troubled. Good personal development monitoring enables issues to be identified

early and resolved quickly to benefit learning. Student Support Workers, the School Counsellor, Connexions Advisor and staff mentoring provide a wide range of support for students and their families and the outcomes are very positive.

31. The arrangements for child protection within the college are good, and referrals to relevant authorities are made when suspicions arise. However, insufficient information is returned from the other authorities. This restricts the help and sensitive support the college might give. The arrangements for children in public care are satisfactory. The newly designated person is currently updating reviews and personal education plans. All medical needs are catered for very well. When students are ill or injured they receive good care and attention. The lack of a welfare room, however, means students are treated in the open reception area, which offers little privacy or comfort. All the risk assessments and routine checking systems for health and safety throughout the school are very good.
32. The use of assessment information to provide support and guidance for students is unsatisfactory. A senior manager has undertaken an effective analysis of the college's current position and identified an appropriate range of steps required to improve the situation. However, because of changes in personnel and difficulties with the use of computer software, this analysis has only been carried out recently and there has been too little progress in the managing and monitoring of data to set targets for students and track their progress. This has resulted in widespread inconsistencies across the college. There is good practice in science, where teachers consider an effective range of national assessment information to inform students of challenging targets for Year 9 national tests. Analyses of the performance of different groups, such as girls and boys or different ethnic groups, are beginning to be used. However these are based on standards in tests, rather than how well students have achieved in relation to their capability, making it difficult for teachers to judge the effectiveness of strategies for raising achievement.
33. Students on the special educational needs register have Individual Education Plans which are reviewed regularly by all staff, and learning support assistants are involved well in this review process. The Annual Review procedures comply with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice requirements, both in the timing of reviews and the reporting on progress towards targets. Targets are invariably specific in their success criteria so each student's progress can be tracked well. All staff are provided with information on students' targets and in many subject areas these are used well to inform lesson planning.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are satisfactory and links with the wider community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The college is determined to improve links with parents and recently established a "Partnership with Parents" group.
- The links with other schools and the strategic planning within the Syston and Thurmaston Partnership are very good.
- The college has very good relationships with, provides well for and is very much at the heart of the local community.
- Links with the community do not sufficiently enliven and enhance learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

34. The college welcomes and works effectively with parents to support students' learning. Parents' induction is good and a strong partnership is forged when students start college. Parents' support for other activities is good when their own children are involved, for instance at sports fixtures and the recent school production of the musical "Sweetie". The greater

concern parents raised in their questionnaire and pre-inspection meeting was the amount of information they receive. The two formal consultations and annual progress reports provide adequate information, but parents asked for more time and more information from subject teachers. The prospectus provides good information but the governors' annual report is thin and newsletters are sporadic.

35. There is a great deal of contact between parents and pastoral staff whenever issues arise. Joint approaches to support students work well and most parents co-operate. However, many parents take their children on holiday and ignore the college's pleas to put their children's education first. Behaviour warnings are reported to parents to "nip emerging poor behaviour in the bud". Parents' views are sought both formally and informally and most parents are satisfied with the way their concerns are responded to. Parents' opinions are helping to shape future planning. Annual reports were recently improved with the addition of National Curriculum levels and clearer targets as a result of parental feedback.
36. Community relations are good and facilities are well used and appreciated by community members. The college caters for all ages, including a crèche and pre-school group, and offers facilities for a wide range of adult learning courses and user groups. Resources are shared and the college has benefited from additional ICT equipment. The swimming pool and sports facilities have been improved. Some courses are designed with boys' achievement in literacy as a focus and the "lad and dads" group. The family learning weekends have some good spin offs for learning and encourage participants to read more. There are good links with local companies and training organisations for the industrial afternoon, but in general, the community is underused as a resource to enrich the curriculum.
37. Links with local schools are very good and enable a smooth transition from primary schools and transfer on to receiving upper schools. The taster days, curricular links, bridging projects and other visits enable pupils to become familiar with the college before transfer. The headteacher of one of the linked primary schools endorsed this very strongly and praised the high quality of the many links, including the dance lessons her Year 6 pupils were receiving from a Roundhill teacher. Links with Wreake Valley Community College are very good and the GCSE options course planning and curricular links are particular strengths.
38. The college's involvement of parents of students with special educational needs is good. Information about students' progress is provided regularly and parents are encouraged to attend Annual Review meetings and actively support their children's learning. There are regular opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress at meetings during the year and staff make every effort to ensure that parents can attend these meetings and discuss any problems they may have. There is very good involvement of a wide range of outside agencies, particularly the Autism Outreach service, Hearing and Visual Impairment teams, Connexions and the Student Support Service, to support the special educational needs of students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership by the principal is very good.
- Governors do not do enough to challenge the principal and key staff about the performance of the college.
- The leadership of special educational needs is very good.
- There are inconsistencies in the leadership and management of subjects.
- The development of use of data to analyse achievement and set targets for individual pupils has been too slow.
- The development plan has identified the most important things the college should do to improve.

Commentary

39. The principal has been in post for a relatively short time, joining the college in January 2003. During that time, she has re-focused the roles of the leadership team to lead the college through the next phase of its development. This is enabling leadership to become more clearly focused on the priorities set out in the college development plan to raise standards and to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Governance

40. Governors are aware of the current strengths and weaknesses of the college and are very supportive of the principal in her actions to make improvements. However, they do not take a sufficiently positive lead in determining the vision for the college. Governors have adopted a development plan that addresses current priorities for the college, but have had too little involvement in the discussions that shaped it. Recent improvements in committee procedures have provided greater opportunities for governors to monitor the progress towards meeting the targets in the development plan but the changes are yet to have an impact. However, governance is unsatisfactory overall because it does not do enough to challenge and hold the college to account about its performance or monitor progress towards meeting targets. Apart from that for a daily act of collective worship, governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The college meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and ensures that it acts fairly and equitably without discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability or marital status. Governors have particular strengths in monitoring health and safety arrangements and, in this function, their support and challenge is very good.

