

INSPECTION REPORT

The Beauchamp College

Oadby, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120265

Headteacher: Richard Parker

Lead inspector: A Briggs

Dates of inspection: 17th November – 21st November 2003

Inspection number: 259290

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

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Terms used in this report

*Those students who remain at college after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 10 and 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at college.*

*At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**) or (**VCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard.*

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	14 - 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1891
College address:	Ridgeway Oadby, Leicester
Postcode:	LE2 5TP
Telephone number:	0116 2729100
Fax number:	0116 2715454
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Canon Glynn Richerby
Date of previous inspection:	11 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

The Beauchamp College is much larger than other schools with a significantly bigger than usual sixth form. It is a very popular and oversubscribed 14 -18 comprehensive multicultural college, situated in Oadby to the south of the Leicester City boundary within the Leicestershire LEA. It is a Community College and a third phase specialist Technology College. Students come from areas which, overall, are above average in social and economic measures. Students' attainment on entry to the college is well above average as shown by their end of Year 9 national tests in English, mathematics and science.

There are almost identical numbers of boys and girls in the college. The student population is stable with very few joining or leaving part-way through the year. The majority of students are white, though there are significant numbers of Asian origin, notably Indian and Pakistani. There are, however, representatives of many different ethnic backgrounds at the college. The percentage for whom English is not the mother tongue is very high but only a few are at the early stages of learning English. A smaller than average proportion of students has identified special educational needs although the proportion with statements of need is broadly average.

The vast majority of students join the sixth form to follow A level and AVCE courses. Their attainment is in line with the average attainment of students entering sixth forms. Very few students leave the sixth form at the end of Year 12 and a high proportion continue in some form of further or higher education when they leave at the end of Year 13. The college has been awarded Sportsmark for the quality of its sporting activities and an international award in recognition of its extensive and wide-ranging exchange programme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15208	A Briggs	Lead inspector	
9334	J Mynett	Lay inspector	
12226	C Clarke	Team inspector	English; sixth form English literature
1503	T Browne	Team inspector	Mathematics; sixth form mathematics
29742	P Fyans	Team inspector	Science; sixth form chemistry
2501	R Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art; sixth form textiles
2495	B Munden	Team inspector	Design and technology; sixth form food technology
12336	M Overend	Team inspector	Geography; sixth form business studies
18663	P Burchell	Team inspector	History; sixth form sociology
32231	A Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32208	D Aitken	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages; citizenship
20490	P Wilson	Team inspector	Music; sixth form music
33002	J Woodhouse	Team inspector	Physical education; sixth form leisure and tourism
20719	A Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education; sixth form religious education
2746	R Lund	Team inspector	Special educational needs
32229	M Comer	Team inspector	Sixth form French
22423	J Lövgreen	Team inspector	Drama; sixth form media studies
32166	N Butt	Team inspector	Sixth form biology
14490	S Jackson	Team inspector	Sixth form history
15075	B Stephens	Team inspector	English as an additional language
17171	M Last	Team inspector	Special educational needs
1522	W Keast	Team inspector	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good college providing very good value for money. Standards are well above average. Students achieve very well because teaching is very good in many subjects. Leadership and management of the college are very good.

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 11 are well above average and have improved since the last inspection.
- Students learn and achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- Very effective leadership and management drive the college forward.
- Management of citizenship is unsatisfactory and students underachieve.
- Outstanding links with the community provide an extra dimension to learning.
- Students have lots of opportunities to use computer technology to help their learning.
- Daily registration time is unstructured and largely unproductive.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards in examinations have been maintained and more students now achieve the highest grades. Teaching and learning has improved with a higher proportion of very good and excellent lessons. Despite significant improvements, the college has not addressed two minor issues from the previous inspection; there is still no daily act of collective worship for all and registration time remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	B	B	N/A	

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
For Year 11, Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Students throughout the college achieve very well. Students arrive at Beauchamp with well above average standards and these are maintained so that standards are overall well above average at the end of Year 11. Achievement in mathematics, French and geography is good; in all other subjects it is very good. In 2003, results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in most others, were significantly above average. Boys and girls performed equally well. Results were very high (in the top 5 per cent) in comparison with similar schools showing that these students achieved very well. The rising trend of results is in line with the national picture. Current standards are well above average in all subjects except religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) where they are above average. Students with special educational needs and those who are particularly gifted and talented make very good progress because of the additional support they receive. Results in 2003 showed a slight improvement in Year 13. Current standards in Year 13 are well above average and students are achieving very well.

Students' personal qualities and their overall spiritual, moral and social development are very good. Students' behaviour is very good throughout the college and has a positive effect on their achievement. The very good relationships that exist throughout the college make a significant contribution to the students' learning and self esteem and are reflected in their very positive attitudes to work; especially in the sixth form. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The college provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning and achievement. Students learn very well because teaching is exciting and imaginative and is even better than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers expect their students to work very hard and to do very well. Lessons are very well planned to ensure all students achieve as well as they can. Teachers prepare students for examinations particularly well by passing on their expert knowledge and focusing on examination coursework. Marking and the use of assessment procedures are generally very good but the practice is not consistent throughout the college. A very small number of lessons, although satisfactory, can be boring at times because teachers spend too much time explaining things rather than encouraging students to work things out for themselves and become more independent learners. Teaching in the sixth form is even better than in Years 10 and 11 with most of it very good or excellent.

The curriculum is good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. The college offers a broad and wide-ranging curriculum with a very wide range of courses in the sixth form. Extra-curricular activities support subject learning very well and provide many sporting activities. However, the provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory. The college has outstanding links with the local community with a particular strength in out-of-hours learning. Students are very well cared for and receive very effective guidance to help them achieve very well. The very good links with parents are having a positive effect on students' learning and their levels of achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the newly appointed principal is very good and has already had a significant impact in the college. Management is very good in the sixth form. Middle management is of an unusually high quality but the monitoring and development of literacy, mathematics and ICT within all subjects is not effective. The leadership and management of citizenship have been ineffective. Governors do a sound job overall but do not meet their legal obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

The college is very popular and oversubscribed. Parents' views are generally very positive. There was a high degree of agreement between students and their parents. In particular, they felt very strongly that students were encouraged to work hard and were taught well. Students were very positive about their college but some felt their views were not always valued enough. Some parents had concerns regarding communication in general and felt they could be better informed about their children's progress and inspectors agree. All students believe they are treated fairly because the college is inclusive in its work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Tackle the unsatisfactory management and overall provision of citizenship.
- Create a more valuable experience for students in the daily registration time.
- Plan for students to have a better and more coherent experience of study skills to include literacy, mathematics and ICT in all subjects and monitor how effective this is.

and in the sixth form:

- Take a more structured approach to developing students' skills as independent learners in all subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the sixth form is very good, as is its cost effectiveness. Students are very well taught and achieve very well. A very wide curriculum choice meets the needs and aspirations of the students really well. There is a terrific ethos in the college. Students have very good attitudes and come to college with a real passion for learning and a will to succeed. This is a college where it is 'cool to learn'. The sixth form is well led and very well managed and governance is effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Current standards are well above average.
- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Very good student attitudes to learning which supports achievement.
- The excellent provision in food technology and textiles brought about by outstanding leadership and management.
- Students are not always encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good in English literature and French .
Mathematics	Good .
Science	Very good in chemistry and biology .
Information and communication technology	There was no focus subject in this area.
Humanities	Very good in history , sociology and religious education .
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Excellent in food technology because of very well organised courses, clear guidance and very effective assessment procedures leading to very good learning. Excellent in textiles because of outstanding teaching leading to inspirational work from students.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good in music . Very good in media studies
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good in travel and tourism . Results are well below average but standards in lessons are above average.
Business	Very good in business .
Health and social care	There was no focus subject in this area.
General education	There was no focus subject in this area.

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the college. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Very good attention is given to students' guidance. Good advice is given on careers, and on further or higher education. Very good systems are used to analyse examination performance and monitor students to check how well they are doing.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Management is very effective and leadership is good. The system of rotating all vice principals across all year groups had previously made the consistency of leadership difficult. This has now been resolved but the full effect of this change has yet to be seen. Despite its vast size, the sixth form is harmonious and successful because of very good day-to-day management. The management of tutors supports students well and makes a significant contribution to their very positive attitudes to study and their personal development. Governance is effective.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students have a very positive view of the college. They feel they are treated like adults and this encourages them to act accordingly and behave very well. They appreciate the cultural diversity in the college and view it as an inclusive community. Students value the support and advice received as a result of the very good relationships established with their teachers. However, they feel the college does not do as much as it could to seek their views and the inspectors agree with this point.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Results in national examinations are well **above average**. Standards in Year 11 are well above average and students' achievement is very good. Standards in all the core subjects are well above average. High attaining students and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates in all years. There is hardly any difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Parents are pleased with their children's progress and students point out that the college is known for its high standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2003 were well above average and very high when compared to similar schools.
- Student achievement by the end of Year 11 is very good.
- Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students.
- Student achievement in citizenship is not high enough.

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

	College results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	74 (75)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	43.1 (42.4)	34.6 (34.6)

There were 506 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. Students do very well at Beauchamp College. High standards have been maintained with a significant increase in the highest grades since the last inspection. In 2003, a well above average proportion of students gained 5 or more grades A* to C and 5 or more grades A* to G. The proportion gaining at least one pass was also well above average. In comparison with similar schools, the proportion of students gaining 5 or more grades A*-C was very high (in the top 5 per cent of schools), those gaining 5 or more grades A* to G was well above average and the proportion gaining at least one pass was above average. The college did not meet the very ambitious targets it had set. On average over the last three years, girls and boys have performed similarly. Results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in nearly all other subjects, were significantly above average. In information and communication technology (ICT) results were average. The rising trend of results is in line with the national picture.

2. In addition to the high quality teaching, one of the main reasons that students achieve so well is that the college concentrates on providing opportunities for students to improve their skills in using computers and modern technology. Because the college is a specialist technology college, students are able to use a large number of computers throughout the college to help them with their work.

3. The standards seen in Year 11 were well above average in all subjects except religious education and ICT where they were above average. In relation to their attainment at the beginning of Year 10 and their capabilities, students' achievement is very good. It is unclear how well students not following the examination courses in ICT achieve in the subject, because their progress is not monitored rigorously enough. Students do not achieve as well as they should in citizenship because the teaching is not planned or managed effectively.

4. The achievement of students with special educational needs is very good, and in line with that of other groups of students. Without exception, all the students with hearing impairment make good progress in their academic and personal development. In relation to their prior attainment and overall needs their success in national qualifications is good with some exceeding the initial goals set for them. Students who are gifted or talented also achieve very well. Many are helped to excel, particularly in their academic studies, but also in other areas such as sport. Students have very good competence in mathematics, ICT and language and literacy skills.

Sixth form

Results in the sixth form are rising year on year. Students enter the sixth form with **average** levels of attainment. Standards in Year 13 are well **above average** and students' achievement is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Results in 2002 were above average and results in 2003 increased further.
- Standards are well above average and students are achieving very well in nearly all the subjects they study.
- Students achievement is excellent in textiles.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	College results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	95.2 (90.3)	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	38.0 (35.5)	39.4
Average point score per student	244.5	263.3

There were 365 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

National comparators are not yet available for GCE results in 2003.

Commentary

5. Results in the 2002 A level examinations were above average. Results in 2003 improved further. Results in nearly all examined subjects in 2002 were above, or well above, average. Males achieved much lower than females in A Level physical education. In VCE business there was a huge difference between males and females results, with females achieving much higher and males achieving much lower levels than the national average.

6. On both A level and vocational courses students achieve very well given their GCSE results on joining the sixth form. The achievement of those taking textiles is excellent. Within the current very good picture, standards are well above average in all subjects except mathematics, music, chemistry, media studies, history, business education and leisure and tourism where they are above average.

7. Results have been maintained at a high level with a significant increase in the number of students gaining the highest grades since the last inspection.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are **very good** and have a really good effect on their learning and self esteem. Levels of attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes and behaviour of students enables them to achieve very well because they are highly motivated and eager to learn.
- Relationships are very good and create a very positive learning environment.
- The provision for students' social, moral and cultural development is very good.
- Students enjoy college very much and they attend regularly.
- Whilst most students generally arrive punctually there are still a small number who lack a sense of urgency to be in college on time.

Commentary

8. Students and parents have very positive views about the college. Parents are particularly pleased by the way students are encouraged to work hard and achieve their best, which enables them to make good progress. Students talk enthusiastically of their interest in lessons, their willingness to learn and keenness to participate in all that the college offers. The behaviour of students is very good both in lessons and around the college. The inspectors were particularly impressed by the way large numbers of students sensibly negotiated the tight spaces within the corridors during changes of lessons or break times and the high sense of order and calmness displayed in the cramped dining areas.

