

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW COLLEGE LEICESTER

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 131945

Principal: Mrs J Mullen

Reporting inspector: Mr D Page
1028

Dates of inspection: 11 – 15 March 2002

Inspection number: 244672

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of college:	Comprehensive
College category:	Community College
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
College address:	Glenfield Road Leicester
Postcode:	LE3 6DN
Telephone number:	01162 318 500
Fax number:	01162 322 286
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs V Dempster
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1028	D Page	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9874	M H Milwain	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30996	A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27201	C Ashworth	Team inspector	English	
10417	K Lambert	Team inspector	Science	
31096	J Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31129	J Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design	
31779	V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
31008	P M Rourke	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
4243	W Freeman	Team inspector	History	
13155	J Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
4697	R Black	Team inspector	Music	

31192	J Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education	
12985	S Jeffray	Team inspector		
23480	M Harding	Team inspector	Religious education	
10782	H Moreton	Team inspector	Business studies	
15462	C Blakemore	Team inspector		
5851	M Robottom	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia College Inspection Services

Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

New College was formed two and a half years ago from the amalgamation of three schools which were in considerable difficulties. Two of these schools were in need of special measures and the third was deemed to have serious weaknesses. The arrangements leading to the formation of the new college did not have the full support of the local community. The college is much bigger than other secondary schools with 1632 pupils compared to the average size nationally of 983 pupils. It occupies a site of 47 acres with widely spread buildings derived from the original schools. Significant difficulties in recruiting teachers for some subjects has resulted in the college employing instructors. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, (29.2 per cent), is above the national average of 15.3 per cent. The percentage of minority ethnic pupils in the college is higher than in most schools at 18.4 per cent. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language, (seven per cent), is much higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements, (41.6 per cent) is well above average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements. The school is situated in New Parks ward which is one of five per cent of the most socially deprived wards in the country.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, New College is an effective college. Standards of attainment on entry to the college are well below the national average and a significant number of pupils join the college exhibiting challenging behaviour and significant levels of disaffection. The standard of pupils' performance in national tests at the end of both Year 9 and 11 is generally below average. The standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection was generally below national expectation. Overall, the standard of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good teaching. The principal provides very strong, clear leadership and has inculcated high levels of commitment amongst staff. There are very effective strategies to ensure that all pupils are included in the life of the college. Given how effective the college is, its very challenging context, and the money it receives, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The head provides very good leadership and has effectively fostered a strong will to succeed amongst all staff.
- The college helps pupils achieve well through the good teaching and high levels of commitment of the staff.
- The college has very good systems for evaluating its performance and for planning for improvement.
- Strategic management by governors is very good and they are very effective at holding the college to account.
- The college is very effective at including all its pupils in the life of the college. The college shows much sensitivity to different cultures and this is reflected in many areas of the curriculum. It provides a good level of care for its pupils, particularly those in crisis.
- The provision for supporting pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- The college provides a very good and extensive programme of extra curricular provision designed to improve pupil attitudes to school.

What could be improved

- The behaviour of a significant number of pupils, especially when out of classrooms, needs to be improved.
- Standards of attainment need to be raised.
- Greater emphasis in the support given to pupils with special educational needs should be devoted to those whose difficulties relate to behaviour.
- Staff deployment needs to be reviewed in order to reduce the size of some classes.
- Despite the college's best efforts, attendance and punctuality are poor and are impacting negatively on standards and achievement and need to be improved.
- The college needs to do more to encourage parents to work in partnership with the college.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college opened two and a half years ago and has had no previous inspection of this type and comparison with a previous inspection report is not possible. However, given the very serious difficulties faced by the schools from which it was formed and the degree to which the college has tackled these, it could reasonably be said that significant progress has been made.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	n/a	E*	E*	E*
A levels/AS levels	n/a	E*	n/a	