Leadership

41. The principal's leadership is very good. She has a clear vision for the future of the college, including the development of expressive arts and cross-curricular enrichment opportunities. This well-defined sense of purpose has been clearly communicated to staff and morale is good. She ensures that Roundhill is committed to the welfare of all students whatever their background. In the relatively short amount of time she has been at the college, the principal has challenged established practices and identified the areas for improvement. Appropriate action is being implemented through the new development plan, such as the coaching of curriculum managers in their role as subject leaders. She is supported well by the other members of the leadership team. They have a highly visible presence around the college and are well respected by staff and students.
42. There is effective leadership in most curriculum areas but, in a few subjects, leadership is unsatisfactory. Where leadership is good or better, the impact of recent strategies to develop the role of curriculum managers is evident. These leaders are developing appropriate skills in the monitoring and evaluation of achievement and the impact of teaching. However, there is too much variation in the effectiveness of those with curricular responsibilities. Leadership and management are excellent in history and geography, very good in science and art, and good in religious education, music and mathematics. Although the subject teaching of ICT is soundly managed, co-ordination of ICT across subjects is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of English, French and design and technology are unsatisfactory. In these subjects, there is inadequate support for temporary or inexperienced staff, and curriculum managers do not take sufficient action to ensure consistently good teaching to raise standards.
43. Leadership of provision for students with special education needs (SEN) is very good. The co-ordinator is a very experienced teacher who deploys her staff effectively to meet the needs of pupils on the register. She provides very good advice and guidance to colleagues on developing and producing materials to meet the needs of pupils in their classes. Despite the relatively short time she has been in post, she has been very effective in developing learning support within the college. She has defined the role and functions of her teams of learning support assistants, has produced very good Individual Education Plans and has encouraged

the involvement of parents and outside agencies. Funding for SEN students is used appropriately and effectively.

Management

44. The college annually monitors performance in national tests but has been insufficiently focused on evaluating and analysing the achievement of different groups of students. It has been too slow in introducing the use of data to track students' achievement and set individual targets. As a result, these initiatives are not fully co-ordinated or embedded. The college has successfully incorporated many aspects of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, but monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the college is too variable. The annual subject reviews led by senior managers are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that any weaknesses are tackled effectively and follow-up action monitored.
45. The current development plan systematically covers ten relevant areas for improvement, and these are reflected in each subject area's plan. Together, these amount to a comprehensive programme for raising standards and improving consistency across the college. The statutory targets set for 2004 represent an appropriate, significant uplift in English and a modest improvement on the already high standards in mathematics and science.
46. There are good arrangements for performance management. The college has a clear policy and this has been put into practice effectively with teachers. Led by the principal, recent changes have ensured that targets are closely linked with the priorities of the development plan. Commitment to staff development is reflected in the Investor in People status which has been re-awarded to the college.
47. Financial management is satisfactory. The budget is carefully planned and balanced. Students are benefiting from recent refurbishments made to the learning environment. Money has been set aside to make further improvements to the college site including a new drama studio and more effective security measures. Although there is consultation with parents, students and the community, governors and senior managers do not compare their spending patterns and performance indicators with those of similar institutions and, in this respect, their practices do not fulfil the principles of "best value".

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,839,697	Balance from previous year	75,427
Total expenditure	1,748,718	Balance carried forward to the next	166,406
Expenditure per pupil	2,271		

(Data taken from the Leicestershire County Council Secondary Schools Outturn Statement 2002/03)

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGE 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve below expectation based on their prior performance.
- Despite very good teaching by permanent staff, long term absences result in a significant number of students experiencing unsatisfactory teaching.
- Insufficient use is made of data to ensure effective provision for all groups of students.
- Good support is given to the less able students.
- There is insufficient challenge to more able students resulting in underachievement for this group.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is good and they co-operate well with teachers.

Commentary

48. The department has experienced staffing difficulties in recent years which has contributed to unsatisfactory standards and achievement at the end of Year 9. The trend in results is below the national trend. The results show that students make slow progress and achieve less well than they should when judged against their prior attainment. This is particularly evident for the most able students and in the area of boys' reading. Standards in English are well below those in mathematics and science in the school. Although many students are making good progress in lessons, current standards of work remain below average in Years 7 and 8. The quality of students' work in Year 9 is satisfactory because almost all students are taught by permanent staff.
49. Teaching by permanent members of staff is good and often very good. However, a significant proportion of lessons are taught by supply teachers who work in the school for short periods of time and do not provide continuity and progression in learning for those classes. This makes the quality of teaching unsatisfactory overall.
50. A core of teachers works collaboratively to plan innovative and engaging lessons which adopt a range of teaching styles designed to interest all learners. Lessons are based on the objectives of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and starter activities are used to engage students from the outset. These teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge which provides students with clear and accurate information and advice enabling them to analyse difficult texts. In a poetry lesson on Robert Browning's *Porphyria's Lover*, Year 9 students were able to make clear comparisons with Shakespearean sonnets. Learning is often reinforced when teachers provide the students with opportunities to reflect upon and discuss what they have learnt.
51. In some lessons, teachers do not challenge the more able students to achieve their best and there are frequent occasions when the activities that they are given to do fail to extend their learning sufficiently. On the other hand, for less able students there is good support from both teachers and learning support assistants. These students benefit from the opportunities to work in small groups to develop their skills in reading and writing.
52. Where teaching is unsatisfactory teachers, who are often non specialists, do not have sufficient knowledge of the subject. As a result, students are asked to repeat previous work which does not challenge them or extend their learning. Not enough emphasis is given to

developing the skills of sustained writing and work is too frequently incomplete, inaccurate and poorly presented. Unsatisfactory lessons are often lacking in pace and clarity and, in a department which is otherwise marked by very good relationships between students and teachers, disaffection and poor behaviour becomes apparent.