9. The college has an appropriate focus on promoting good behaviour and supporting those very few individuals who find difficulties in this area. In the vast majority of lessons students can learn without being disturbed by others. Relationships between both staff and students and amongst the students themselves are very good and really help motivate students to work hard. There are very few incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour and when incidents do occur they are dealt with promptly and very effectively. Students and parents do not feel that bullying or racism is a problem in the college.

10. Students with special educational needs feel valued and supported within all aspects of college life: they speak positively of the support they get from the learning support assistants (LSAs) in particular, and say that the other students are also supportive and helpful to them. The LSAs give well-focused and skilled support to them, without making them feel different or embarrassing them.

11. Students respond well to taking responsibility and contribute to activities around college. The year representatives undertake their responsibilities conscientiously and talked of some of the improvements they had helped to instigate, including the lunchtime 'queuing' arrangements and the introduction of 'smart cards'.

12. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Students have a very good self-awareness and reflect in some lessons on the meaning and purpose of life. Moral and social provision is very good. Students behave very well and work extremely well together, and they showed their concern for those less fortunate as they responded to the 'Children in Need' appeal during the inspection by joining the staff in dressing in a variety of imaginative costumes. Cultural opportunities are many and varied and include a large number of overseas visits. However, there is no daily act of collective worship for all.

13. Students are generally very happy to come to college and eager to learn. Attendance is good and above the national average. The implementation of an electronic registration system linked to a truancy watch has improved the levels of attendance and punctuality significantly over the last eighteen months. However, there have been teething problems with the automatic call home system resulting in some parents being contacted unnecessarily. Nearly all students now attend college regularly and there is little evidence of truancy. Students generally arrive punctually in the

mornings but there are still some who stroll in late. The heads of year and form tutors monitor students' attendance regularly and effectively following up any issues of poor attendance with the educational welfare officer.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2001 – 2002 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
College data	5.1	College data	1.8
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

14. The college only applies exclusions as a last resort as part of its behaviour management system. The level of both short fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions has increased since the last inspection. This is down to the unacceptable behaviour of a very small number of students and the college's insistence on very high standards of behaviour.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last college year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1036	44	3
White – any other White background	44	2	1
Asian or Asian British – Indian	644	13	2
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	52	-	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	16	2	1

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

Sixth form

The **very good** and very mature attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities of the sixth form students have a significant impact on their levels of achievement and the behaviour of younger students. Relationships are very strong and create an environment where it is cool to learn.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in the sixth form demonstrate very mature attitudes in their work and behaviour.
- The very good relationships between staff and students help to promote very good achievement.
- The lack of space in the sixth form areas leads to some difficulties when large groups gather in specific areas.
- There are not many opportunities for students to undertake roles of responsibility and the college does not listen to students as well as it might.

Commentary

15. Students value the very good and often excellent relationships fostered in the sixth form. They feel they are treated like adults and this encourages them to act accordingly and behave very well. They have very mature attitudes to learning and this promotes a good level of debate and a productive working environment. Students value and respect others, and appreciate the cultural diversity in the college. Whilst there is a high level of racial harmony and tolerance in lessons the separation of students into different ethnic groupings in the social areas at break and lunchtimes can be uncomfortable for a very small number of students. However, most students feel it is not an issue.

16. Sixth form students develop into confident and independent young people providing stability to the upper college and acting as very good role models to the other students. Opportunities for students to undertake roles of responsibility in the college are fewer than normally found mainly because of the large numbers involved. The college does not currently take enough account of the views of students and is therefore proposing to introduce a full college council to give the student body a more cohesive and effective voice and a greater involvement in the decision-making processes of the college. Sixth form students show similar levels of attendance and punctuality to those of the rest of the college.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE

The quality of education provided by the college is **very good**. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the college, and the curriculum is good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. Pastoral care is very good and there are very effective links with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11 and as a result the students learn and achieve very well. The quality of assessment of students' work is very good. Teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students learn very well because much of the teaching is very good or excellent.
- Teachers are experts in their subject and prepare students well for examinations.
- Teachers plan lessons really well and push students to their limits.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure that student performance is tracked so that any underperformance can be noted and tackled immediately.
- There are variations between subjects in the quality of marking.
- A very small number of lessons, although satisfactory, can be boring at times.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 118 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (6%)	42 (36%)	44 (37%)	23 (19%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Commentary

17. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is very good in nearly all subjects. It is good in maths, geography and French. Teachers expect their students to work very hard and to do very well. A very high proportion of both parents and students feel, correctly, that this is one of the most significant reasons for students achieving well.

18. One of the real areas of strength in the teaching is the way that teachers of Year 10 and 11 students plan their lessons to ensure students are stretched to the limit in the time given. Students learn at a very brisk pace because teachers use their expert subject knowledge skilfully to plan a variety of stimulating activities which they then deliver in an enthusiastic and exciting way.

19. Teachers are confident users of technology and incorporate computers and other equipment very well into their lessons, often using interactive whiteboards to present high quality information clearly to the class at the start of a lesson. This provides an effective foundation for high quality learning. In the best lessons, teachers share clear, open-ended learning objectives with students so that they know what is expected of them. Students respond by working really hard and achieving very well.

20. Most teachers have an easy and confident manner, relating well to students in lessons. They use probing questions to establish the degree to which students have understood the topic. Behaviour management is very good. Teachers are particularly well informed about the requirements of the examination courses they teach resulting in students being fully prepared for their examinations.

21. The college has a very successful system for producing 'home grown' teachers through its Graduate Teaching Programme (GTP) resulting in a high proportion of enthusiastic, innovative and committed teachers. Departments with GTP students tend to be more imaginative and exciting in their teaching compared to those departments that have not yet had the experience of 'new blood'. The college makes excellent use of its associate staff and there is a real team spirit within the college that 'rubs off' on the students.

22. The teaching of students with special educational needs and their learning and achievement, are very good. Most subject teachers plan effectively to include all students with special educational needs and make good use of the targets within their individual education plans (IEPs). They make sure that questioning is appropriate to their needs and provide modified or different worksheets. Teachers have a good overall awareness of the needs of hearing-impaired students but they do not always know the specific targets or strategies they should employ to ensure each student understands. For example, although they have been trained in the best conditions for lip reading, some teachers still do not ensure that the students have a good view of their faces.

23. Teachers cooperate well with the LSAs to ensure that the activities and materials in lessons enable students to learn very well. However, mathematics is an area in which planning for students with special educational needs is inconsistent and not clearly linked to their IEP targets. The college does not focus on identifying and targeting numeracy difficulties at present. The LSAs offer skilled, professional support to enable each student with special educational needs to learn as well as others in the group. They explain, clarify and modify materials and teaching approaches so that students can work towards meeting the targets in their IEPs.

24. Students' work is assessed very well. Detailed and constructive marking, as in English, science and art, gives guidance to students about how to raise the standard of their work. In the best practice the students benefit from being involved in judging their own performance. The progress of students towards examination success is checked regularly, and this can lead to adjustments in teaching. However, there are some variations between subjects in the quality of marking, the involvement of students, and the use made of assessment information. The learning support assistants monitor the students' progress towards meeting their individual education plan targets very well.

25. Although students are generally very competent in language, literacy, numeracy and ICT, not all teachers emphasise the development of these skills within lessons. When teachers do pay attention to these skills they are quick to correct pronunciation or ask for more appropriate vocabulary from students, but there is no college wide policy on this to ensure consistency. Several classrooms have displays of key words that are required for the subject, but these were not referred to in lessons and may as well just be there to decorate the walls.

26. Good behaviour is common in lessons, partly as a result of the students' super attitudes to learning, but also because most teachers' control is such that a quick stern look is enough to quieten any student who even thinks of starting to misbehave. There is virtually no disruption to learning. There are, however, a very small number of lessons that, despite being satisfactory, could be better. Some lessons are a bit boring, particularly when students have to spend long periods listening to the teacher without being actively involved. Teachers spend more time than is necessary explaining things rather than encouraging students to work things out for themselves. In these lessons students become restless and a few begin to mess around, shouting out and generally disrupting others' learning. Teachers do not handle these situations well because they have not prepared for them in their planning. In some subjects the quality of teaching is less effective. For example, there is little variety in the ways students learn mathematics and in physics, teachers rely too much on worksheets.

27. Surprisingly for a college with such a high percentage of recently trained teachers there is little evidence of new 'good practice' initiatives introduced to enhance teaching such as the national strategy. Only a few subject areas actually incorporate the concept of a three-part lesson and there is far less use of a summary to consolidate learning at the end of the lesson, than normally found. The use of these techniques was evident in nearly all lessons judged to be excellent.

Sixth form

Teaching in the sixth form is **very good** and brings about very good learning. Procedures and use of assessment are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over half the teaching was very good or excellent so students learn very well.
- Teaching is outstanding in textiles resulting in excellent achievement and learning.
- Highly knowledgeable teachers with clear understanding of examination requirements.
- Students are not always encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 86 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (8%)	39 (45%)	28 (33%)	12 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Commentary

28. Students learn very well overall because the quality of teaching in the sixth form is even higher than that found in the main college with over half the lessons being very good or excellent. Teaching is characterised by very high expectations, strong subject knowledge and really good planning so students learn very well. It is good in mathematics and leisure and tourism and very good in all other subjects. It is excellent in textiles where students are inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm and love of the subject and make outstanding progress.

29. The best lessons are exciting and interesting and students respond by working extremely hard and learning very well. Teachers provide a very good environment for learning through a relaxed yet highly motivating style of delivery. Students have the confidence to try things out, to attempt a more ambitious answer or to put forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow students will be sensitive and supportive. Many teachers often take risks to capture the minds of their students and raise them to greater heights. Students' learning is regularly enhanced by lots of opportunities to use up-to-date computers. Assessment procedures are very good with regular analysis of examination performance and frequent checks to see how well students are progressing.

30. In lessons where the teaching is not as good, students are generally too passive. They sit quietly, do as they are told and take relevant notes, but the teacher does not involve them enough, preferring instead to adopt a lecturing style which some students do not like. This lecturing approach also has the drawback that it does not prepare students for later life in terms of equipping them with the skills of debate, enquiry and research. In wanting students to succeed, these teachers often do too much for them, missing opportunities for students to work independently, explore ideas themselves or to learn from their mistakes.

The curriculum

The college offers a broad and wide-ranging curriculum that provides effective opportunities for all students. It is planned so as to provide continuity for students from the age of 14 through to the age of 19. These learning opportunities are **good** in Years 10 to 11 and **very good** in the sixth form. The provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**, daily registration time is unproductive and the college does not offer a daily act of collective worship. Extra curricular opportunities support learning very well and provide a really good range of other experiences, particularly sporting. The college has very good resources to meet its curricular needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The broad and wide-ranging curriculum and large number of clubs and other activities available outside the college day enhance student learning well.
- The unsatisfactory provision for citizenship results in students underachieving in the subject.
- Resources, particularly computers, are very good and enhance students learning very well.
- Very good opportunities through enrichment activities are provided for students identified as particularly gifted or talented.
- The daily registration periods are generally unproductive.
- The college does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

31. The college is strongly committed to providing an interesting and relevant curriculum. All students' benefit from the wide range of subjects and courses offered including religious education, dance, and drama. Computers are used widely throughout the curriculum reflecting the specialist, technology status of the college. Citizenship is not developed as a subject in its own right nor incorporated fully within other subjects.

32. As well as a wide range of GCSE courses there is a GNVQ course in ICT. Alternative accreditation is provided for those students who find a full range of examinations difficult. An alternative curriculum in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided as well as off-site courses in conjunction with partner institutions. The college strives to provide students with relevant work-related experiences if appropriate.

33. There is no doubt that students become more mature individuals through their experience at Beauchamp. However, the PSHE curriculum is limited and taught within a programme of extended tutor periods throughout the year. The sessions incorporate some elements of citizenship but the college does not have a coherently planned programme to identify opportunities to promote students' personal development and relies on the input of individual teachers and what is included in the content of subject teaching.

34. All students with special educational needs receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum. When withdrawal of students from lessons takes place, it is based on a clear rationale that shows benefit to the students involved. Students with physical disabilities are able to access most areas of the buildings and by careful timetabling they are able to join in all lesson activities. Although continuing to be developed, the provision for students who are gifted or talented is generally very good. The learning experience for students for whom English is an additional language is good, and the college successfully monitors academic results by ethnicity to ensure all students achieve their full potential. Hearing impaired students follow all the subjects of the National Curriculum and their learning is steered by the use of targets within their education plans. All requirements of the code of practice are met and documentation and files show that parents are pleased with the curriculum and the progress that their children make.

35. The careers education and guidance programme is good. It is well constructed and is strongly supported by the Connexions staff, who offer careers advice. Most Year 10 students undertake two weeks of work experience. A number of outside speakers and agencies are used well to support and enhance students' learning.

36. The college benefits from its outstanding community links in many ways. 'Twilight' courses run in the college offer additional opportunities for students to gain new skills and qualifications in such areas as first aid, food hygiene and sign language. There is a very good programme of activities that students can take part in outside of normal college hours and many students participate in this successful and imaginative Extended School Initiative. There are many opportunities for students to gain extra help with their coursework and revision outside the college day. Latin lessons are provided after college through video conferencing technology. However, musical activities are limited and low numbers take part in instrumental lessons.