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

The standards of pupils on entry to the college, as measured in national tests when the pupils were at the end of Year 6, are well below average. When compared to the attainment of pupils in Years 7 to 11 during the inspection, these results show that pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their time at the college. Pupils of all prior attainment, including those with special educational needs and those learning in English as an additional language, achieve well. At the end of Year 9 in 2001, when compared to all schools nationally, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was well below the national average. Over the two years the college has been open, the trend in the college's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects has risen as fast as the national trend. Throughout the college pupils' standards in English as seen in their books and in lessons were well below expectation. Work seen in mathematics was generally in line with the expected level for the majority of pupils. While standards in science were generally below expectation some pupils reached high levels of achievement. Standards at the end of Year 11 in 2001 were very low and in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. The college sets very challenging targets for pupils' performance by the end of Year 11. The pupils' performance in GCSE/GNVQ at 5 or more grades A*-C, 1 or more grades A*-G, and the average points score, were below these targets in 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Unsatisfactory. Many pupils adopt reasonable attitudes to the college. A significant number of pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9, see little value in education, sharing some of their parents' views as to the worth of attending the college.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory. Many pupils enter the school with low levels of self control and exhibiting challenging behaviour. The school does well to inculcate better standards of behaviour amongst older pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Poor. Many pupils form good relationships within the college. A significant number of pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9, have poorly developed respect for others and find it hard to show initiative or take responsibility. Poor relationships are not generally racially motivated.
Attendance	Poor. Despite the college's best efforts, attendance and punctuality remain a significant impediment to learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching of the experienced staff is good with a significant amount of very good teaching. There are high levels of commitment amongst the staff and in the most highly developed instances teachers demonstrate attitudes consistent with a vocation. While in many cases teachers' behaviour management skills are highly developed, there are some where this skill is insufficiently strong to cope with the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. In such lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and accounted for seven per cent of lessons seen. The teaching meets the needs of all boys and girls, regardless of their special educational needs, ethnicity, or whether they have English as an additional language. In English, lessons sometimes begin with a short language based activity, and this is helping to raise standards of literacy. In mathematics teaching is a strength of the department. The development of the three part lesson which is part of the National Numeracy Strategy leads to some good starter exercises. In science the quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and good or better in well over half the lessons. Relationships with pupils are very good even in cases where there is inappropriate pupil behaviour in the lesson. Provision for literacy is good and developing steadily. The teaching of numeracy across the college is currently satisfactory, and training has now been given to all staff and the college is well placed to continue to make improvements in this area.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Overall, the college provides a broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils. However, the strengths are diminished by the provision for modern foreign languages and religious education which does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. A large team of support staff are well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. However, some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are not being identified and provided with appropriate support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The college provides well for these pupils, employing a native speaker for asylum seekers and refugees and making good use of outside agencies.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. In the best lessons, pupils' social development is fostered through collaborative work. Staff provide good role models for moral development; art makes a significant contribution to cultural development while religious education supports pupils' spiritual development well.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring attainment and personal development are good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour need to be further developed.

Despite the college's best efforts, the match of staff to curriculum needs is unsatisfactory in some areas. The college premises are very extensive, and this presents some severe management problems, especially outside lesson times. Learning resources are well managed and deployed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Very good. That the college has made headway against the substantial challenges facing it is in no small part due to the vision, determination and strength of the principal. She is very well supported by senior staff who share her determination and commitment to succeed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are well informed and many, especially the chair, take a high profile in the strategic management of the college.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The college has developed very thorough procedures for evaluating its performance - there is a well-established culture of constant review and improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. While financial planning is good, the deployment of teachers does not match well the demands of the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The expectations the college has of the children.• The pupils like the college.• The progress made by the children.• The comfort with which parents feel they can approach the college.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about how well their children are getting on.• The extent to which the college works closely with parents.• The amount of homework.• The leadership of the college.

At the meeting for parents before the inspection, significant concerns were expressed regarding the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils, although a significant number of parents did not readily acknowledge their own contribution to this. Concerns were also expressed about the staff turnover and employment of supply staff and instructors. The inspection found evidence to support the parents' views concerning: the high expectations the college has of the pupils and the good progress made by them; the need for the college to work more closely with parents; the inconsistent use of homework, and the negative impact of staffing difficulties on learning. The inspection did not support parents' views regarding information about how well their children are getting on which was found to be good, and the leadership of the college which was found to be very good.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