53. Whilst good relationships exist between members of the department, insufficient lead is given in the drive to raise standards and vision for rapid improvement has yet to be formulated and shared. As a consequence, the leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Performance data is not used effectively to ensure that all groups of students have appropriate levels of challenge and that underachievement by specific groups and individual students is identified and addressed. There is no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning in the department to identify strengths that could be shared and weaknesses that should be addressed.
54. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection as students now achieve less well than students in similar schools. Despite the energy, drive and expertise of some teachers, teaching is unsatisfactory overall. However, given more stable staffing and the opportunity for effective teachers to spread good practice, this department has the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Students' literacy skills are well supported across the curriculum and schemes of work reflect the focus that the college has on embedding the key messages of the Key Stage 3 Strategy into its curriculum. As a consequence teaching supports the development of reading and writing in many subject areas.
56. Teachers extend students' understanding and spelling of specialist vocabulary by a variety of techniques. In art, the labelling of displays is designed to exemplify specialist and unfamiliar terms. Key Word posters are available in all classrooms to ensure that students are familiar with the terms and vocabulary of citizenship.
57. Excellent examples of literacy support are found in history and geography. Students are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of styles including poetry; in an English lesson a student made reference to a poetic technique that he had learnt in history. Effective and appropriate writing styles are developed to match the needs of the curriculum in science where students are given clear guidance and support to record aspects of scientific enquiry. There is a similar focus in religious education where teachers provide frameworks to ensure that less able writers are able to record their words effectively.
58. Speaking and listening is well supported in drama where dynamic teaching encourages pupils to express themselves in different ways and reflect on the impact of their words.
59. There is no identified literacy co-ordinator at present, but the college has plans to appoint to this position so that work in all subjects can be better evaluated and shared.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

Provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and students' achievement have good features, but they are unsatisfactory overall.
- In a significant minority of lessons, poor behaviour is not adequately managed and in some lessons the steps in learning are not clear enough to enable students to learn effectively.

- There are big differences between the groups; most students learn and achieve well while others underachieve.
- Staffing problems over the last three years have hampered progress.
- The three permanent staff show great dedication and use many good ideas but the teachers' efforts are not always matched by the students' efforts, so learning suffers.
- Strategies have not been put in place to overcome the difficulties in managing the behaviour of challenging students.

Commentary

60. Teacher assessments show that students reach levels broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 9. Standards observed in lessons confirm these assessments. Reading and listening skills are about average but there are much greater variations in speaking and writing: the high-attainers have a thorough knowledge of French grammar and can use a good variety of tenses and vocabulary, particularly in writing. There are some outstanding examples of extended writing. Students are keen to speak, managing well in set tasks but less confidently in routine speaking. Middle ability students have a reasonable understanding but accuracy and fluency are less secure. A considerable number of low attainers answer mostly with one word or in short phrases, with little recall of language previously covered. Notably, students from ethnic minority groups generally achieve higher standards than average. Several classes have been, and are still, affected by staff turnover or absence. This has reduced students' motivation and progress so a significant number do not learn as much as they should. However, most students make reasonable progress in language learning, supported by the strenuous efforts of teachers to make up for this lack of continuity.
61. Teaching is unsatisfactory, largely because of the small but significant number of classes in which poor behaviour gets in the way of learning. These students are either too easily distracted or they are unruly and unco-operative. The teachers try hard to use interesting activities but lack the strategies to ensure constant attention and good learning conditions. For instance, in a Year 8 French lesson, students showed poor attitudes and behaviour, calling out, showing little self-control; the teacher's worthwhile activities and well prepared, attractive resources did not lead to the students making adequate progress because the teacher did not establish calm, effective learning conditions. In other lessons, teaching is at least satisfactory and there are some good and very good features. In these good lessons, teachers carefully prepare a good range of stimulating activities which keep the students on task and the pace of learning brisk. For example, a Year 7 group showed high motivation, joining in the varied activities enthusiastically. The teacher's clear and rapid sequence of activities enabled the students to gain confidence in speaking and make very good progress.
62. There are many positive features in the department: the hardworking staff provide enriching opportunities for students, for example through foreign exchanges or day trips to France for each year group and a lively lunchtime club; assessment is thorough and the information gained from it is well used for planning; routines and resources are efficiently organised; planning is carefully thought through and acted on. For example, positive strategies are being tried to improve boys' attainment. The curriculum manager has a calm, thoughtful understanding of all other issues, helping the team to work well together, despite staffing problems. However, leadership and management are unsatisfactory because all the planning has not dealt with the main problem of managing challenging behaviour.
63. Since the last inspection, attainment, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning have declined. However, great efforts have been made to overcome the difficulties in staffing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well, especially the most gifted mathematicians.
- Teaching is very good and includes examples of excellent practice.
- Teachers often set very high levels of challenge and support students well to ensure success.
- A wide variety of teaching and learning styles is used, which sustains students' interest very well and produces strong enthusiasm.
- Assessment information is used to inform students of how well they are doing, but this is insufficiently developed.
- Monitoring of lessons and students' work is carried out, but there is too little support for inexperienced teachers.

Commentary

64. Results in Year 9 national tests in 2003 were average; this represents very good achievement when compared with students' previous attainment at the end of Year 6. There were no significant differences between boys and girls, but non-white students attained higher standards than white students. Results also show the proportion of students reaching higher levels (level 6 and above) places the college in the top 5 percent of similar schools nationally.
65. Current students also achieve very well to attain above average standards. Achievement of the most gifted students is exceptional. For example, the highest attainers in Year 8 can interpret equations and stretch their graphs in a way normally associated with those on a GCSE course. Students in middle ability groups achieve very well, attaining above average standards. For instance, in Year 9 they learn quickly to calculate percentages of quantities, and they progress rapidly to solving a wide range of real life problems using their new skills. Students in low attaining groups achieve well, often demonstrating standards similar to the national average, such as when they competently add and subtract negative numbers in Year 8.
66. Teaching is very good and produces very effective learning. Lessons are often characterised by a very high level of challenge and a relentless pace, without losing the interest or understanding of the students. This is because most teachers have very competent subject knowledge which they communicate very effectively. They use a wide range of different resources and teaching styles, and make very skilful use of questioning to maintain high levels of concentration, to recap previous knowledge and to build new levels of understanding. One of many examples was in a Year 7 lesson on angles. The teacher's careful use of questioning inspired inventive contribution from students on angles as rotations in real life, and on definitions of different types of angle. Imaginative management of students' activity, including rotating sticks, folding paper, projecting the image of a protractor and charting angle measurements, produced very rapid learning of the properties of angles and very strong progress in estimating the size of angles and measuring them accurately.

Example of outstanding practice**Year 8 mathematics lesson on interpreting equations, using excellent questioning techniques**

The teacher gained immediate attention of every member of the class by asking open and closed questions, such as “what is the equation of this line?” (closed question), and “why?” (open question). Students gave a very wide range of highly intelligent responses, demonstrating advanced understanding of the key features of any given line. The teacher had very high expectations of the behaviour of the group and of the standard of the work they could achieve. These were fully realised, as every student maintained very high levels of interest, enthusiasm and interest throughout the lesson. The teacher got students to consider and question the effects of changing an equation on the resulting graph. She never “spoon-fed” the students with her own ideas, but always used her highly developed questioning skills to gain contributions from students. The pace of the lesson was relentless, with students rapidly moving on from considering straight lines graphs to evaluating quadratic expressions and parabolas. During the lesson the students developed new learning very quickly and all demonstrated exceptional achievement and standards normally seen at GCSE level – yet these students are still in Year 8!