37. Resources available in subject areas are very good. The library is well-stocked but too small for the number of students. Accommodation is very good in many areas but there are weaknesses in design and technology, physical education, science and special educational needs. There is overcrowding in corridors and the foyer due to pressure of numbers on the existing dining facilities. The accommodation for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory; there is only one small room for student support and a small office for the use of the specialist staff.

38. There are, however, two issues with the curriculum that need attending to. Firstly, in the curriculum for citizenship there is a lack of detail in the planning of work so all aspects of the subject are not covered fully; providing insufficient guidance to teachers and adversely affecting students' achievement. Secondly, the previous report was critical of the time wasted during the meeting of tutors with their forms. This has not been resolved and the daily registration time remains unstructured and largely unproductive because teachers do not plan the time well and students do not treat the sessions seriously enough; regarding them as an opportunity to socialise.

Sixth form

The quality and range of learning opportunities in the sixth form is **very good**. The college offers a broad and very wide-ranging curriculum including specialist, general and vocational courses that provide very good opportunities for all students. Resources are very good.

Main strengths

- The college uses its status as a technology college to really enhance the opportunities offered to students by providing lots of opportunities to use computers.
- Students are able to choose from an unusually wide range of courses to meet their aspirations.

Commentary

39. The college provides a very wide range of courses, at different levels, that are suitable for the students in the sixth form and provide a good basis for continuing their education. In addition students are able to take the community sports leader award and Open University courses are available to gifted and talented students.

40. The curriculum is very well planned to allow students to follow a coherent programme of study. Prior to entry to the sixth form students are given a good level of information and guidance in the selection of their options. Nearly all students follow general studies courses and go on and take the AS level examination. The religious education programme has improved since the last inspection and now meets the requirements of the local syllabus. Sixth form students have good opportunities to pursue sporting activities and physical education provides the chance to coach, umpire and participate at college, local and county level. It also offers a good introduction to leisure pursuits outside college.

41. The college uses its specialist resources as a technology college to provide opportunities for students to use state-of-the-art computer technology in almost all subjects. Staffing, accommodation and resources are the same as those in the main college.

Care, guidance and support

Systems to ensure students' support, guidance and welfare are very effective and students are very well cared for during their time at college. The college monitors and supports them very well but, although year councils have been set up, and are effective, they do not provide enough opportunities to seek students' views about the work and development of the college.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good procedures to support students' personal and academic development and monitor their progress help to promote very good achievement.
- Expectations of mature behaviour and hard work are upheld consistently and contribute to students' achievements.
- Students receive very good guidance as they move through the college to enable them to make well-informed choices.
- Good pastoral systems are in place, but registration/tutor time is rarely used well.

Commentary

42. Students have extremely positive views about the college and the care, support and guidance they receive whilst there. They value the teaching, the range of extra curricular activities and the whole learning environment. The induction processes to the college and support for new students are very well structured and developed, so students are able to settle into college quickly. This level of care is continued with information readily available to help students make important decisions as they progress through the college. The well thought out pastoral system provided by form tutors, heads of year and the year offices provide a sense of stability and ensures that students have someone they can turn to if needed. The daily registration time is not used well as an opportunity to interact with students and provide a forum for discussion.

43. Specialist advice and additional support is provided through the highly effective learning mentors and counsellor. This helps those who may be having difficulties as well as contributing to the well-rounded development of students in the college. Procedures to monitor and support students' personal and academic development and progress are well developed. Individual targets are set in all subjects and shared with students. This contributes very well to the achievement of students by helping them to be aware of how they are doing and pinpoint what they need to do to improve.

44. The care, guidance and support given by the college to students with special educational needs is very good. Students feel safe and well supported within all aspects of college life and this stems from the firm commitment of the staff to include them. Students are aware of their needs and targets and what they need to do to meet them. The college makes very effective use of adult mentors in some departmental areas in order to support the students' coursework and ensure students behave in a mature way and work hard in lessons. The college makes very good use of external support staff and receives particularly good support from its educational psychologist. A full time nurse on the college staff looks after the needs of students with medical problems well.

45. Careers advice develops on what has been introduced in the high school and takes advantage of the good resources in the careers library and support from the Connexions team. This includes self-evaluation and one-to-one consultations with the careers officer and the Connexions advisers who are available to all, but particularly target students who may be uncertain about future pathways or may be leaving before the sixth form. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are securely in place and risk assessments regularly undertaken.

46. Parents spoke very positively about the college and feel it treats students fairly. Almost all students like the college. They value the education they receive feel they are taught well, expected to work hard and trusted to do things on their own. They generally feel they are well consulted and that some of their views are taken into consideration through the year council representatives with a number of issues being addressed following their interventions. However, not all students feel the college listens to them or acts upon their concerns.

Sixth form

The college continues to offer **very good** support and guidance for students' personal and academic development. Not enough is done to seek the views of students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students value the support and advice received as a result of the very good rapport established with their teachers.
- Students are involved in the interview process for all staff appointments.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to be involved in the decision-making processes of the college. Students feel that their views are rarely listened to.

Commentary

47. Students are happy at college and have very positive views about the sixth form. Very good attention is given to students' guidance. Students are helped and encouraged to work and study and teachers are supportive if they have a problem or encounter difficulties with their work. Students value the good rapport established with their teachers. They particularly enjoy being involved in the appointment process of all teaching staff.

48. The strong links between pastoral and careers education developed in the main college are continued into the sixth form. Good advice is given on careers, and on further or higher education. Regular one-to-one reviews take place between tutors and students. Students applying for university receive intensive help with their applications and all students who leave to take up work or for alternative courses have the chance to see a Connexions adviser before they make their final decisions.

49. Not all students feel they are given enough opportunities to get involved in influencing decisions about the college. They welcome the proposed establishment of a college council and feel it will give them a greater voice and involvement in the decision-making processes of the college. Inspectors agree that the views of students are not taken into account enough by the college.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and partner institutions are **very good**. The links forged with the local community are **outstanding** and one of the major strengths of the college. The college successfully promotes itself as a specialist Technology and Community College and offers an extensive range of courses, activities and support programmes for all age ranges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Community links are excellent and enhance learning through a huge range of activities for the very young to the aged.
- The links with local clubs, organisations and course providers are extensive.
- The early years provision through the nursery and childcare facilities is well used.
- The very good links with partner institutions help promote students' educational progress.
- Parents have very positive views about the college.
- The reports to parents provide a statement of progress but are not seen to be very helpful.

Commentary

50. The small number of parents who completed the inspection questionnaire and attended the parents' meeting, generally expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the college. They feel it provides a very good education for students and they find the staff very approachable. The parents' positive views about the college are reflected in the fact that they are eager for their children to attend and it is over-subscribed. The college seeks to keep parents fully updated about ongoing activities and events through regular newsletters and the web site. Appropriate documentation is provided to ensure parents are fully informed about key events. A small number of parents expressed some concerns about the quality and frequency of communication received. This may be due to a reliance on 'student post' with letters not necessarily reaching home and being passed on. Very important communications are always posted direct.

51. Good home/college links are maintained with the tutorial staff, and parents are contacted both when there are problems and if their child has done well. Parents are regularly advised about the progress of their child through consultation and review meetings, with progress reports circulated every half term. These reports provide a broad picture of the students' current situation and predicted grades. However, although they like the frequent updates, some parents and students feel the lack of detailed comments has lessened their value and these are not as helpful as previous reports.

52. The college works very well with the parents of students with special educational needs and disabilities. Parents are happy with the support which their children with special educational needs are receiving. The annual reviews of statements are comprehensive and thorough and well organised by the learning development department administrator. Parents are involved in setting and monitoring IEP targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures that parents can contact somebody at the college at any time and it is to her credit that most parents attend the annual review meetings for students with statements of special educational needs. There are very good links with the partner schools which ensure that the college identifies and supports students with special educational needs well, during the admission and induction process.

53. The well-established and very effective links with other schools and colleges ensure students progress through each stage of their education really well.

54. The excellent community provision developed over a number of years is one of the major strengths of the college. The range of programmes and activities is extensive and seeks to meet the needs of the community including parents and carers, minority ethnic groups, the disabled, support groups and the elderly. Senior staff have worked hard to obtain external funding and to increase the numerous courses and activities on offer to the very appreciative adult college community. The current Extended Schools Initiative is seeking to widen this participation further for the benefit of both local residents and the wider community. The college has forged very strong community links and developed numerous initiatives with a variety of organisations and has a very loyal following of adults who have been attending a number of courses for many years.

55. The on-site nursery and well-established childcare provision offer a valuable facility for staff at the college, course participants and the local community. Some of the current college students started their time at Beauchamp as infants in the attached day care centre. The innovative 'Spaceship' facility established within the college provides an excellent easily accessible introduction to computers for both parents and children and is extensively used by parent groups, playgroups and local schools.

Sixth form

The college continues to foster **very good** partnerships with parents and **excellent** links with the local community. Very good links with universities are firmly in place and facilitate students' smooth transition to higher education.

Main strengths

- Links with the community are outstanding.
- Very good links with parents are continued into the sixth form to keep them fully informed and involved in students' progress.
- Students benefit from the colleges strong links with universities and other local institutions.

Commentary

56. Parents are very happy with the sixth form provision for students, which continues to build on the very good achievement reached in year 11. They value the regularity of communication with staff and the fact that they are kept suitably informed if there are any problems or concerns. The frequent progress reports are well received, although some parents again feel that more detailed comments would be even more helpful.

57. There are well-established programmes of visits to and links with universities which help students identify and move to the next step in their career development. The very good links with local colleges and businesses are linked well with the content of vocational courses. The college provides a very good range of 'twilight' sessions to help support and broadens students' knowledge and experience.

58. A new partnership initiative with a local large supermarket is offering arrangements for the sharing of courses and facilities for the benefit of both their staff and the wider community. The partnership between the college and community is therefore having a direct impact on improving facilities, aiding students' learning and helping to raise their levels of achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** in the main college. Vision and ambition are now combined with increased discussion and taking of responsibility. Middle management is very effective. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The college transmits a strong message about raising standards, and the commitment expected from all who work in it.
- The new principal and the leadership group are creating a caring, listening atmosphere, balanced with a continuing ambition and willingness to try out the new.
- The quality of middle management such as heads of year and heads of subject is very good.
- The leadership and management of citizenship are unsatisfactory.
- Not enough attention is given to planning how citizenship, ICT, literacy and numeracy are taught, nor to checking their effectiveness.

Commentary

59. The very good leadership of the recently appointed principal has already had a significant impact in the college. The changes he has made to the college day have brought about a more calm yet purposeful atmosphere. His input to building plans has radically altered the next stage of development. Under his leadership senior staff are empowered to take on real authority and responsibility in a climate where new thinking is encouraged and initiative expected and valued. Staff at all levels appreciate the care and support they are given, the principal's encouragement of debate and new ideas, and the continuing emphasis on quality and improvement.

60. The leadership group is very effective in communicating the ideals of the college, and in managing most systems to check on effectiveness and progress. A weakness is in the use of examination data where differing systems result in some staff having difficulty picking out the main messages. The management style adopted by the leadership group is to intervene in areas where there is a cause for concern and not to meddle with areas that are working successfully. This approach has been effective, borne out by improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. However, the learning skills that cross subject boundaries, like ICT, literacy and numeracy and the introduction of the new citizenship course have not undergone the same rigorous evaluations to ensure standards are consistently high and being built upon in all departments and faculties.

61. The quality of leadership and management of year groups and subjects is particularly strong and is a key factor in the college's success. In almost all areas there is a consistency of approach and clarity of thinking, supported by good quality paperwork which is thorough but unfussy. How to improve teaching even further, and sharing ideas about what has worked especially well in lessons, are regular features on most departmental agendas. However, the lack of a coherent scheme of work and monitoring systems for citizenship means students experiences are not coordinated across the college.

62. The management of the specialist unit for students with hearing impairment is very good and includes good procedures for promoting teachers' awareness through annual training. As the specialist teacher's role does not include monitoring the effectiveness of such support, the training does not have a full impact on learning. As a result no one is absolutely clear as to how effectively teachers know, attend to and ensure that students with hearing impairment work towards their targets on a regular basis.

63. The college has been highly effective and imaginative in its use of new and trainee teachers, and advanced skills teachers. This has allowed teaching to remain in the hands of subject specialists. It has also stimulated many new ideas and, because of the requirement to observe and guide teachers, it has been central to the debate about what makes a good lesson and how students best learn. This has been particularly effective in departments that have had a high turnover but less of a feature where staff changes have been few.