New College Leicester

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The size of the sixth form broadly matches other sixth forms, (135 students compared to the national average of 166), and shows a significant increase on the previous year. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, (9.6 per cent), is above the national average of 6 per cent. The college has an open entry policy to the sixth form which is consistent with its policies on social inclusion. The percentage of minority ethnic students in the sixth form roughly matches that of the rest of the school. It is also designed, at this early stage of the sixth form's development, to establish a local culture of staying on for further education. As a consequence, many students have relatively low prior attainment on entry to the sixth form.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an effective and improving sixth form. It is providing a good educational experience that meets the academic and social needs of students. A good range of courses is being actively extended and enrichment opportunities, currently satisfactory, are due to be substantially improved. Standards achieved by students retaking GCSE and GNVQ are above the national average. Although standards at AS and A level are below average, they represent satisfactory levels of achievement given the low prior attainment of many of the students. There has been no significant difference between the performance of male and female students. Teaching and learning are both very good. Management of the sixth form is very good and well integrated with that of the main school. There are clear development plans well focused on appropriate priorities. While student progress is very good and the sixth form effective, the proportion of the college's money which it receives, coupled with some very small group sizes, mean that the cost effectiveness of the sixth form is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching at Post-16 is generally very good and ensures pupils make very good progress.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- Provision for some vocational courses is good with high levels of student morale and students achieving very well.
- The developing partnerships with other post-16 providers enhances the range of courses on offer.

What could be improved

- Careers guidance needs to be improved and the college has clear plans to do so.
- Curriculum enrichment needs to be further developed and brought together in a coherent programme which the college has clear plans to do.
- Cost effectiveness needs to be improved by reviewing group sizes on some courses.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics A level	Good. Teaching and learning are very good. Students are well motivated and making good progress. The number of students choosing mathematics is rising.
Biology A level	Good. The teaching staff are enthusiastic with good subject knowledge and have good relationships with the students. Year 13 students are on track for high grades although standards are lower in Year 12.
Business studies A level	Unsatisfactory. The current teachers work hard and with dedication and have good subject knowledge. Previous staffing difficulties and a poor match of course to students' prior experience lead to levels of achievement which are too low.
Information and communication technology A level	Good. The quality of teaching overall is at least good and often better. Standards of attainment are above the national average. The leadership of information and communication technology in the sixth form is strong and focussed on ensuring that students are given ample opportunity to achieve at a high level.
Leisure and recreation Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education	Good. Standards are below the national average although this represents good progress given the below average standards at the end of Year 11. The quality of teaching is good.
Leisure and tourism GNVQ Advanced	Good. Standards are in line with the national average. The quality of teaching is good with a variety of learning experiences provided for students.
Leisure and tourism GNVQ Intermediate	Good. Standards are above the national average and students are progressing well. The quality of teaching is good.
Travel and tourism Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education	Good. Standards are below the national average, although This represents good progress. The quality of teaching is good. Students' learning is enhanced through links with local leisure providers.
Health and social care Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education	Good. Students make satisfactory progress and standards are in line with national averages. Teaching is good and well planned.
Health and social care GNVQ Intermediate	Good. Students make satisfactory progress and standards are in line with national averages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach well.
Art A level	Satisfactory. Overall, standards in lessons are below average, although the A level results for 2001 were above the national average and better than in 2000. Teaching is satisfactory. While management of students is very good the deployment of staff means projects are too long to sustain students' interest.
English literature A level	Very good. Standards are in line with national averages. Students' achievement is currently very good as they work hard and co-operatively with their teachers and are committed to achieving higher standards. Teaching is very good and built on very good relationships with the

	students and work is pitched at an appropriately high standard.
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OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Satisfactory. The sixth form operates an effective tutor system, which students feel prepares them well for study methods in Further and Higher Education. Careers guidance for students is currently unsatisfactory where staffing difficulties have compounded a poorly developed service.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. The leadership and management of the sixth form is very good, it is well organised and effective. The post-16 development plan is a clear well focused document which identifies realistic and appropriate areas for development. A culture of constant review and improvement is well established and focused on raising standards. Performance management needs to be integrated into these evaluation strategies. The open access policy is an example of the effective approach to equality of opportunity in the sixth form.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are accessible if difficulties arise. They are helped and encouraged to study. Their work is thoroughly assessed. They are taught well and challenged to do their best. The college helps them well to settle into the sixth form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers guidance and advice from the college. The range of enrichment activities. The degree to which they are kept well informed of their progress. The extent to which the college listens to their views.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Pupils' standards on entry to the college based on national tests at the end of Year 6 are well below the national averages for English, mathematics and science. Given the standards at the end of Year 9 and 11 as observed during the inspection, it indicates that the college helps pupils make satisfactory progress in their time at the college.
- 2 The college has been open for two and a half years. In that time the results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison to similar schools results have been well below the average in English and mathematics and very low in science. The science results fall within the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The improvement in the college's performance is matching the national trend in all the core subjects. There is little difference in the relative performance of the higher and lower attaining pupils at the college.
- 3 At the end of Year 11, the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE and GNVQ has been very low compared to the national average. The same situation has applied to the percentage gaining 5 or more grades A*-G and 1 or more grades A*-G. The results fall within the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. In comparison to similar schools, the picture is the same except in the case of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C which is well below the average. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- 4 In English, work seen during the inspection was well below average overall in all areas of the subject. At the end of Year 9 speaking and listening standards are well below average. Apart from most of those pupils who are learning in English as an additional language, many find it difficult to express themselves adequately in Standard English. By the end of Year 11 standards have risen but are still below average. Literacy levels are low overall throughout the college. In mathematics standards of work seen in lessons and pupils' exercise books during the inspection were at the expected level for the majority of pupils. Standards of numeracy of the majority of pupils are good. While standards are generally below expectation, some pupils achieve highly in science.
- 5 In drama the standards of work seen were broadly in line with expectation. Standards of attainment in art by pupils on entry to the college are well below average, by the end of Year 9 are well below average, and by the end of Year 11 are below average. Standards of work seen in design technology by the end of Year 9 were well below the national average and in the 2001 GCSE examinations, results were well below the national average. In geography, the standards in the teacher assessed tests at the end of Year 9 have been well below the national average. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 the proportion of pupils attaining grades A* - C in 2001 was well below the national average and geography was amongst the lowest performing subjects in the college. Pupils enter the college with standards in history well below national expectations. Few pupils reach the higher grades in GCSE although there are indications that a slight improvement is taking place. The level of attainment of pupils in information and communication technology entering the college is below the