67. On the very rare occasion when learning is unsatisfactory it is because an inexperienced teacher requires more support to identify and overcome factors which inhibit students’ progress. These include the need to explain the objective to set a clear purpose for the lesson and not to provide work which represents too big a step in understanding without sufficient previous discussion. This leads to disruptive behaviour which is difficult to manage.
68. The team of mathematics teachers is led well. The curriculum manager is an excellent role model because her own teaching is of very high quality and her informal support for other teachers is highly valued. There is a strong commitment to success, shared by all team members, which is producing very high achievement. A programme of lesson observations is in place but the observations are not sufficiently frequent, or well enough focused on development and support for improvement, especially for inexperienced teachers. Management of the department is good. There is an up to date improvement plan with appropriate priorities; resources are well organised and performance management is properly established. Assessment information is interpreted to set national test targets for students, but this requires more careful analysis and earlier introduction for each student so that they know more precisely how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. Current schemes of work place too little emphasis on providing inexperienced teachers with a wide enough range of strategies on using different resources and teaching approaches to meet learning objectives.
69. The teaching of mathematics makes a strong contribution to improving students’ standards of literacy; key words are widely displayed in classrooms and teachers frequently ask students to spell and define them, with a positive effect on understanding.
70. The department has improved well since the previous inspection. The good progress of students recorded previously has improved to be very good. The quality of teaching is now better, with unsatisfactory lessons almost eliminated. There is more frequent use of computers than in 1998 but this is still insufficient to contribute fully to the development of ICT skills and the enhancement of mathematical learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Competence in mathematics is above average. Students have the opportunity to develop their numeracy skills in several subjects beyond mathematics, and this is having a positive effect on their standards. They often analyse statistical information well and produce graphs of a high standards. In science, for instance, they produce accurate line graphs and bar charts.
72. In geography students demonstrate attainment which is well above that normally seen, such as when they draw very accurate climate graphs with very good attention to the detailed labelling of axes and scales. Students demonstrate confident use of percentages in many aspects of science and in other subjects such as PSHCE, when calculating tax as a

percentage of income. They make good use of their knowledge on length, density and volume, such as in design technology when calculating the weights of bridges. Overall, students have good opportunities to improve their competence in mathematics, and their skills are sufficiently high to ensure that there is no barrier to learning in subjects where skills of numeracy are required.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Test results are above average at the end of Year 9.
- Achievement from Year 7 to Year 9 is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Procedures for target setting and tracking are very good, leading to improved standards.
- Leadership and management in the science department are very good, leading to improved standards.
- Resources in science are very good; staff and students use ICT very effectively.
- Further improvement is needed in formal monitoring, and in links with industry and the community.

Commentary

73. At the end of Year 9, results are above national average both at level 5 and above, and at level 6 and above. Results have improved over time in line with the national trend. Progress from Year 7 to Year 9 is very good. Boys and girls achieve equally well. These standards are being maintained by very good teaching and learning.
74. Students' overall achievement through Years 7 to 9 is very good. Students work to their full capacity because teachers provide appropriate challenge and ensure brisk yet appropriate pace. When students are questioned about their level of work and what they must do to improve they are able to give clear and mature responses. More able students are making very good gains in their scientific knowledge and investigative skills. For example, they can hypothesize, suggest independent and dependent variables and explain the concepts of magnetism and the particle theory. They are encouraged to undertake independent research to extend their learning. Focus on learning lists, vocabulary and writing frames ensure that students with weaker literacy skills make good progress in science.
75. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject, high expectations of students, good, well-focused planning, and a range of teaching methods which maintain interest and facilitate learning. By matching objectives very well to the current stage of learning and using skilful questioning, teachers enhance students' learning further. In most lessons students have positive attitudes and they work well individually and in groups. Relationships between students and between teachers and students are good to very good. Homework provides opportunities for students to extend and consolidate learning. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly with helpful comments on how it could be improved and suggest further targets.
76. Leadership and management in science are very good. The curriculum manager has a clear vision for the department. There is a purposeful focus on raising standards. Development planning is effective and manageable. Teachers work well together as a team. Relationships within the department are cordial and based on mutual respect. The department has developed very good systems for monitoring and evaluating students' progress. Resources in terms of accommodation, books and ICT are very good and provide good support for teaching and learning.

77. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Science investigations are integrated into the scheme of work. Students use ICT very well for research, in presenting and manipulating data, and they make judgements and evaluate their own work. Resources in the department are very good and enable students to gain a lot of productive practical experience.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision is **good**, because all pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 acquire a full range of ICT skills. Within specialist lessons provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effectiveness of teachers' planning and enthusiastic delivery is a strength.
- Students' attitudes, behaviour and motivation are very good.
- Co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Insufficient assessment information is provided for students to help them understand what they do well and what they need to improve.
- Students' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good.
- Insufficient use is made of available data to set targets and track progress.

Commentary

78. In recent years assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 have been above the national average for level 5 and slightly below for level 6. These results are not externally moderated. Work seen this week suggests standards for students in Year 9 are in line with those seen nationally.
79. Standards and achievement of students currently in Year 9 are average. However, students in Year 7 and 8 are benefiting from the Key Stage 3 Strategy and here achievement is good, with some pupils making rapid progress. In Year 7 pupils are able to demonstrate their ability to lay out and present information for different audiences. Students in Year 8 are able to design and insert formulae into a spreadsheet and can test it effectively. The teacher uses a range of strategies to support and encourage all students. Those with special educational needs are supported well and demonstrate good attainment. High attainers are sufficiently challenged and demonstrate independence in their work.
80. Teaching is very good or better in specialist ICT lessons. The teacher has expert knowledge of the subject. Planning is meticulous and a good variety of strategies are used including drawing on real life situations, for example planning a school fund-raising disco. This has a positive effect on students' motivation and levels of interest. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good, leading to effective learning. The teacher has embraced the Key Stage 3 Strategy and this is having a very positive effect in the classroom. Lessons have a clear structure and pupils are given constructive feedback on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve on individual tasks. However, insufficient work has been done to track this progress over time and not enough reference is made to National Curriculum level descriptors. Behaviour in lessons is a strength and there is a sense of purpose.
81. Leadership and management of specialist ICT is good. The subject is led by an enthusiastic teacher who has considerable experience. A clear development plan is in place to consolidate and extend the impact of the subject. The co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, with no effective mapping of students' experience; however, plans are in place to address this. The Key Stage 3 Strategy audit has been completed and a focus for action is in place. At present, insufficient use is made of available data. There are no clear targets for students and any possible underachievement is not being diagnosed sufficiently well.

82. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Coverage of the National Curriculum is now in place. The ratio of computers is better than the national average and plans are in place to update current stock. Students now make good progress and standards have improved. The quality of teaching in specialist ICT lessons is very good and sometimes excellent. There has been improvement in accommodation for the teaching of ICT in other subject areas but this is still not satisfactory because the rooms are cramped and students have to share computers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory despite the cramped accommodation. Co-ordination is unsatisfactory. Staff have benefited from training and are now generally more confident in the use of ICT. There is evidence of good practice in many curriculum areas. Staff and students are making effective use of wireless laptops in science for data logging and analysis. In history the school Intranet has been set up to help students use focused research for topics. This is proving to be a motivating factor, especially amongst lower attaining boys. Many other pockets of good practice are evident. Mathematics makes some use of bookable ICT rooms, using revision packages and software for exploring geometry. A small network of computers is used very effectively in music. 'Successmaker' software is carefully targeted to enhance numeracy and literacy skills of students with special educational needs. However, computer-assisted design and manufacturing remains an underdeveloped area in design and technology.
84. An effective technician is supporting staff in their efforts and is helping the curriculum area manager to train staff. Many teachers are enthusiastic and appreciate how ICT can enhance learning, but conditions are less than ideal because bookable rooms are cramped, lack projectors and students have to share computers. The pockets of good practice make a good foundation for developing a co-ordinated programme for other staff, concentrating on the impact that ICT can have on teaching and learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in geography is very good and enables students to learn well.
- Subject leadership is excellent and makes an impact on students' attainment.
- Students are very well supported and encouraged to do their best.
- Lessons are planned carefully so students make very good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Not all students are given sufficiently challenging work.

Commentary

85. The standard of attainment at Key Stage 3 in the 2003 teacher assessments was similar to that normally seen. Girls attained higher standards than boys.
86. Current students behave very well and try hard. They make good progress. Work on coastlines in Year 7 gives them a sound knowledge of ways in which our landscape is shaped, and its effect on people. Students can describe ways in which places around the world change. Work in Year 9 gives them a good understanding of life in countries at different stages of development. Students with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and take a full part in the lessons. Gifted and talented students are not always stretched sufficiently to explain more difficult ideas. In their work on Brazil for

example, they do not have sufficient opportunity to work with independence to explain climate patterns. Geography makes a very positive contribution to literacy and numeracy. For example, students write poetry which shows real understanding of the effects of an earthquake.

87. The standard of teaching is very good. Lessons are planned carefully to include a range of interesting and challenging activities. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher started by showing a photograph of a stretch of coastline. Students quickly identified where waves were wearing away the cliffs. The teacher then provided helpful guidance on how to structure written work about the effect on people's homes in the area. Students responded very well and worked hard to write reports that showed good understanding of the issues and of the need for sustainable management. She summed up the lesson with an excellent activity in which one student took the role of a local resident and answered questions from the rest of the class. All students took part with interest and enthusiasm. Lessons are meaningful and relevant to the needs of students. For example, the teacher started a Year 9 lesson on Brazil by showing a station sign from Leicester. Students could quickly see similarities between the multicultural communities of England and Brazil. All lessons help students to develop literacy skills. Students have plenty of opportunity to read and write. Teachers help by giving students carefully planned assignment sheets. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, students wrote letters expressing their concerns about the damage ranching may have on rain forest areas of the world.
88. The leadership and management of geography are excellent. The subject leader works with commitment and enthusiasm to improve the quality of learning in geography. She has a clear focus on raising standards. Her work is helping create more interesting lessons, so students work harder and achieve more.
89. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. In particular, the overall standard of teaching is better so students make better progress. Further work on setting individual learning targets, and helping students develop skills in investigation is needed to raise standards further.

History

Provision in history is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in history is excellent and enables students to make very good progress.
- Subject leadership is excellent so there is effective teaching in all lessons.
- Students have an excellent attitude to their work and try hard.
- Teachers pay a lot of attention to literacy so students make very good progress, particularly in developing writing skills.
- Some students do not always have sufficient guidance on how to achieve the highest levels in the subject.

Commentary

90. The standard of attainment at Key Stage 3 in the 2003 teacher assessments was better than normally seen. Girls attained higher standards than boys.
91. Standards of work of current students are also higher than normally seen. They have a sound knowledge of important people and events through different periods of history. In Year 7, for example, students gain a sound knowledge of aspects of the medieval period. They can describe events which led to the Battle of Hastings. Project work on castles shows a good knowledge of the period. Students continue to make sound progress through Year 8. They

can begin to explain the expansion of European empires and the exploration of the New World. Written work on important events, including the gunpowder plot and the Civil War, shows good understanding of political and religious issues of the period. Students in Year 9 continue to achieve well. Their work on the First World War shows good understanding of the times. Some of their written work on life in the trenches and front line hospitals is outstanding, both in the quality of the writing and the depth of understanding of how people were affected by war. Students with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and take a full part in the work. Gifted and talented students achieve well in some of their work, but are not always clear how to reach the highest standards in everything they do.

92. The main reason students achieve so well in the subject is the very high standard of teaching. There are many strengths in the teaching. The most important is the obvious enthusiasm of teachers for the subject. This rubs off on students who tackle their work with real determination. An excellent example was a Year 8 lesson on the French Revolution. The teacher introduced the lesson by showing a picture of the Storming of the Bastille, painted just after the event. Students were immediately intrigued by what was going on. She then showed a further selection of resources, including extracts from the London newspapers of the time and a film made in the 1950s. She read a passage from Dickens' Tale of Two Cities with such energy and passion that students were captivated. They were then able to compare the different accounts. As well as gaining a good understanding of the event, students also learned how events can be interpreted in different ways. The lesson also helped students develop important literacy skills in listening, reading and writing.