64. Governors are very committed to their work and do a sound job. Their ability to shape the direction which the college is taking, and check on and influence its work has improved. Governors gained from the process of deciding what qualities they were looking for in a new principal. This enabled them to analyse where the college's strengths and weaknesses lay, and what style and qualities were needed to take an already successful institution forward. They are now better informed about the college and are in a sound position to support it by more closely questioning managers about standards and the success of developments. Committees work effectively. Briefings by staff and a programme of visits enable governors to put their knowledge of the college into a practical context. The governing body did not diligently address the minor issues from the last report but they do now meet their legal obligations, with the exception of providing a daily act of collective worship.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	6,457,077
Total expenditure	5,306,452
Expenditure per student	2692

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	204,592
Balance carried forward to the next	1,150,625

65. Financial management is very good. Governors play a full part in setting and monitoring the budget. Financial controls within the college are secure and there is an appropriate separation of financial responsibilities. Systems to track orders, deliveries and invoices are very good. There is a close link between finance and the new strategic college plan which includes appropriate use of the very large budget surplus for additional sports facilities and the refurbishment of other areas of the college. The additional income generated from the excellent community links and significant use of the buildings for various activities is used very effectively to improve the facilities for the benefit of the college and the students. In financial affairs the college always seeks to provide value for money through adhering well to the principles of best value.

Sixth form

The sixth form benefits from **good** leadership. It is very well managed. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite its size, the sixth form provides a very good education for a wide range of students as a result of the very effective management.
- Leadership is good and has made a significant contribution to raised standards.
- Not enough has been done to encourage the social integration of all groups represented within the sixth form.

Commentary

66. Leadership of the sixth form is good and is characterised by effective teamwork coupled with a commitment to build on success and improve further. There is a clear vision for the future based on a desire to continuously raise standards. The pattern of rotating all vice principals across all year groups in the college has now ended. This has provided the opportunity for a more detailed plan to be prepared to steer future developments. The plan is in its early stages so has not yet had full effect. The Year 11 students who continue their education at Beauchamp and the hundred plus students from elsewhere who join Year 12 each year are well integrated. The college accepts some students who would be dissuaded from joining other sixth forms and entry requirements to many courses are lower than those often found.

67. The sixth form is very well managed on a day-to-day basis so that despite its vast size, it is harmonious and successful. This has led to very good achievement and good progress since the last inspection. The range of courses on offer is vast, and the curriculum is very well organised such that almost all students are able to take their preferred combination of subjects. Leadership and management at middle management level is generally very good, in many subjects it is excellent. As a result of this high quality management standards across subjects and years have become more consistent and the proportion of higher grades achieved in examinations has increased.

68. The governors are doing a good job and have ensured that religious education is now provided for all students in Year 12, thus fulfilling the requirements of the local syllabus and addressing a criticism in the last report. Governors and managers have not yet successfully tackled the social segregation of students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds at lunchtime. Whilst this partly relates to students' cultural interests and causes no obvious problems, it is a concern to some students, and limits the cultural awareness and understanding of others.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGE 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of very good teaching by teachers who know their subject very well and plan very effectively.
- Students have a very sound grasp of their texts and are able to produce very good writing for a variety of purposes.
- The quality of leadership is excellent and this has led to very good progress since the last inspection.
- Some students do not take a real part in the learning process because some teachers mistake speed for pace and cram in too many activities.
- On occasion, some students do not concentrate well enough because they are not fully involved and teachers behavioural management is not strong enough.

Commentary

Examination results

69. Results in the 2002 examinations in both English and English Literature were well above the national average and continue a rising trend. Although the attainment of boys is very good and also above the national average, girls continue to perform better than boys.

Standards and achievement

70. Students generally have very good language skills and are able to express themselves both orally and in writing. Students have high levels of understanding of a range of texts such as 'Othello' and 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'. They are able to support their view of characters by reference to the text and they can also comment on a writer's ability to create tension. Reading is clearly perceived as a main focus and most students are confident about reading aloud in class. The standard of written work is also above average. Standards have been improved by the introduction of extra activities and classes focussing on particular groups. Mentoring sessions have been introduced to help boys achieve higher grades; there are also special examination workshops for gifted and talented students.

Teaching and learning

71. Students benefit from knowledgeable teachers who plan very carefully. The pace of lessons is brisk and generally holds the attention of most, although on occasion lessons can be rushed. Most group work is very carefully organised and the best lessons have very good teacher-generated worksheets and activities that match the students' needs well. In the best sessions students show interest in their work, they are able to concentrate all the time and can think and learn for

themselves. In a minority of lessons, some students drift off task or resort to calling out in a random way. Students are given a diet of interesting and challenging activities. Their attitudes to the subject are very good and they enjoy sharing their work with others in very good work displays. Teachers share the aims of the lessons very well. They give praise and encouragement and most lessons are marked by very good relationships. Students respond by working really hard. Teachers are particularly well informed about the requirements of the examination courses they teach and marking and assessment systems are very good.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership, with its vision and direction, is excellent. Standards since the last inspection have improved significantly because of the very good management. There is very good analysis of results in the faculty review and regular team meetings focusing on teaching and learning have recently been introduced.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. Standards of speaking, reading and writing are very good throughout the college. In most subjects specialist vocabulary is used with understanding but there is no consistent approach to the emphasis and display of key words. Individual teachers include aspects of literacy in their work and good use is made of annotation in design and technology. Students are articulate and there are examples of effective teaching of speaking and listening skills in many subject areas. However, there is no coordination of literacy throughout the college and no whole college policy. Attention to literacy and awareness of its use in subjects is patchy and depends to a large extent on staff good will. Overall, literacy has not been developed enough within all subjects throughout the college.

Modern languages

Provision in modern languages is **good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Leadership is highly effective and is committed to developing new ideas of high quality.
- Some middle and lower attaining students do not work as well as they should in small groups.

Commentary

Examination results

74. Results in 2002 were well above average. Girls performed much better than boys. Results for French in 2003 are subject to appeals for a large proportion of the students entered.

Standards and achievement

75. Students achieve well and overall attain standards well above average in French and German. Higher-attaining students achieve very well. They are quick to absorb new vocabulary and structures, remember them well and apply their knowledge accurately when working in pairs. A number of middle and lower-attaining students, usually boys, are less self-reliant and this holds them back in class. The quality of teachers' support, especially in coursework, helps to compensate and enables these students to achieve at least satisfactorily.

Teaching and learning

76. Teachers have high expectations of linguistic performance and speak in the focus language throughout the lessons. Lessons are well planned, materials are creative and activities are sequenced to provide students with lots of opportunities to work with increasing confidence in all the skills. Students are praised for their efforts and one-to-one monitoring helps them improve and motivates them. Teachers use digital projection equipment really well to capture students' interest and give students the opportunity not only to see the quality of their answers being assessed instantly on screen but also to consolidate their learning. Overall, students have good attitudes towards their work. Some students, however, are casual in their approach, are not targeted sufficiently in teacher questioning and while not disruptive, do not work hard enough when in pairs. Booster classes and small group sessions provide good opportunities for students of all levels. Homework is regular, but day-to-day marking is not sufficiently tied to GCSE criteria to be of real benefit to all students.

Leadership and management

77. The department has been successful in maintaining high standards despite major changes in personnel. The staff team work well together underpinned by a firm commitment to professional development. Managers are creative and successful in devising new ideas to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of their very hard work and the consistently good teaching.
- The teachers' expertise and experience contribute substantially to the high standards.
- Students are successfully prepared so they achieve well in examinations.
- Teaching lacks variety and does not make enough use of discussion and exploration.

Commentary

Examination results

78. Examination results were well above the national average in 2002, and have continued the rising trend in 2003. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades A and A* was twice the national average and only small numbers of students achieved low grades. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

79. Students become very skilled at applying the standard techniques that they have been taught. They successfully answer questions in all areas of number, algebra, geometry and statistics, having had regular practice during the course. Students have very positive attitudes. They work very hard during lessons and, for example, produce extensive pieces of coursework. Students effectively learn how to manipulate algebra, draw graphs and handle percentage calculations. Both lower and higher attaining students achieve well, because teachers match the work to their needs.

Teaching and learning

80. The teachers are well qualified and effectively use their good knowledge of both mathematics and examination requirements to ensure students achieve well. The expectations of all students are very high. Teaching typically involves the effective explanation of ideas and techniques at the board and then individual practice exercises, often using worksheets drawn from an extensive bank of material. Students learn at a brisk pace and homework is used well. Behaviour management is good, and teachers relate well with the students. Examination success is supported by the well-organised use of topic tests, which are marked carefully so the students know how well they are doing.

81. However, there is little variety in the ways students learn mathematics. In particular there is little discussion between students or exploration of methods and ideas, in order to develop understanding and confidence. Although systematic records keep track of the progress of individual students, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback. The literacy skills of students are little used or developed within mathematics. Despite some very good resources, the use of ICT is patchy and not well enough coordinated. Students with special educational needs generally make progress in the same way as their classmates but teachers do not always give sufficient attention to individual learning targets.

Leadership and management

82. The strong team of teachers is well led with an effective focus on maintaining and raising examination performance. This is soundly supported by analysis of results. Courses and resources are well organised, and the faculty benefits from a technician. Noteworthy features include the developing expertise with interactive whiteboards, the involvement of students in national competitions and the interesting faculty website. However, leadership is not sufficiently focused on how to improve further the quality of teaching and learning. Whilst importantly the examination results have improved since the last inspection, all the points made in the last report about teaching, marking and monitoring have yet to be properly tackled.

Mathematics across the curriculum

83. Students generally have very good numeracy skills and so they are able to apply these well in other subjects. For example, students can competently calculate, use algebra, and draw and interpret graphs in order to support their learning in science. Students accurately measure and carry out surveys in subjects such as geography or design and technology. However the use and development of mathematical skills across subjects is little planned or coordinated. The college recognises that numeracy is an area needing improvement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve really well because of the very good, and sometimes excellent, teaching they receive.
- Very strong leadership and management which has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection.
- Very good assessment systems ensure that student performance is tracked so that any underperformance can be noted and tackled.
- Relationships are very good in the majority of lessons so students work very hard.
- There is a variation in teaching of the science curriculum with strengths in chemistry and biology and weaknesses in physics.

Commentary

Examination results

84. Results in the 2002 examinations were well above average and were similar in 2003. These standards have been steady for several years but the percentage of students achieving higher grades has increased since the last inspection and is well above national figures. Boys and girls perform similarly.

Standards and achievement

85. Students literacy and numeracy skills allow them to cope well with the science curriculum. They write and balance chemical equations, construct and interpret graphs and do simple calculations. They recall facts and higher attaining students explain scientific ideas well, both orally and in writing. Lower-attaining students are given activities to help them record their work and they respond well to these. Students with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants and make the same progress as their classmates. Students enjoy working hard and achieve very well during their time in college.

Teaching and Learning

86. In the majority of lessons, teachers share clear learning objectives so that students know what is expected of them. They use their very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of stimulating activities, often using interactive whiteboards to present high quality information clearly to the class. Students respond well and learn with excitement and interest. Relationships enhance students' learning as interactions are open and supportive, giving students the confidence to risk making mistakes. Teachers present science with clarity, energy, and enthusiasm which brushes off on the students. In the minority of less successful lessons, learning objectives were less clear and too easy. Teachers had not planned an appropriate range of activities and often used far too many work sheets. In one lesson the ICT equipment did not work as well as intended and the lesson became mundane, students became bored and misbehaviour of some boys soon followed.

87. Laboratories are well equipped with interactive whiteboards and laptops for teacher and student use. Dataloggers and logic gates are also used well to aid learning by extending the experience of students. Students show that they have a good command of word processing skills and can use spreadsheets well. Student come to lessons prepared to learn though for some the 100 minute lesson is very long. Limited laboratory space and the equivalent of three technicians to service the department constrains what teachers can do in their lessons. The whole team works very hard to ensure that this does not directly affect standards.

Leadership and Management

88. The leaders in the department are very good role models. An extensive data base of students' performance is kept and analysed so that underperformance can be identified and tackled. Teaching and learning is a regular feature at departmental meetings so that the department can drive up standards. The monitoring of teachers' performance needs further development in order to remove inconsistencies and improve the contribution of physics. Although the department promotes literacy and other study skills, higher level skills such as research and extended writing are not encouraged enough in lessons or identified clearly within the schemes of work. Despite staffing difficulties, standards have improved, teaching remains very good, opportunities for higher-attaining students to take three sciences have been developed, assessment is strong and ICT is planned and used really well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are continuing to rise because of well planned lessons, very good leadership and a strong focus on examination requirements.
- Students learn and achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- There are far more computers throughout the college than normally found.
- The use of computers in other subjects is not monitored enough.

Commentary

Examination results

89. Results in 2002 were in line with the national average and in 2003 they improved considerably. Girls did better than boys.

Standards and achievement

90. Those who follow the GCSE course begin with a wide range of previous experience of computers but standards are generally below average as they start the course. Standards seen during the inspection were above average and students' achievement, as a result of the course, is very good. Only around a third of each year group takes an ICT option for GCSE and provision for the majority of students is successfully taught through other subjects. All students get lots of opportunities to use computers in the subjects they study. The achievement of students who do not study the GCSE course is not monitored rigorously.