national average and well below by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11 standards have improved each year, but are still below the national average.

- 6 Standards in modern foreign languages showed a marked improvement over the previous year, but remain well below the national average by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11 pupils showed levels of attainment which were around the national average, and all were making at least satisfactory progress.
- 7 Many pupils join the college with well below average attainment in music. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in Year 9 is well below national expectations. Standards in the present Year 11 are similar to those of last year but that standards in Year 10 are significantly higher and below national expectation. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 in physical education show that standards are well below the national average. By the end of Year 11 the attainment of the majority of pupils is below the expected level. The attainment of pupils in religious education at the end of Year 9 is well below national expectations and those of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards reached at the end of Year 11 are below national levels.
- 8 By the end of Year 9 the attainment of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is well below the national average. As a result of absence or poor performance, a high proportion of all pupils fail to achieve a grade in the Year 9 tests. By the end of Year 11 the attainment of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average. In 2000, nineteen per cent of pupils left college without any GCSE qualifications. This proportion increased in 2001 to twenty three per cent well above the national average.
- 9 The attainment of gifted and talented pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 is below the national average. At the end of Year 9 very low proportions of pupils attained level 7 or above in any subjects and none attained higher than level 6 in design and technology, information and communication technology, art and music. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 three A* grades were attained, in science, history and information and communication technology. A total of only twenty-one A grades were attained, although 240 pupils were entered for the GCSE examinations. One grade A was awarded in mathematics, four in English language and two in science.

Sixth form

- 10 In the Sixth Form, the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE and GNVQ has been above the national average. The percentage gaining 5 or more grades A*-G has been well above the average, and those gaining one or more grades A*-G has been just below the average.
- 11 The number of candidates entered in the different categories at the college is relatively low and care is needed in the interpretation. For candidates entered for less than two A levels, results at the college are below the national average. For candidates entered for two or more A levels, results are well below the average and close to the average for Advanced GNVQ. There has been no significant difference between the performance of male and female students.
- 12 In mathematics A level students are making good progress and achieving well. Standards of work seen in the inspection in the sixth form GCSE course were above average. In biology A level standards are high with students on track to achieve some of the highest grades. In physics A level attainment is generally in line with national expectations. In chemistry A level the level of attainment was high with very good