Example of outstanding practice

History – written work on life in a front-line hospital during the First World War

With the encouragement and support of her history teacher, a Year 9 student wrote an inspired account of the First World War. She imagined herself as a young nurse in England in 1914. In her writing she showed how such a person might be determined to do her patriotic duty for her country. The student showed an understanding of how someone of the time might be inspired by stories of Florence Nightingale, and could abandon the genteel life to volunteer for the army. The work is a fictional diary of a woman swept from the world she knew, to service in a hospital on the Western Front. Her work tells of the day-by-day events of the war and of the long years of the horror in the trenches, of young men killed and injured, of disease and deprivation. She recounts a poignant tale of life a long way away from home. It is a heartbreaking story of the reality of war, seen through the eyes of the young nurse – an outstanding piece of writing. It is difficult to believe it was produced by a fourteen year old girl as part of her studies in history, and is an excellent example of how students' literacy work can be stimulated and enhanced by imaginative teaching in history.

93. The leadership and management of history are a further strength. The subject leader has a clear vision for history and a focus on raising standards. Teachers work well together. This teamwork is largely responsible for the high standard of lesson planning, and the reason why students work hard and achieve well in the subject.
94. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. Students reach higher levels of knowledge and understanding, and the overall standard of written work has improved. A refinement would be to give students more opportunity to work as independent learners.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables students to learn well.
- Effective leadership is driving forward improvements in the subject.
- Assessment needs further development to ensure that it informs students' future learning.

- The subject makes a powerful contribution to students' personal development.

- Lessons are carefully planned and students find them interesting.
- There are too few activities to support independent learning or challenge the most able students.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

95. Students currently in Years 7 to 9 are making good progress and their achievement is good. They have a good knowledge of Christianity and other major faiths. In Year 7, students know what is meant by the term 'miracle' and can give examples of 'modern day miracles'. They understand how stories of miracles such as The Wedding at Cana contain important teaching for Christians about the person of Jesus. In Year 9, students show good understanding of how religious and moral principles can influence individual decision making. In their work on abortion, students could explain how biblical passages could be used by Christians to guide them in shaping their attitudes towards this issue. Overall, standards are in line with those expected by the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. The achievement of students with special needs is good and they benefit from individual support given by the class teacher. More able students in some classes in Years 7 and 8 do not make the rapid progress they are capable of because they are not always sufficiently challenged by their work. Students from different ethnic groups achieve equally well.
96. Religious education makes a useful contribution to literacy. For example, a written task on 'non-violent protest' helped students to develop their essay writing skills and their ability to discuss and weigh up different points of view. Guidance sheets help students with weaker literacy skills to improve their writing. Students have only limited opportunities to use ICT to present their work.
97. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are planned carefully using a variety of activities that students find interesting. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used 'hot seating' to help students explore the meaning of the parable of the Lost Son. This captured the interest of all students who were keen to question the main characters. The teacher then used the information they had gained from the activity to help students understand the meaning of the parable. In another lesson, a computer-aided presentation given by the teacher portrayed sensitively the dilemma faced by two climbers lost on a mountain. The class became so absorbed in the story that they were able to begin to understand some of the difficult decisions that people have to make at times of crisis. This made a powerful contribution to their understanding of Buddhist teachings on attitudes to life. Teachers successfully establish good relationships with students so that when they are given the opportunity for reflection, they feel able to openly share their ideas with the rest of the class. Stillness and meditation activities are a feature of the teaching and create a valuable time for spiritual development. Lesson activities enable students to work together and learn from each other but there are too few opportunities to extend learning through independent research.
98. The leadership and management of religious education are good. In the absence of a full time specialist, the curriculum manager for humanities has recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She has worked rapidly to put into place a number of new ideas to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise standards of attainment. For example, work has begun on developing a new and exciting scheme of work for all year groups.
99. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Teaching is now consistently good. The amount of time allocated to the subject meets the requirements of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. Good progress has been made in implementing a new system of assessment to enable the setting of meaningful learning targets for students, though more work is needed to ensure this is fully embedded.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of their subject specialisms.
- Designing and making tasks in Year 9 are not sufficiently demanding.
- Best practice in teaching and learning is not shared effectively across the department.
- Students make good progress in systems and control.
- Students have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to enhance their designing and making skills.
- The refurbished accommodation for food and textiles is good.

Commentary

100. Recent teacher assessments of 14 year-olds have been just above those recorded nationally. However, these results were not subject to moderation, for example by comparing the students' work with that in other schools. Students in the current Years 7 and 8 develop a foundation of designing and making skills as they work in each material area. Progress in these years is sound and standards are similar to those normally seen. In systems and control, for example, students demonstrate a good understanding of how to use the computer to control a burglar alarm system. In food, students prepare a variety of well made ready meals. In the current Year 9, however, students' progress is unsatisfactory, so standards and achievement are below average. For example, students in Year 9 textiles make quilted items and in resistant materials, wooden containers. Such projects are too closely directed by the teachers and do not provide opportunities for students to make the designing and making decisions which would enable them to reach the higher National Curriculum levels.
101. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject specialisms. They provide good help and advice to students on an individual basis, discussing their work and advising them on how to proceed. Students learn most effectively when lessons have pace and challenge. For example in Year 7, they learn how to evaluate the steady-hand games they have made and develop their analytical and literacy skills by describing to the rest of the group the advantages and disadvantages of torches they have brought from home. In Year 8, students making bridges develop their numeracy skills by calculating accurately the weight of the components used to assemble their structures. When challenged in this way, students show a high level of interest and are enthusiastic about their work. Where teaching is less effective, the tasks set are insufficiently challenging and expectations within lessons are too low. For example in Year 8, students making patchwork products spend too long assembling their practice pieces and should be tackling more demanding tasks at this stage of the course.
102. Subject management is satisfactory. This is evident in the smooth running of the department on a day-to-day basis. However, there are weaknesses in the leadership of the subject which are having an adverse effect upon standards. It does not promote a fully co-ordinated approach to teaching and learning across the department. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the impact upon learning require strengthening to ensure that best practice is shared across the department. Department members have set some useful priorities in their development plan. However, there is no clear overall vision for the future to demonstrate how the department plans to improve standards.
103. Progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Students in Year 9 are underachieving and their standards are below average. The quality of teaching, previously rated as good, is now satisfactory overall.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and music were inspected in depth. Drama was sampled. Of the two lessons seen, one was very good and the other one was outstanding.