Teaching and learning

91. Students on the GCSE course learn very well because a team of well qualified subject specialists deliver lessons in which students make very good progress. Teaching seen was never less than very good and was sometimes excellent. The department instils very good routines so that screens are turned off and students turn to the front to receive whole class teaching without distraction. Teachers give very good one-to-one support which maintains students' interest and motivation. Teachers use digital projection equipment to feed the students bite size chunks of information to get them swiftly onto each task. Lessons have a brisk pace because teachers expect their students to work very hard and behave well. Relationships are very good and on occasions excellent. The clear focus on examination requirements throughout the department reflects the fact that some staff are themselves examiners and this contributes to the very good teaching and learning and examination results. There was not enough evidence of the teaching of ICT within other subjects to make a judgement on the overall quality. However it was clear that students use computers regularly in the vast majority of lessons.

Leadership and management

92. The leadership and management of the ICT department are very good. Staff are deployed very well and mentoring of graduate and newly qualified teachers is very effective and has resulted in very good and sometimes excellent teaching from less experienced teachers. The management of ICT across the college is less successful. There is a clear philosophy for the model adopted and a large amount of staff training has taken place leading to confident use of ICT amongst the staff. The college's performance management systems are used to monitor staff competence and confidence in the use of ICT. However, monitoring of students' actual ICT competence is not rigorous enough. Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection largely due to the increased computer resources throughout the college and teachers improved confidence in using them.

ICT across the curriculum

93. The use of ICT is very good throughout the college. ICT is embedded in the schemes of work of all subjects and examples were seen of very good use in several subjects during the inspection. For example in a Year 10 French lesson, ICT was used to support a native speaker of the language who needed help with spelling, and in Science ICT was used to produce an animation of the operation of a blast furnace. There is very good use in technology, where a technician and a learning mentor offer after school support for students who are "computer shy". The college's internal network and website are very good examples of ways to support learning and many subjects have placed resources on these systems that help students to achieve well in their subjects. The use of video conferencing in Latin lessons provides a good example of using technology to broaden the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average because of good teaching.
- Students' achieve and learn well because teaching is effective.
- Leadership of the subject is good, ensuring that students are successful.
- The assessment of students' work is not consistent throughout the department.

Commentary

Examination results

94. Examination results were well above average in 2002 with a high proportion gaining the highest grades. In 2003 results were similar.

Standards and achievement

95. The good standards attained in external examinations are mirrored in students' written work and in their knowledge of the examination requirements. Students give great attention to detail in their work which expands their knowledge and raises standards. Students make rapid progress throughout Years 10 and 11 and achieve well overall. At all levels students improve their skills and increase their store of knowledge, often above that predicted.

Teaching and learning

96. Students learn well because of the good teaching they receive. The best lessons are well planned, the pace is brisk and time is well-managed. Teachers vary the content of lessons to motivate and interest students. Students are encouraged to take an active part in lessons through the imaginative use of case studies and other simulation material, working well together to solve problems, address environmental issues and extend their knowledge and skills. Very effective use is made of videotape presentations and computers. Learning is enhanced as students respond to, and ask searching questions, taking full advantage of the knowledge and experience of teachers. Interest and motivation are generated by good quality displays in geography rooms and adjacent corridors and learning benefits from a wide range of good quality resources. Most teachers mark work well so students know how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership of the subject ensures that students are successful by focusing clearly on examination requirements in detailed schemes of work. There is a clear vision for improvement based on a desire to drive up standards even further. However, the assessment of students' work is not consistent across the whole department. Schemes of work do not clearly indicate opportunities to contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, literacy and numeracy and to education for citizenship. Since the last inspection the department has focused on involving students more in their own learning but attention to the individual needs of students have still to be fully attended to.

History

Provision in History is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- Students attain very high standards and achieve very well because teaching is imaginative, challenging and very well resourced.
- The quality of leadership and management are very good and provide a clear vision and strong structures for the teaching of the subject.
- The frequent use of computers provides a particularly flexible resource for students' independent learning and meeting individual needs.
- Relationships between staff and students are friendly and relaxed and promote high expectation and achievement, so that students enjoy working really hard.

Commentary

Examination results

98. Results were well above average in 2002, but dipped a little in 2003. Boys performed significantly better than boys nationally, being only slightly below girls' performance.

Standards and Achievement

99. Students have a really good grasp of the course requirements and demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of many areas of historical knowledge. Achievement is very good because students enter the course with high potential, but a variable range of historical knowledge, and soon make rapid progress because of the very good teaching. Over two thirds make or exceed their target grade by end of Year 11.

Teaching and learning

100. Students learn very well and progress actively and independently. This is because teachers plan thoroughly and provide a wide range of interesting and often highly practical tasks, so that all students work hard. Teachers and students work very well together, so attitudes to the subject are very positive and the pace of learning is always brisk. Students can concentrate for long periods. Teachers are particularly well informed about the requirements of the courses they teach, and they reinforce this very well in lessons. Marking and assessment are very good.

Leadership and management

101. The department is very well managed and is led with very clear vision and direction. The head of department has a cooperative and collaborative style, which has resulted in a creative, committed and rigorous response to points raised in the last inspection. As a result very good progress has been made, and standards have improved. A number of new initiatives have recently been put into place, which have yet to achieve full impact, for example the storage and use of online assessment data and the more explicit teaching of citizenship. It is a department that is committed to improving and raising standards but not enough is done to evaluate the impact of new teaching initiatives and to use national assessment data to plan for future improvement.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of very effective teaching.
- All students follow the full GCSE course as part of their core curriculum and this makes a very good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Question sessions do not always involve enough students.
- The formal monitoring of teaching in relation to student learning is not focused enough.

Commentary

Examination results

102. GCSE results were above average in 2002. Girls and boys achieved similarly. In 2003 the results improved further, maintaining the upward trend.

Standards and achievement

103. All students study the full GCSE examination course in Years 10 and 11. They achieve better than expected standards because of the very good specialist teaching. The opportunity to study a major world religion of their choice motivates students to work extremely hard. Students develop very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through considering relevant contemporary issues and aspects of world religions. They can show how religious beliefs influence rituals and behaviour and how these may vary with different faiths.

Teaching and learning

104. Students are achieving very well because the team of specialist teachers prepare their lessons very thoroughly and use a variety of learning activities. They present material in an interesting way and involve students in paired and group activities allowing them to try out ideas before writing. Teachers know the potential of their students and set challenging tasks and work tirelessly to ensure that these are met. Assessment identifies how well students are doing and enables action to be taken to ensure knowledge is learned and can be applied before a new topic is started. Students know the standard they have reached and how they can improve their work. They are prepared very well for the examinations and use writing frames to help them answer trial questions. All students make very good progress because the work is matched to their needs. Those who need it receive extra help and high attainers are stretched well in lessons. In some lessons teachers try to get all students to take part in question and answer sessions but this is not always successful because small numbers of students do not contribute.

Leadership and management

105. The department work as a team ensuring a common approach and the sharing of ideas. There is a clear vision and direction and a relentless drive to raise standards even higher for the full year group now taking the subject to examination level. Although there are systems to formally monitor teaching they do not focus enough on all aspects of students learning. Since the last inspection standards have risen and achievement improved through better use of assessment procedures.

TECHNOLOGY

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain very good standards and achieve very well because of very effective teaching.
- Standards are consistently very high in food and textiles technology.
- Leadership and management encourage effective team work and has resulted in good progress since the last inspection.
- Some wasted time in long lessons because single tasks are too long.
- Opportunities for literacy, numeracy, ICT and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not clearly identified in planning.
- Students working in practical rooms are not adequately supervised at all times because of the room layout.

Commentary

Examination results

106. GCSE results in 2002 were well above average. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Students maintained very high standards in food and textiles. In 2003, results were very similar.

Standards and achievement

107. All students, including those who have special needs, achieve very well because work is very well structured and they use their designing and making skills really well. Students use well developed research and analytical skills to turn ideas into highly creative individual pieces of work. They have very good recording and presentation skills and the work of higher-attaining students is often outstanding. Effective use is made of computer technology in presenting coursework and in manufacturing products. All students show confidence and competence in using a range of materials and processes as they produce their final projects.

Teaching and learning

108. Students benefit from very knowledgeable teachers. Coursework is highly structured and well planned because teachers are very well informed about examination requirements. However, in some lessons, time is wasted because teachers do not always set short brisk tasks and marking criteria is not clear enough. Students are cooperative and show interest in the work given. Most show good levels of concentration, particularly when involved in practical work. Many put a lot of effort into presenting their coursework to a high standard and homework is used very well to reinforce learning. Assessment procedures are generally thorough and help students to improve their work.

Leadership and management

109. Close cooperation within the teaching team enables the department to provide a well balanced curriculum and maintain high standards. Departmental documentation is not explicit enough about how literacy, numeracy, use of computers and aspects of spiritual, social, moral and cultural education could be a planned part of students' learning experiences. Classrooms are cramped and resources are barely satisfactory and do not reflect the college's technology college status. Students working in workshops can not be supervised at all times because of the outdated layout of the area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Provision in art is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well and examination results have significantly improved because of the very good teaching.
- Very good leadership and management has produced detailed course planning, excellent assessment strategies and on-going development of ICT.
- Student standards of creative experimentation and their ability to discuss their own and others' art work are weaker than other aspects of their work.
- Not enough use is made of Year 9 art assessments to plan work for Year 10.

Commentary

Examination results

110. Results in 2002 were well above average. All students gained an A*-C grade although fewer students than nationally attained the highest A* grades. In 2003 results improved even further.

Standards and achievement

111. Skills of research and problem solving, underpinned by above average standards of literacy, enable students to progress at a fast rate. They confidently carry out research tasks using books and computers, record their ideas and annotate their work to a good standard. The quality and depth of students' oral contributions are not so well developed and practised and standards are generally lower. Examination requirements are made very clear from the outset and this helps students to understand how they will be assessed and to apply this when they work in lessons and at home. However some are less confident and accomplished at pushing out the boundaries, exploring and experimenting with different media alongside, or in conjunction with, more traditional ways of working. Overall, students have very positive attitudes and work very hard ensuring they achieve very well.

Teaching and learning

112. Teachers have a very secure understanding of the subject and course requirements. Lessons are very well planned and organised and expectations, about effort and work rate, very clear. Visits to places of interest and national and international exhibitions enrich students' experiences and their understanding of how social and cultural influences have shaped the arts, craft and design. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, the teacher's explanation helped them recognise the differences and similarities in Dutch painting prior to and after the invention of the camera. However, students are often passive and rarely show curiosity. Teachers do not create enough opportunities for students to explore ideas and to intellectually challenge, and be challenged.

Leadership and management

113. The course planning, assessment strategies and record keeping are high quality. There is a good understanding of the strengths and where there is scope for improvement, notably to improve access to ICT, create better links with the high schools and use Year 9 assessments to inform planning at the start of Year 10. Very effective team-work has helped raise standards since the last inspection.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently well above average.
- Students achieve very well because of skilled and stimulating teaching.
- Students' group skills and ability to work independently are outstanding.
- Very good leadership encourages initiative and originality.
- Boys and girls usually work in single sex groups; boys' practical work tends to be less imaginative.

Commentary

Examination results

114. Results in 2002 were well above average with a higher than average proportion of the very highest grades. In 2003 they were similar.

Standards and achievement

115. Students join the college with overall average standards. They come with a wide range of previous drama experiences. Their achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good. They become confident and thoughtful performers, making very good use of planning time. Some show very accomplished acting skills. The majority of students understand drama conventions and show this in how they stage performances. When planning and rehearsing students share ideas unusually well, supporting and directing each other with insight and sensitivity. The minority of boys tends to work together. Their focus is often on action and climax rather than on atmosphere and characterisation.

Teaching and learning

116. There is an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and cooperation throughout the department. This encourages very good learning in which students accept that being given the opportunity to explore their own ideas and interpretations requires maturity and self-discipline. The ability to work well together in groups is outstanding, as is students' willingness to take responsibility. As a result they can work for extended periods without constant supervision so that teachers can give concentrated guidance where it is most needed. Lessons are very well planned to provide stimulating ideas from which students can work. Teachers have the expert subject knowledge to give detailed advice on the skills and techniques which can help students make the best of their performances. Much thought provoking work of the highest quality is achieved. A relative weakness is in planning alternative methods for those students, mainly boys, who have less interest in exploring alternative ideas and interpretations because they want to rush straight into performance.

Leadership and management

117. The department is very well led such that teachers and students alike feel a responsibility to it, and to each other. Within this atmosphere all feel able to test out new ideas and approaches, and to seek the views of others knowing that these will be honestly yet fairly given. Accommodation is very good and excellent use of it allows very effective group rehearsal work to take place. Students' drama opportunities are enriched by drama clubs, theatre visits and annual college productions. There has been good progress since the previous inspection. The quality of leadership has enabled high standards to be sustained with an increasingly wide range of student abilities and needs.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- Student standards in performance and composition are particularly high.
- Very good management provides a secure framework for high achievement.
- Very low numbers of students are involved in extra-curricular music groups and instrumental lessons.