progress made and the student on track to achieve one of the highest grades at the end of the course. In business studies A level attainment is consistently below the national average. In information and communication technology, A level results are above the national average. In leisure and tourism the GNVQ advanced course students achieved in line with the national average. In the GNVQ Intermediate level attainment was above average. Most students on the AVCE leisure and recreation course achieved a Pass grade and the two students on the travel and tourism course successfully completed the course. Results in the health and social care AVCE in 2001 were below average but were average in the GNVQ Intermediate. In the current year standards seen are average in both Years 12 and 13 of the AVCE, with evidence of some good progress from GCSE scores. In GNVQ Intermediate, standards seen were below average. Overall, standards in art in the sixth form are below average. In English literature results are in line with national averages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 The attitude of a significant number of pupils is unsatisfactory. Many pupils enter the school with very poorly developed social skills and show very little pride in their school. This is evident by the conditions both inside and outside the buildings where litter of all kinds abounds. The behaviour of a significant number of pupils outside the classroom is unsatisfactory. When moving around school many pupils do so in a disorderly and noisy manner, they only rarely show any courtesy to their peers or adults. Many pupils push their way through crowds and allow doors to close on those behind them. The layout of the site and the narrowness of some corridors frequently exacerbate unruly behaviour.
- 14 In the majority of lessons behaviour is generally satisfactory, pupils listen and make an effective contribution to the lesson. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and physical education. There is a significant difference between the behaviour of the majority of pupils in lessons and outside the classroom. Many pupils have a poor attitude to learning, and where lessons do not fully engage the attention of the pupils, the result is poor, and frequently unacceptable behaviour by a significant minority. These pupils make offensive comments and display a challenging and sometimes aggressive attitude towards their teachers. In the worst cases, this diverts the energy and attention of the teacher and this disruptive behaviour has an adverse effect on the learning of the rest of the class.
- 15 Because of the school's inclusion policy there are relatively few permanent exclusions. As a result there is a high number of fixed period exclusions. The school does not use this sanction lightly and it is only taken when a pupil's poor behaviour is persistent or presents an imminent threat to other pupils or staff. In all cases of exclusion the events leading to the action are appropriately recorded and monitored. Those pupils receiving support for learning or behavioural difficulties generally have a positive attitude to the staff who work with them. They respond well, and in many cases are aware of the effect that the support has had on their behaviour.
- 16 The school works hard to involve parents in the task of ensuring that pupils attend regularly. Levels of attendance are poor, the overall rate is well below the national average. The school has a well-organised system, strongly supported by the education welfare service, to address the low levels of attendance. Despite the diligent efforts of the staff concerned attendance levels remain unacceptably low. This has a serious effect on the learning of the pupils concerned. Punctuality is a problem with a significant number of pupils arriving late for lessons. Some pupils exploit the large distance they have to travel between some lessons. Some pupils absent themselves from lessons during the day, many of them leaving the site. The

school has worked hard to gain the support of local shopkeepers, and co-operates with the local police in organising truancy sweeps in an effort to combat the problem.

- 17 In many instances relationships between pupils are satisfactory. In those lessons where the skilful teaching holds their interest pupils work well together as a whole class or in groups, they are able to share ideas and resources. In a Year 8 personal social and health education lesson a meaningful discussion developed around the choices people have to make in life.
- 18 The overall behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs for literacy difficulties and who are supported in class by support assistants work hard and behave well. However, in those lessons when pupils with literacy difficulties are not supported, and teachers do not appropriately modify materials and tasks for them, many avoid written work as much as possible by simply ignoring it or by misbehaving instead.
- 19 There is little support for pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural difficulties and their behaviour in lessons is often deliberately disruptive. There is also a number of pupils in the college who have emotional and behavioural difficulties but whose misbehaviour is not recognised as indicating a special need. These pupils should be placed on the special educational needs register and additional specialist help and guidance provided. The poor behaviour of these pupils offers encouragement to other pupils in lessons to misbehave. These other pupils are able to stop their misbehaviour when they realise they have gone too far, but the pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have no such realisation and carry on until the teacher's patience is exhausted. The college needs to develop strategies for teaching these pupils how to manage their unacceptable behaviour. The mix, in the college's large classes, of pupils with literacy difficulties who are over-challenged by the work provided for them, of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and of pupils who simply do not feel like working, often produces collectively extremely challenging behaviour that is beyond many good teachers' capacity to control.
- 20 Pupils with special educational needs constitute a significant proportion of the pupils whose attendance is poor and who have negative attitudes to college. Their frequent or their lengthy non-attendance exacerbates their already low attainment. Pupils who are learning in English as an additional language have a very positive attitude to the college and to their learning.