Drama

104. Standards are satisfactory and achievement is good in both Year 7 and Year 8. Students are learning the key skills of listening, observing and characterization and discipline in movement. They are learning how to improvise and create drama given specific situations. They respond very well in lessons, inspired by the teacher's lively ideas, vision and expertise in the subject. A small number of boys who initially misbehaved were quickly checked by some inventive and highly effective behaviour management and lessons flowed without interruption.
105. Teaching and learning are very good with some excellent features. Lessons are very well planned and action packed. They are structured to build skills and to make creative and imaginative responses to the situations being studied. The teacher's expertise is demonstrated when he responds spontaneously to situations students create. He adds humour and challenges students to try even harder to achieve more. The drama teacher shows very good and energetic leadership, which promotes high standards and inspires students to develop good techniques, working attitudes and drama conventions. The accommodation space is adequate but it is old and smelly and the ambience is not conducive to learning, overcome only by the high quality of the teaching.

Art

Provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of two- and three-dimensional work is above that often achieved.
- The wide range of teaching styles enables all abilities to learn effectively.
- The art curriculum builds progressively, making a good foundation for GCSE work.
- The role of sketchbooks is underdeveloped.

Commentary

106. Teacher assessments in the subject have recorded continuous improvement in results to levels currently above LEA and national averages. The good standard of work seen during the inspection is in line with teacher assessments. Students are able to develop imaginative compositions using observational skills as a starting point. For example, drawings of plants and animals are used to create images of imaginary beasts and jungle settings inspired by the work of Rousseau. Cubist collages of a high quality also show how well pupils use observation creatively. By Year 9, students are able to express purpose and meaning in their work, exploring the spiritual dimension of art. For example, work inspired by Aboriginal art represents stories through the use of signs and symbols. Students develop good three-dimensional skills through working with clay and achieve well by building progressively on their experiences at primary school. Students' understanding of the role of sketchbooks is underdeveloped. As a result, evidence of investigative work with art materials and techniques is insufficiently linked through research to the work of different artists. The use of mixed media when developing work is also rare. Boys, girls and different ethnic groups of students achieve equally well in art. The use of specialist vocabulary is a strength, and the application of ICT is emerging well.
107. Very good teaching predominates. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is used particularly well to explore a wide range of teaching and learning approaches to stimulate the achievement of all. Students' prior knowledge is incorporated into lessons and their understanding is challenged at

the end. Very good knowledge of individual students enables teachers to use carefully targeted, differentiated materials to suit students' capabilities. Demonstration and displays are used particularly well as teaching tools. As a result, students enjoy a supportive and structured approach to learning, which provides continuous stimulation and evaluation of progress. The productive pace of lessons is, however, teacher driven. Where independence is demanded, the response rarely matches the industrious lesson preparation or follow-up modelled by the teachers. The recording of first hand experiences outside school is insufficiently valued by the students, so they are over-dependent on secondary source material. The department has planned an artist-in-residence and a visit to a gallery to improve experience of original art.

108. The vision of the principal to link art to other expressive subjects has resulted in efficient subject management and creative leadership matched with enthusiastic specialist teaching. As a result, a more appropriate allocation of time in Years 8 and 9 has enabled students to develop their work more fully. The curriculum is sensitive to multiculturalism and appeals to boys and girls. Exceptionally, art teachers continue to keep in contact with students' progress at Key Stage 4 and contribute to their assessment. Consequently, Key Stage 3 work is valued by students and teachers at the next stage, and evidently contributes to success at GCSE. Assessment approaches which identify specific targets for individual units of work are effective in promoting individual achievement. However, this is insufficiently related to the strands of the National Curriculum to provide a coherent basis for assessing and reporting students' progress.
109. A swift and thorough response to the previous inspection resolved the non-conformity in the subject reported as a key issue. The high standards now achieved are evident in many areas of the college. The creative interpretation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy by the specialist teachers has brought an enthusiastic response from students who now show a very good balance of technical and expressive skill.

Music

The provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The atmosphere and ethos within lessons is very positive and students enjoy music.
- Teaching is consistently good and has many very good features.
- Students' listening skills and confidence with ICT are very good.
- The amount of time given to music is significantly below average and this leads to attainment and achievement being only average in Year 9.
- The music room is well equipped with computers, software and a range of amplifiers. Helpful booklets with information about topics and targets to be achieved are provided for students.
- Extra-curricular activities are very inclusive and involve a good cross-section of the school.
- Long-term planning needs to define more clearly the learning that will take place over three years so that students have the opportunity to practise skills and re-visit ideas.

Commentary

110. By the end of Year 9, the attainment of students is average. The teacher-assessed levels in Year 9 were similar to the national average in 2002 and slightly above average in 2003. During the inspection, students were seen reaching levels that were average for their age. For example, they perform and compose pieces with a reasonable level of skill and know and understand some key words such as 'chord' and 'ostinato'. Their listening skills are very well-developed and students listen intently to pieces in order to pick out key ideas, listen to each other's work with real concentration and perform alongside electronically generated backing tracks with confidence. Confidence in using ICT is very high. Keyboard skills are sometimes

limited to playing single-finger notes with alternate hands and this sometimes prevents students from maintaining sufficient fluency in their performances. Although students often learn key words or skills in a topic, they do not develop these confidently and consistently between Years 7 and 9. Often this is because students spend substantially less than an average amount of time studying music. The school curriculum only allocates fifty minutes per week. On some occasions, further constraints reduce this to forty-five minutes. This means that although both teaching and learning are good, the overall achievement of pupils is only sound.

111. Students have very good attitudes to music lessons. They say that they like music and this is confirmed by the way that they arrive at lessons promptly, immediately focus on what they need to do and maintain their concentration at the highest level. They always work very well. They are able to maintain this level of concentration even when they are in small groups and asked to work on a task on their own.
112. Teaching is good overall. It has many very good features. Lessons are well paced with specific tasks and have timelines that require the students to work rapidly. Students respond well to this. However, the fast pace of the lessons does not make up for the less than average amount of time available. The teacher creates a very supportive atmosphere in lessons. This contributes strongly to the positive feelings that the students have about music and means that behaviour is always very good. Extra support for students with special educational needs and for those who need more encouragement is effective.