Commentary

Examination results

118. In general, GCSE music results have been consistently well above average in recent years. In 2002 results were well above average with most candidates gaining A* and A grades. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

119. All students achieve very well. They have lots of opportunities to use computers for performance and composition. By the end of Year 11 they are fluent in the use of computers for music and their compositions display interesting use of computer-generated sounds. Some students' compositions reveal 'individual voices' with levels of originality not often found at this stage. Standards in musical performance are also really high. Listening and appraising skills are weaker but students develop a musical vocabulary with which to describe well the music they hear.

Teaching and learning

120. Students benefit from knowledgeable and committed teaching. Previous attainment is successfully built on. Teaching supports special needs students and involves them in all activities. Care is taken to relate tasks to previous learning; lessons often have a range of musical tasks and a brisk pace. This helps to consolidate student learning and maintain their interest. Teaching embodies strong preparation, a wide range of teaching styles, interesting work, and very good organisation. Homework is used well to reinforce learning.

121. The provision for instrumental teaching is good. There are approximately 85 students receiving instrumental lessons each week which is very low in relation to the size of the college. The visiting instrumental teachers make a very strong contribution to the curriculum and their work is carefully managed and well integrated into the work of the department.

Leadership and management

122. Administration within music has strong organisation; there is an administrative support assistant and she helps to ensure that the department runs very smoothly. Some curriculum aspects, for example consideration of literacy and numeracy, and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, are not yet fully in place within schemes of work or lessons. Teachers often promote literacy by emphasising key terms in lessons but, as yet, this has not had a significant impact on improving student listening and appraising skills. The long-term monitoring, assessing and recording of students' work are good. There is informal analysis of attainment across the range of skills taught in music lessons. However, the department does not formally analyse examination components to identify precisely relative strengths and weaknesses. Nor does it record successes in grade examinations as part of its examination statistics.

123. Extra-curricular opportunities are good but not enough students take part. Such opportunities for performance have a strong impact on the cultural and social development of those students who take part.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in Physical Education is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching has resulted in high standards and very good achievement.
- Excellent leadership and management has ensured very good progress since the last inspection.
- Students really enjoy the subject and are very keen to learn.
- The department development plan is not monitored and evaluated enough.

Commentary

Examination results

124. Results in 2002 were above the national average and girls did better than boys. In 2003, results improved.

Standards and achievement

125. Compulsory and GCSE lessons were inspected. In the core curriculum, students' understanding and skills are well above average. In GCSE lessons, standards are also well above average in all aspects of the course and reflect the increased examination results. Overall students are doing much better than expected in relation to their levels on entry to the college. Passing and dribbling skills in hockey are well developed. In badminton, they know how to serve correctly and can use short and long-range shots effectively. They work well in small groups such as that seen in a dance lesson where students worked together to produce a dance routine. The skills they learn are applied effectively to competitive situations. There are teams in all the main team sports with strong representation at county level.

Teaching and learning

126. Teachers show good subject knowledge and demonstrations are usually of high quality. Warm-up and competitive games are linked effectively to the skills taught. Lessons are well planned although the setting of objectives at the beginning of a lesson is not always sufficiently clear. In examination classes, key words are not emphasised or recorded enough. Students enjoy sports and are keen to learn showing excellent attitudes. Teachers match work well to the needs of the students. Students are aware of how well they are doing through the use of individual record cards and they use data to assess their own performance.

Leadership and management

127. The head of department is an excellent role model for students and members of staff and has a clear vision of how the department should move forward. Schemes of work are detailed and the development plan has clear targets for improvement and how they should be achieved. Progress towards achieving the targets is not evaluated enough. The work of the department is reviewed in detail each year. Since the last inspection standards have risen, students achieve better and resources have improved. There is still not enough space for indoor activities and there is no performance area for dance. Plans are in hand to deal with this through the building of a new sports hall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 11
Standards	Not enough evidence
Achievement	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Not enough evidence

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management have been ineffective. As a result, the subject is still at a very early stage of development.
- Monitoring procedures lack sufficient rigour to secure students' progression and the reliable assessment of their work so they do not achieve as well as they should.
- The scheme of work fails to plan for progression and full coverage of the course; curriculum provision is undeveloped.
- Active involvement in many aspects of citizenship is embedded within the ethos of the college.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

128. Students' awareness of citizenship is low and their understanding of the subject is generally superficial. When asked, they equate it with good behaviour or making contributions in lessons. They do not have the in-depth knowledge of many aspects of the course requirements. For example, during discussions with Year 11 students it was clear that they had a low level understanding of law making, the criminal and civil justice systems and knowledge of government and how the economy functions. Their skills of enquiry, whilst keen, were lacking in many areas. There is no College Council and so opportunities for involving students in learning about active decision-making, and in so doing capitalise on the very good ethos of the college, are not taken up as well as they could be. There are year committees but they have had little impact in this area. Many students are involved with the charity, debating and residential experiences that form part of normal college life. They get opportunities to develop skills of participation and responsible action through the high quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural activities of the college but this is not enough to fulfil the key requirements of the citizenship course.

Teaching and learning

129. The college does not have a formal regular programme of personal and social education, consequently avenues for students to acquire knowledge and understanding and develop citizenship skills are lacking and the extended tutor time is insufficient for that purpose. There is no evidence in the work seen or in discussion with students that their work is separately assessed to recognise their achievement. Teaching and learning are not monitored. Students are insufficiently aware of their responsibility for maintaining a file for citizenship and the progress sheet, newly introduced for Year 10 students, is too vague and superficial to serve as a reliable basis for tutors to report on students' achievement.

Leadership and management

130. There is evidence that the college provides some opportunities for active citizenship but there has been a lack of urgency shown in introducing citizenship into the curriculum of the college. The new co-ordinator, in post since September, has put in place some initiatives to tackle the situation. As yet they have had little impact. A second audit was being collated during the week of the inspection. Individual departments are responsible for delivering the curriculum but this is not monitored and the quality is variable. While some core subjects, such as religious studies and English, deal with topics which include elements of citizenship, they do not plan in any organised way for progression.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	19	95	90	53	43	41	39
Biology	20	90	82	25	33	32	33
Business studies	18	83	98	6	32	24	35
Chemistry	16	44	85	13	37	16	35
Communication Studies	17	82	94	24	36	32	38
Design and Technology	8	38	89	25	32	15	36
Drama	6	100	95	50	38	45	39
English / English Language	6	100	92	33	30	40	36
English Literature	7	100	94	57	38	46	39
French	9	78	85	11	35	26	35
General studies	76	97	79	45	26	42	30
Geography	9	44	88	0	36	14	36
History	5	80	92	40	37	34	38
Information Technology	35	77	78	9	21	25	28
Mathematics	21	76	74	19	34	25	31
Music	6	33	94	0	39	8	39
Other Sciences	5	80	83	40	32	36	33
Other social studies	47	66	83	40	33	37	34
Physics	9	89	82	22	36	37	34
Sociology	10	50	84	20	34	21	34
Sports / PE Studies	10	100	88	10	28	28	34
Vocational Studies	5	100	68	0	22	28	26

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	70	96	96	44	49	81	85
Biology	91	97	92	54	36	85	74
Business studies	50	100	96	14	33	66	77
Business studies VCE	14	86	87	21	17	58	60
Chemistry	54	100	94	54	46	86	81
Communication Studies	36	100	98	36	37	84	81
Design and technology	13	100	95	15	36	71	77
Drama	26	100	98	38	42	87	83
Economics	27	96	96	56	46	86	83
English language	35	97	98	37	37	86	80
English literature	61	98	98	36	44	80	84
French	12	100	96	75	46	100	83
General studies	56	88	90	11	29	57	69
Geography	39	97	97	46	41	86	81
German	6	100	96	83	44	97	82
History	45	96	97	51	41	84	81
Information Technology	104	92	90	14	22	59	64
Information Technology VQ	43	91	84	19	25	69	64
Mathematics	98	95	93	57	52	88	85
Music	8	88	98	25	42	68	82
Other Sciences	12	100	95	16	39	93	79
Other social studies	105	91	94	26	39	67	78
Physics	38	92	93	37	43	77	79
Sociology	36	100	95	64	40	92	79
Sports / PE studies	32	94	95	34	30	73	73
Health and social care VCE	19	87	90	5	16	63	63
Vocational studies VCE	15	73	85	20	24	50	61
Travel and tourism VCE	16	63	88	0	16	31	61

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
GNVQ Intermediate							
Art and Design	1	100	88	-	31	-	-
Business	7	100	75	43	19	-	-
Health and Social Care	6	83	77	33	19	-	-
Information Technology	9	100	78	89	27	-	-
Leisure and Tourism	6	17	64	-	16	-	-

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus for the inspection in this curriculum area was English literature and French. Lessons were observed in English language and German.

In the very effective A level English language lesson seen, students achieved very well. They confidently presented analyses of how children acquire language skills and used PowerPoint presentations to very good effect. Skilled questioning from the teacher enabled them to link examples to correct terminology and theory. One A Level German lesson was seen. It was satisfactory. Whilst teaching was challenging, students were not given sufficient support to fully comprehend the audio cassette they were working from.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching by very knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff leading to very good student learning and achievement especially in written work.
- Excellent leadership and very good management has ensured very good progress since the last inspection.
- Some students tend to be passive in class discussion; although supported in other ways, they are not brought into discussion enough.
- A small number of lessons are too teacher led resulting in not enough opportunities for students to become actively involved.

Commentary

Examination results

131. Results at A level in 2002 in both English Literature and English Language, the more popular option, continue to be well above the national average. Although the college were disappointed with results in 2003, they were only slightly lower than 2002.

Standards and achievement

132. Nearly all students use spoken and written language with accuracy and imagination. They can structure an argument, for instance in response to a thesis on idealised character in 'The Merchant of Venice', and they show good mastery of specialist vocabulary, such as 'baroque', 'archaic' and 'neologism', used in the discussion of language. Most students can discuss the ways in which language, form and context can shape meaning. They can generally write accurately and clearly and their language skills are being honed. However, a small number of students are reluctant to take an active part in discussion and generally need more support and encouragement. Most literature students are able to analyse and evaluate texts in detail and present their finds cogently and coherently to a group. They can support their comments by close reference to the text.

Teaching and learning

133. Students learn really well because teachers are very knowledgeable about their subject and plan a very good range of activities. They expect students to work very hard. Students are stimulated by teachers' enthusiasm to enjoy the study of language and to develop appropriate critical skills and the investigative skills of independent research. Some of the independent coursework includes multi-cultural literary comparisons, for instance between the writing of Jane Austen and Quisra Shahraz. Marking and assessment are for the most part very good with college created assessment sheets that include space for teacher and student comment and target setting, but there is not a consistent approach to their use.

Leadership and management

134. The head of department has an extremely clear vision and fosters a strong team spirit. Evaluation of student achievement is thorough and very rigorous and standards from the last inspection remain well above average with notable increases in the highest grades.

French

The provision in French is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables students to acquire very good language skills.
- Students' very good attitudes ensure they are highly motivated and achieve very well.
- Very good opportunities to live and work in France assist students' cultural development and improve their oral skills.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to use ICT in lessons to improve their research and independent learning skills.

Commentary

Examination results

135. A Level results in 2002 were well above average. Results dipped in 2003 because students' attainment on entry to the course was lower.

Standards and achievement

136. Standards in Year 12 and 13 are well above average and students are achieving very well. The most advanced students speak and write fluently and confidently, using complex and sophisticated language to construct well-argued cases with few errors. Less advanced students have difficulty developing their ideas more fully because their grasp of grammar is less secure.

Teaching and learning

137. This is an enthusiastic, high performing department in which some excellent teaching was seen. The teachers' thorough knowledge of their students and high expectations are reflected in skilful lesson planning. They use a very good range of challenging activities testing all four language skills and maintain a very brisk pace while teaching wholly in French. As a result, the students' learning is accelerated, their interest is sustained, and they respond very confidently and competently to the excellent models of spoken language provided. Teachers use very good, sensitive and imaginative questioning and discussion techniques to build student confidence. Marking is rigorous, with very good use of praise. Very detailed, constructive feedback, together with the students' very positive attitudes, helps students improve their work. Although teachers' use of ICT in presenting lessons is excellent, students do not use ICT enough in lessons to develop their research and independent learning skills.

Leadership and management

138. Monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment is very effective and ensures consistently high standards across the department and has resulted in very good progress since the last inspection. Students' oral work benefits from time spent living and working in France. Newly qualified teachers are very well trained and supported.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students, from a wider than usual range of ability, achieve well because of their hard work and the good teaching.
- The teachers' expertise and experience contribute substantially to the good achievement.
- Mathematics is popular in the sixth form, with a flexible range of course opportunities.
- Students are not involved enough in class discussion about concepts and methods.

Commentary

Examination results

139. Results in mathematics at A Level were above the national average in 2002 and were similar in 2003. Although the numbers involved are smaller and have fluctuated, the standards achieved in further mathematics are particularly good, and the most-able mathematicians do particularly well. Gender differences are small, but the take-up and performance by girls are strong features in the faculty. The popularity of the subject and the good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Standards and achievement

140. Students learn and use techniques confidently and accurately. In the A Level courses the students have good algebraic skills and apply these well in other areas of mathematics. Students are methodical in working through solutions to standard problems. In mechanics for example they systematically tackle problems involving forces. In statistics they build up a good knowledge of how to use different distributions. Those students with a lower performance before starting A Level courses study hard and achieve well, gaining from the opportunities in the modular course. Achievement on the re-sit GCSE course is typical of such provision, which gives students the opportunity to improve their grade. The highest attaining A Level students, especially those studying further mathematics, make good progress and benefit considerably from the expertise of the teaching staff.

Teaching and learning

141. The teachers' knowledge and experience, coupled with high expectations, ensure students achieve well on the sixth form courses. In one very good lesson the students were challenged to apply differentiation techniques to find the maximum area enclosed by particular fencing. More usually the learning of A Level mathematics mainly involves listening to instruction at the board followed by individual practice. Although students respond to teachers' questions, they are little involved in class discussion. This means that students have less experience of finding alternative methods to solve problems, thinking mathematically or developing their study skills. However, teachers share their enjoyment of the subject and provide motivation. Students concentrate hard, make their own notes and complete their work diligently. Teachers prepare students carefully for module assessments and examinations, insisting on high standards of rigour and accuracy.

Leadership and management

142. The various courses, staffing and timetabling arrangements are well organised. The process of setting challenging but realistic targets for individual students is used well. Good leadership maintains high expectations, and sixth form mathematics provision is enhanced through series of lectures and other external opportunities, such as competitions.

SCIENCE

Biology and chemistry were the focus of the inspection but a lesson in physics was sampled. The A level physics lesson was satisfactory. Students were beginning to understand the concept of internal resistance. They gathered sufficient results to plot an appropriate graph, demonstrating average standards and satisfactory achievement.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- The quality of leadership and management is excellent and provides a clear vision for the subject.
- The very high quality support materials available through the intranet are helping students to achieve really well.
- There is not enough student involvement in class discussion in some lessons.

Commentary

Examination results

143. Results in the 2002 A Level examinations were well above average and, in the main, continue a rising trend. Girls performed better than boys did overall. 2003 results were similar.

Standards and achievement

144. Students have well developed ICT skills which they put to good effect in enhancing their understanding of biology. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students used images on pre-prepared PowerPoint slides to assemble a series of diagrams explaining the mechanism of stomatal opening and closing. Their technical vocabulary is well developed given the emphasis the department places on improving this through detailed schemes of work and supportive material on the college intranet. By the end of Year 13, most students are able to use effective research techniques to investigate biological problems related to the A Level syllabus.

Teaching and learning

145. Students clearly benefit from the high level of subject knowledge their teachers have. The pace of lessons is often brisk. A good range of activities captures the interest and involvement of students of all levels in the class. Students are actively engaged in a variety of interesting and challenging activities because teachers plan lessons very well. Students are not encouraged enough to be involved in class discussion in some lessons. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. Teachers are particularly well informed about the requirements of the courses they teach. A strong feature of all lessons is the way in which students show an interest in the activities, work cooperatively and concentrate for long periods.

Leadership and management

146. The department has very clear vision and direction and is managed excellently. Day-to-day management is of an exceptionally high standard. Very good assessment data is used extremely well by teachers to plan their work. There is a very clear commitment to raising standards and providing students with the best possible education. As a result of this high quality management good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards are higher and the quality of teaching is improved.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Not enough evidence

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning leading to very good achievement and above average attainment.
- Good monitoring of student performance and identification of underachievement so it can be tackled.
- Very good analysis of data leads to planning new schemes of work and strategies in areas of weakness.
- There are not enough opportunities for enrichment activities or for students to use ICT in experimental work to enhance learning.
- Shortage of accommodation and not enough technical support is hindering curriculum development.

Commentary

Examination results

147. Results in the 2002 A level examinations were above average. Boys did better than girls. Results in 2003 were similar.

Standards and achievement

148. Students with a wide range of abilities study chemistry in the sixth form and they achieve very well. Students in Year 13 concentrate hard to understand and apply ideas. They interpret infra-red spectra and mass spectrometer graphs to identify unknown compounds well. They work conscientiously and safely during practical sessions, carrying out small scale organic reactions and tests to identify the compounds they started with. Year 12 students have a good knowledge of organic compounds, drawing displayed and structural formulae and identifying the reactions of the halogenoalkanes well.

Teaching and Learning

149. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan and teach lessons with clear objectives. They identify the logical sequence of ideas well, to make them accessible to students. Homework is set so that students can extend their understanding and develop their study skills. Relationships are supportive and collaborative so that students can discuss their work and further their understanding. The best lessons are challenging and stimulating. Teachers use well-prepared PowerPoint presentations to help students' access difficult ideas or to liven up otherwise dry material. They transmit their own enthusiasm for chemistry to which students respond very positively, enjoying the intellectual challenge that they feel it presents. Less successful lessons have too much teacher talk and not enough for the students to do. However, when ideas are demonstrated well, lessons begin to sparkle and students' interest rises.

150. Students have access to a well stocked library, though the books are mainly text books. Up-to-date periodicals are available as is the Internet. Useful sites are added to the chemistry intranet page by staff, librarian and students.

Leadership and Management

151. There have been several staff changes during the last few years but these have been managed as well as possible. Teachers new to A level have been well supported. The team is developing a new scheme of work so that resources and best practice can be shared, producing more coherence in a very large department. This has already improved the materials available to help lower-attaining students. Laboratory space is limited, as is technical support. This places constraints on the way teachers can organise the curriculum. The department keeps and analyses a very good data base which helps teachers identify potential student underachievement. Chemistry was not mentioned as such in the last report so it is not possible to comment on progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

This was not a focus for the inspection. However, one lesson of each of A level information technology, VCE IT, GNVQ IT, and Key Skills, were sampled.

In a Year 13 A level lesson standards were average, students being better at practical applications than written theory. The teacher's presentation was good but gave insufficient opportunity for students to put forward their own ideas. In the VCE IT lesson observed standards were below average. Teaching was good, with clear explanation and effective advice for individuals. Learning was satisfactory because limited understanding of IT skills restricted the pace at which some students were able to work. Their achievement was satisfactory. The GNVQ lesson was well taught; students worked steadily and independently on their assignments. They achieved well and reached the standards expected on such a course. During the ICT Key Skills lesson students had the opportunity to use and consolidate their skills whilst drafting coursework. Satisfactory and supportive teaching led to satisfactory achievement and average standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

152. ICT is used extensively in the sixth form. A Key Skills course is offered as a support, but most students deploy a range of ICT skills through their A and AS level subjects. For example there was very effective use of cameras and data projection to stimulate effective discussion in film studies and photography while in French, PowerPoint projection stimulated a very good question and answer session. In travel and tourism students' use of computers enabled them to carry out independent research. Students benefit from the above average number of computers in the college and the skills of staff.

HUMANITIES

History, religious education and sociology were inspected in detail. Lessons in economics, geography, geology, law, politics and psychology were also observed.

In the economics lesson standards were above average. Learning was very good. Students showed interest and enthusiasm in response to the very good teaching which expected them to put arguments forward from varying perspectives. They learned to link theory to topical situations. In geography attainment was above average. In the two lessons sampled good quality teaching resulted in students getting very involved in practical work and making good use of the very good resources available. Students attained well above average standards in the geology lesson because of energetic and enthusiastic teaching. Effective PowerPoint presentations were a strong feature in their very good learning.

In law two lessons were observed. Standards were above average. Students were achieving very well as a result of very good teaching and effective use of case law to promote very good understanding. In politics, standards were average and teaching was good in the lesson seen, students gained benefit from the teacher's good subject knowledge and use of interesting strategies to stimulate their interest. However, some students had gaps in their basic knowledge. In the one

psychology lesson seen standards were average. Teaching and learning were satisfactory, as was students' achievement. Only a few students were confident to express opinions in whole class discussion, and this limited the impact of that work. They performed better in group work and in presentations.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- The high standards of attainment at A level.
- The very good quality of teaching, which is based on excellent subject expertise and very effective planning, which results in very good achievement.
- The very high levels of departmental organisation that underpin good achievement.
- The very good quality of resources that are used to promote learning.

Commentary

Examination results

153. In 2002, results at A Level were above the national average with over half the students gaining A or B grades. In 2003, results improved. Females consistently do better than males.

Standards and achievement

154. Students are achieving very well in terms of their prior attainment. Encouraged by their teachers, students learn to think creatively and to consider different analytical approaches and historical interpretations. Written work demonstrates the growing ability of all students to challenge the assumptions implied in a question, and to select and use knowledge relevantly and effectively. Those at the top end of the range show a strong understanding and a very good capacity to reach sound historical judgments. Adopting a critical approach, students can produce convincing arguments and reach coherent conclusions.

Teaching and learning

155. Lessons are exceptionally well planned and structured. Teachers' excellent subject expertise allows them to confront students energetically with issues surrounding evidence and the significance of historical controversies. Using skilful questioning techniques, teachers heighten the appreciation of different factors in historical causation. Lessons are designed to extend historical enquiry and to develop conceptual understanding. The good relationship of staff and students contributes to an atmosphere that is both constructive and secure. Students are focused and responsive, whether collaborating in small groups to share different perspectives and ideas, or testing out their views in class discussions. Overall, students become confident, independent learners and as such are well prepared for university education. Teachers demonstrate very good understanding of the way students learn, which is reflected in the quality of course handbooks they produce.

Leadership and management

156. Very high levels of organisation support the work of a very professional team. Teachers collaborate well and expect students to work very hard. Their commitment is mirrored in the regular assessment of written work, although written feedback could provide students with more detail of what to improve. Very good use is made of assessment data including value added information. Reporting and review procedures are well defined. Students have access to an exceptionally good range of resources, including computers. The very good management has ensured good progress since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' standards are well above average and they achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subject which they pass on really well.
- Students' attitudes to work are very good so they work very hard in lessons.
- The lack of a male teacher to act as a role model and help the recruitment of males to the course.

Commentary

Examination results

157. In 2002 all the very small number of entries gained a grade A or B. In 2003, the results for a group that was four times as big were also all grades A or B.

Standards and achievement

158. Standards on both the AS and A2 course are well above average. Students are achieving very well because of the very good teaching they receive. They are very well prepared for the examination and respond by working very hard. They have a much higher than usual grasp of the knowledge and skills required to do well in examinations.

Teaching and learning

159. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and explicit knowledge of the examination requirements. They prepare well and lessons have a brisk pace and use every minute of the time available. They use a variety of teaching methods that involve the students in active learning and require them to be independent learners. Care is taken to ensure the needs of all capabilities are met by offering additional help as required to those needing it. There are opportunities to show exceptional aptitude in extended answers. Students use their thinking skills to argue philosophical viewpoints. Good use is made of ICT and students are competent on the Internet and in using commercial software.

Leadership and management

160. The subject has very clear direction and management. There is a determined effort to continue to raise the already very high standards. The subject is popular and the number of males is increasing due to the syllabus chosen but there is currently no male teacher in the department to act as a role model. The progress since the last inspection is very good, the results have improved and the numbers taking the subject hugely increased. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are now met.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of the imaginative, challenging and well-resourced teaching.
- The quality of leadership is excellent and provides a clear vision for the subject.
- Students attitudes are very good because they are motivated by the teachers and respect them.
- What is to be learnt is not always made fully explicit to students so they are not confident independent learners.

Commentary

Examination results

161. Results in the 2002 examinations were well above average, and those in 2003 were better. Students particularly males, exceeded their predicted grades.

Standards and achievement

162. The department has an 'open access' policy so students' standards on entry to the course cover the whole range of attainment and a significant number have not studied the subject at GCSE. High numbers take the subject and make very good progress, often achieving the highest grades. Higher-attaining students are very strong at using relevant theories to back up their views and fully understand the key ideas of the subject. Lower and middle attainers are less strong, but show real care, pride and motivation in their work.

Teaching and learning

163. Students learn very well because teachers plan very well and are expert in both subject knowledge and in teaching methods. The pace of work is always brisk, so lessons are active and often fun. Teachers work very hard to produce a wide range of imaginative resources, which leads to very high levels of interest, participation and concentration by students. Work is well matched to students' needs and tasks allow all to achieve very well. Teachers are very well attuned to examination needs and incorporate these skilfully into most lessons so that students are really well prepared and confident. Students know their subject strengths and weaknesses clearly because assessment is done well, particularly in coursework. They are less clear, however, in their understanding of the importance of the processes by which they learn, so they are not fully independent as learners.