Example of outstanding practice

Music - very good provision of ICT music resources

The provision of ICT music resources has been a labour of love for the music teacher. The result is a very well equipped room with a range of computers. These have been set up imaginatively and enable students to work in pairs using well-planned software. They are able to experience high quality electronic sounds that they find exciting and motivating. The provision of a 'peer network' means that the teacher can quickly find and use students' files. They can find ideas saved by the teacher as a starting point for their own ideas. These pieces are used quickly and efficiently for the purposes of demonstration. This environment is a major achievement. It is all due to the fact that the teacher has set the room up in an imaginative way and in some cases raised the necessary money to buy new kit. This has arisen through hard work and dedication and the impact on learning is very powerful.

113. The music room is well equipped and laid out, so that students have access to high quality sounds, a range of multi-media computers and well-chosen software. Students are given helpful booklets with key information about the topics that are being studied and targets to achieve. When learning the guitar, students find that practice rooms have sheets of paper on the walls with the information they need to play the piece they are practising. The planning of activities across Years 7 to 9 requires further development of more specific objectives. This is to ensure that progress between years is clearer and that students have the opportunity to practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge more effectively.
114. The department is well led and managed. Considerable effort has gone into the provision of ICT facilities in the music room. The evaluation of the effectiveness of this has been rigorous. Curriculum developments have been well planned and there has been good progress since the last inspection. The school production involves a wide range of students and is highly valued by the school and the local community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relatively new curriculum manager has made good progress in identifying and prioritising areas for development in the subject.
- A good start has been made in improving student participation and motivation in lessons.
- Teachers work hard to ensure all students, whatever their ability, can participate in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Good extra-curricular opportunities involve other staff and adults and attract an increasing number of students.
- The pace of lessons does not provide enough time to develop practical skills and thus raise achievement.
- There are too few opportunities within lessons for students to develop their observation and analysis skills to improve their own and others' performance.
- There are not enough opportunities for the curriculum manager to observe and be observed teaching in order to spread good practice.

Commentary

115. Performance in lessons indicates that the majority of students, by the end of Year 9, are performing at a level that is typical for their age and there are some who are producing good performances in a range of activities. A particular strength is the standard of swimming in Year 7, where almost all students can swim and many are starting to develop good water safety skills. Students make satisfactory progress as they move through the college and their achievement is in line with that expected, with no significant differences between boys and girls or between different ethnic groups.
116. Teacher assessments for the last three years are very low when compared with the national average. These do not appear to have been accurate and have underestimated students' actual capability with the result that some students became de-motivated. The curriculum manager has identified this as an area for development and is working with the local education authority and the main local contributory school to address this issue.
117. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are deployed to teach to their strengths. Their knowledge and understanding of physical education is particularly good. They generally make good use of questioning to ensure students have understood what they have been taught. Relationships are good and teachers provide good support to lower attaining students and those with special educational needs. There are, however, inconsistencies in teaching. Not all lesson planning ensures that there are opportunities for students to focus on the development of their observational and evaluative skills to help them to improve their own and others' performance. The pace of some lessons is at times slow with too much time spent on the teacher explaining skills and too little time spent on drawing out students' own observation and practical activity. Whilst there is some good practice in developing students' understanding of the benefits of exercise and recognition of major muscle groups this is not being developed by all teachers.
118. The curriculum manager, who has only been in post since September 2003, provides satisfactory leadership and good management. He has identified and prioritised areas for development, including developing a scheme of work and assessment programme; however, there has been insufficient time to see the full impact of these on students' achievement.

119. Students' standards of behaviour are usually good and they respond well to the teaching. Most students are keen to do well, listen carefully and follow instructions and at the same time show good levels of effort. Working relationships are very positive. Students generally show respect for each other, teachers and other adults and work well to improve their own standard of performance.
120. Generally accommodation for teaching the subject is good, with a sports hall, swimming pool and a hall used for dance and health related exercise; however, the changing rooms and sports hall are in need of refurbishment.
121. In most areas the subject has stood still in its development, and in the key area of assessment of students' performance it has regressed since the previous inspection. The newly appointed curriculum manager has accurately identified the areas needing improvement. However, there has not been enough time for these to have yet had a significant impact on raising students' attainment. Progress since the previous inspection has therefore been unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall planning and co-ordination by the curriculum manager is effective.
- Elements of the programme provide good opportunities to develop aspects of citizenship learning, such as an understanding of democracy linked to the school council.
- The citizenship programme is not structured to provide sufficient progression in learning, or enough scope for work in depth.
- The requirements for assessment, recording and reporting of citizenship are not yet met in full.
- Students demonstrate responsibility in their attitudes to themselves and others.

Commentary

122. Overall the quality of provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is satisfactory. There are some good elements within the personal, social and health part of the programme. This programme covers many important issues and gives students the opportunity to be informed and to discuss topics affecting their personal development. Knowledge and understanding of aspects of society are further developed through some subjects including work in geography on global citizenship. Students are able to take part in the democratic process used to elect the school council and those students elected have a real sense of responsibility and wish to make a difference to the school community. All the work undertaken has given opportunities for students to write and discuss, take part in group activities and demonstrate responsibility in their attitudes to themselves and others.
123. Achievement is satisfactory in citizenship across all years. Progress is inconsistent with some of the written work at a lower level than that achieved in other subjects. The more able students particularly are not working at the levels of which they are capable.
124. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of the aspects of PSHCE that they teach as part of their role as form tutors. During the allocated time and the collapsed-timetable days students have opportunities to practise and develop interpersonal skills, including oral communication, whilst exploring their thoughts and feelings. Clear lesson objectives and a well-structured lesson in a Year 8 lesson using the 'Real Game' led to high levels of interest and concentration by the students. Effective management of students, tight timing and a brisk pace in a Year 9 history lesson dealing with the topic 'Fairness' in the context of World War 1, encouraged a high level of attention and participation by all

students providing them with an insight into the process of decision making. Where there

were weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons, critical factors were too much talking by the teacher and allowing students to work slowly at low level tasks.

125. The curriculum manager provides good leadership. She has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development of the current provision. A detailed audit has been completed across all subjects. This is important because the discrete time for the overall programme is limited. All departments now need to be clear about the areas for which they are responsible and to undertake assessment to contribute to the overall record and progress being made by students. The assessment needs to relate particularly to the citizenship elements of the programme so that an accurate assessment against the criteria for the course can be made.
126. The current provision for students' personal, social, health education gives the college a good platform from which to make further progress.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	3
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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