Leadership and management

164. The department has an excellent vision for the future because staff work very well together to share and use their experience and skills. They are positive, yet self-critical, and are consistently focused on improving standards. Systems are thoroughly managed and evaluated, but evaluation of the impact of teaching styles on student learning could be better used by a more formal and focused approach.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Food technology and textiles were the inspection focus subjects.

Food Technology

The provision in food technology is **excellent**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain very good standards and achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- Excellent leadership provides clear vision for the subject and encourages very effective team work.
- Students are encouraged to study the work of well known designers and to be creative in their own work.
- Very effective assessment procedures enable students to improve their work.
- Students' are not given enough opportunities to be responsible for their own learning.

Commentary

Examination results

165. Results in 2002 were well above average and improved from the previous year. Results in 2003 were similar.

Standards and achievement

166. Students make substantial progress through the course. They are good at analysing existing products and developing design briefs. They carry out substantial in-depth research and are able to develop and evaluate a good range of individual creative ideas. The quality of coursework is very high. Presentation of work is a particular strength with many excellent examples. Students use a wide range of recording techniques to express their ideas and computers are used very effectively to support and present coursework.

Teaching and learning

167. Courses are very well planned and taught very effectively. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and this is used very well to plan and teach very well structured lessons. Teachers have very high expectations of students and this promotes very good learning. Regular monitoring and assessment of work, linked to individual feedback to students in lessons, is very effective in reinforcing learning and enabling students to improve their work. Students have very

positive attitude to their work and display high levels of concentration in lessons. Students and teachers work in close partnership and working relationships in lessons are excellent. A good range of teaching methods are used and available time is used very effectively. Although teachers structure learning opportunities very well, in some lessons there could be more opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills.

Leadership and management

168. The management of the course is excellent. The department is led by an enthusiastic and inspirational leader. There is a shared commitment to raising standards and teachers work very cooperatively to achieve it. As a result, courses provide structured and well-organised experiences for all students. The high quality management has ensured good progress since the last inspection.

Textiles

Provision in textiles is **excellent**.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Excellent
Teaching and Learning	Excellent
Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent teaching leads to students' excellent achievement.
- Students are inspired by the teachers' enthusiasm and love of the subject.
- Students' work shows high levels of creativity and imaginative problem solving.
- The detailed course planning, constructive assessment strategies and very good record keeping helps students to manage their time and be independent learners.
- The extra-curricular opportunities enrich the curriculum very well.

Commentary

Examination results

169. In 2002 results at A level were well above average. Students did better in textiles than in any other design aspect.

Standards and achievement

170. A significant number of students join the course without qualifications and experience in art and design or textiles. From their various starting points students make rapid progress and achieve excellently. The quality of work in sketchbooks is a mouth-watering display of colour, imaginative use of skills, materials and techniques to problem solving. The work is truly inspirational, highly creative and very imaginative and reflects the personal and individual styles students bring to their work. Deadlines for completing work are made all the more 'real' and urgent because the work is exhibited in the faculty gallery. This public viewing is taken extremely seriously and means so much more than handing in a completed project. The progress made by students with special educational needs is excellent. They are included in all the activities and make a valuable contribution to the lessons.

Teaching and learning

171. Teachers inspire students. Their excellent command of the subject, use of resources and exemplar materials, and their sheer love and enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and students cannot help but be touched by it. Expectations are very high and students rise to challenge. Students have a very clear understanding of the course requirements and what they must do to improve their work and grade. Assessments are thorough and constructive and they provide a very secure basis for independent study. Students learn new skills and work very hard. They benefit significantly from additional opportunities – like the artists/ designers who visit the college and trips to the Clothes Show and to national and local exhibitions.

Leadership and management

172. Leadership and management are excellent. The course plans and assessment records are excellent, and the analysis of examination results leads to effective action. Staff are excellent role models. High standards have been maintained and improvement since the last inspection is good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Media studies and music were the focus subjects. Art and design, dance, drama, graphics and photography were sampled during the inspection.

In 2002 the combined results for fine art, art and design, photography, graphics and textiles were average. The individual point score was higher in textiles than in other art and design courses and compared well with performance in other subjects. Results have fluctuated in recent years but are now on more secure footing than in the past. In 2003 the combined results for art and design subjects were slightly above the college average. A significant number of students take courses with little or no previous experience and qualifications in the subjects. They achieve well.

Two graphics lessons, one fine art, and two photography lessons were sampled. The work showed students were building a broad repertoire of skills that included computer and digital media alongside fine art printing, drawing and painting. The quality of some photographic and work using digital media was very high. Teachers have excellent subject specialist skills. Learning was most effective where a variety of teaching styles were used; for example, instruction, demonstrations and question and answer; and where students were expected to give extended responses to questions. Many were not confident speakers and struggled to argue convincingly for one course of action in preference to another. In the lessons seen teaching and learning in fine art and graphics were good and in photography very good.

One lesson each of A level dance and drama were observed. In the dance lesson standards were average. Very good teaching with expert demonstrations led to very good achievement. The sequencing of activities helped students build their skills and knowledge. In the drama lesson very good teaching, featuring high pace and strong support for individual performance, resulted in very good achievement. Students made very good progress in technical skills such as movement, lighting ideas and positioning on stage.

Media studies

Provision in media studies is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of the very effective teaching.
- Excellent management has resulted in very good progress since the last inspection.
- Teaching is very good: stimulating yet well matched to examination requirements.
- Students are enthusiastic and benefit from access to high quality technology.
- Students do not always discuss media issues in sufficient depth or breadth.

Commentary

Examination results

173. Results in the 2002 A Level examinations were above average. 2003 results were similar.

Standards and achievement

174. The course attracts students with a wide range of abilities and interests, many joining with standards which are only just average. Their very good achievement is evident in the extensive and well produced coursework they complete, and their awareness of technical language and accuracy in using it. Many students have lively ideas and are confident and articulate in presenting them orally. However, in class discussion too many are more willing to listen to ideas than to propose their own or extend those of others. Issues are not then explored enough. Work seen shows a good ability to appreciate alternative means of conveying media messages, and a growing awareness of how to exemplify theory and explain significance.

Teaching and learning

175. Teachers are knowledgeable and keen on teaching the subject. This is transmitted to students who enthuse about the subject. Lessons are notably well planned and organised. Students learn to work at speed and with a tight focus. On occasion teachers do not create enough opportunity for students to think and debate media issues freely to broaden their understanding. Theory, vocabulary and examples are clearly explained by teachers. There is a very effective focus on examination and coursework requirements, but this is not allowed to dictate or limit teaching styles. Important skills such as note-taking, photography and video/sound use are taught in context. This allows students to learn not just techniques, but how and when they are best applied to their own work. A particular strength is the use made of technology so that students become highly competent in communicating messages in a range of modern media. Thorough marking and discussion of written work is an important factor in students realising how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

176. Management is excellent. Lessons, rooms and equipment are highly organised. Analysis of the department and plans for its development are thorough yet incisive. Departmental leadership is very good. There is a strong sense of teamwork, with both work and teaching values being shared, and an ambition for improvement being very apparent. Resources are excellent, notably the range of ICT which is available. Standards have improved since the last inspection because of better teaching and departmental leadership, and this is reflected in the subject's increasing popularity.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- Standards in performance are particularly high.
- Strong organisation provides a secure framework for learning.
- Formal analysis of examination assessment by component is not used enough to aid planning and the progress of students.

Commentary

Examination results

177. Results in 2002 were below average. Results in 2003 improved considerably.

Standards and achievement

178. Standards of the current Year 13 students are above average because they have very high levels of performance skills with many working towards higher instrumental grades. Students have opportunities to use computers for composition. As a result of strong musical and computing skills, work is of a high standard. One particularly strong feature is that students are able to analyse and appraise their performances objectively in considerable detail. This means that students are well placed to improve the 'finish' of performances without reference to their teacher. Students' aural and musical literacy are marginally less good and this has a slightly negative effect on attainment in those areas requiring theoretical, rather than practical, skills. The emphasis in Year 12 is on factual rather than discursive writing, but by Year 13 a few students develop a strong analytical style of writing. Their technical vocabulary is above average. They identify performing as their strongest element and aural work related to harmonic recognition as a relative weakness.

Teaching and learning

179. Students benefit from very well-organised and knowledgeable teaching that relates well to the requirements of the A Level course. Lessons are planned very well and the pace of lessons is often brisk. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They work well independently in practical situations. Students are taught to maintain comprehensive written records of their work. Marking is detailed and assessment used well to help student's achieve very well.

Leadership and management

180. The department is managed very well overall and good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Documentation is very good but as yet the department does not record the UCAS points scores derived from instrumental grade examinations. Music technology A Level is not offered which is unusual for a technology college. There are opportunities for students to take part in traditional musical events within the college including regular sixth-form recitals. However, lower than normal numbers of students participate in instrumental and vocal lessons within school.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

In addition to the focus subject one BTec travel and tourism lesson was observed. In the lesson seen students achieved very well and reached above average standards because of very good teaching. They showed very good independence and initiative both in researching work and in their ability to discuss it knowledgeably.

Travel and Tourism

Provision in travel and tourism is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Not enough evidence

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning and effective teamwork of the teachers results in good achievement by students.
- There are effective reviews of students' work so that they know how well they are doing.
- Students have a positive attitude to learning and work hard in lessons.
- There is not enough varied and student-centred learning in some lessons.
- The development plan lacks detail to assist long-term planning.

Commentary

Examination results

181. In 2002, results in the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education examination were low compared to the national average. The 2003 results showed some improvement.

Standards and Achievement

182. Students' knowledge and understanding are above average overall and broadly average in terms of study skills. Most students have at least five grade A* to C at GCSE and from this base, their achievement is good. Their portfolios of evidence are thorough and well presented. Skill development lacks variety and tends to be mainly restricted to word processing, taking information from textbooks and other literature. However, students do this well.

Teaching and Learning

183. Teaching is good overall mainly because of the methodical planning, good subject knowledge and effective teamwork. Theoretical aspects of the course are well developed although practical elements do not always give enough opportunities for students to gain a realistic insight into the travel and tourism industry. Teachers create a positive environment for learning and have good subject knowledge. Students have a satisfactory grasp of the course but do not get enough opportunity to experience a variety of student-centred learning styles. Students show good concentration and have a positive attitude to classwork. Students manage their learning well and use the teacher as a consultant in lesson time. Students have good opportunities to use computers.

Leadership and management

184. Management made a good decision to change to a more appropriate course for students in order to improve examination results. Schemes of work are comprehensive but do not have enough variety in activities so that the interest of the students is maintained. There are plans to introduce a new more detailed department development plan to help focus long-term planning. Student work is reviewed and assessed well so they know how well they are doing and what to do to get better.

BUSINESS

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **very good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement by students.
- Very effective management has resulted in standards that are above the national average.
- Experienced, knowledgeable staff work effectively as a team.
- Very good resources enhance learning.

Commentary

Examination results

185. With one hundred per cent success in 2002 results were above national averages. All candidates achieved at least a pass grade in GNVQ Intermediate examinations. Results at Advanced and GNVQ levels were marginally down in 2003.

Standards and achievement

186. Students reach standards that are above the national average for the course. Students apply theory to case studies very well and make good use of statistics and computers in their work. All students achieve very well making real gains in their knowledge and understanding of a variety of business scenarios.

Teaching and learning

187. Teachers encourage and stretch students well during lessons. Lesson planning is very good, tasks are varied and effective time management ensures that the pace of lessons is brisk and students concentrate well on the work in hand. A real strength of the teaching is the way in which students are encouraged to become involved in lessons so that they take an active part in their own learning. Students work successfully in groups and pairs, learning from each other as they respond to simulation exercises and real-life situations. Learning benefits from the experiences of outside business that teachers bring to their work. Very good quality resources enhance learning and realistic coursework assignments provide the detail that encourages high standards and improves numerical and information technology skills. There is very good use of up-to-date and topical information in teaching and student interest is further created by effective displays in the area in which the subject is taught.

Leadership and management

188. Leadership and management of the subject promote high standards and very good achievement. Effective assessment and monitoring of students' progress ensures they know how well they are doing and are aware of how to improve. Monitoring of teaching, annual reviews of examination results, regular meetings of subject staff and appropriate development planning ensures that the subject continues to meet the needs of its students very well. Falling standards have been reversed since the last inspection. Standards have risen and student participation in coursework and in lessons has improved.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

This was not a focus for the inspection but one Year 13 and two Year 12 lessons were observed. Students achieved well in all three lessons because of effective and engaging teaching.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

This was not a focus for the inspection but a Year 12 general studies lesson was sampled. The focus was on religious education and the students learned and achieved very well because of the very good teaching they received.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>College grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the college	2	2
How inclusive the college is		2
How the college's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the college	2	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Students' achievement	2	2
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the college		2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	2	2
How well the curriculum meets students needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	2
How well the college seeks and acts on students' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the college's links with parents		2
The quality of the college's links with the community	1	1
The college's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the college		2
The governance of the college	3	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	2
The effectiveness of management	2	2

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