Sixth form

- 21 Students in the sixth form have a positive attitude to their work. They show an interest in lessons and are keen to improve the quality of their learning environment. Relationships in the sixth form are good, both between students and between students and staff. Students are given the opportunity to organise their own research and the majority of students take their responsibilities very seriously.
- 22 The sixth form has an open access policy and offers a wide range of subjects. The opportunities provided for students are appreciated and most students recognise that they have a role to play in achieving their goals. Despite students having chosen to take a sixth form course, attendance shows no improvement over that in the main school. The school recognises the sometimes low value placed on education within the local community and is working hard to combat this.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 23 Overall, the quality of teaching of the experienced staff is good with a significant amount of very good teaching. There are high levels of commitment amongst the staff and in the most highly developed instances teachers demonstrate attitudes consistent with a vocation. The good teaching is characterised by: the skilful use of behaviour management tactics; good teaching methods; good levels of subject knowledge; well planned lessons which move at a good pace maintaining the interest of the pupils, and good relationships developed between the teachers and pupils based on evident respect.
- 24 While in many cases teachers' behaviour management skills are highly developed, there are some where this skill is insufficiently strong to cope with the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. Four per cent of lessons seen were unsatisfactory as a consequence. In these lessons progress is inhibited by the dissipation of the teachers' energy from the learning of pupils to the management of pupils. These lessons are generally led by some of the less experienced, supply or instructor staff on which the college is forced to rely. This is despite the college's best efforts to employ staff better able to cope with the challenges. The behaviour of a significant number of pupils, particularly in the lower years before the college has had opportunity to train them to behave better, tests the skills of any teacher. Class sizes in many subjects are far too large. This, coupled with the poor attitudes and behaviour of a substantial proportion of the pupils, and the college's inadequate identification of pupils with behavioural difficulties, make the teachers' work more challenging.
- 25 In English, lessons sometimes begin with a short language based activity, in line with the National Literacy Strategy framework and this is helping to raise standards of literacy. Lessons usually have a good level of challenge and a good sense of pace. In drama lessons there are good strategies to manage difficult pupil behaviour, and ensure pupils get a sound grounding in a wide range of acting techniques. In mathematics teaching is a strength of the department, it is mostly good or very good. The development of the three part lesson which is part of the National Numeracy Strategy is becoming normal practice and some good starter exercises were seen. In science the quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and good or better in well over half the lessons observed. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are always shared with the pupils at the start of each lesson. Relationships with pupils are very good.
- 26 Teaching in art is good. The behaviour of a minority of the pupils, who interfere with the learning of their peers, linked to poor basic skills means that learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, even though teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and teach with enthusiasm. In design technology learning is increased in the better lessons and good progress made because teachers use good subject expertise to develop or expand ideas, use time and resources effectively, and lessons have good pace and good pupil management. All teaching in geography is at least satisfactory and in a significant number of lessons is good or better. In many lessons teachers encourage learning by making effective use of pupils' prior knowledge. Teaching in history is focused effectively on the range and depth of historical knowledge though greater attention to source-based work could be developed.
- 27 Teachers in information and communication technology have a good knowledge of their subject and they plan and structure lessons well so that pupils improve their knowledge and skills. Teaching overall in the modern languages department is satisfactory, and the teaching of older pupils is good. Where activities involve the teacher interacting with the pupils they try hard and make progress. Where the

lessons move swiftly to written exercises, pupils often switch off. In music the standard of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and very good in Years 10 and 11. Throughout all years the good teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher. The quality of teaching in physical education is at least satisfactory and in more than half of the lessons observed teaching was good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and boys and girls work well together. In good lessons teachers plan well with clear objectives, however, many lessons are teacher led and pupils are given insufficient opportunity to take responsibility or to learn independently. Teaching is good overall in religious education, and some teaching is very good. The extent of learning does not always match the quality of teaching in lessons where there is widespread disinterest or poor behaviour. Some of the difficulties result from classes that are too large and without enough learning support assistants.

- 28 Pupils with special educational needs have the advantage of being taught by subject specialist teachers, mainly in mixed attainment classes, alongside their higher attaining peers. However, class sizes are large and most pupils do not receive as much support as they need. Additionally, many of them present challenging behaviours to their teachers, not all of whom can control their behaviour sufficiently. There is some setting of pupils by prior attainment in English and mathematics from Year 7 and in science from Year 8. In these subjects pupils in the lower attaining sets are in effect in special educational needs classes, but few classes are smaller, nor are they taught by teachers with special expertise, so the setting confers less advantage than it might. Individual education plans are available for all pupils as required by the Code of Practice and teachers are aware of their contents. The quality of teaching for pupils learning in English as an additional language is good and they are well supported to make good progress. Teachers address the different needs of boys and girls effectively and pupils of both genders are enabled to achieve well.
- 29 In religious education tasks and materials are well modified to make them accessible to pupils with learning difficulties. In most other subjects this is not the case. In mathematics and science there is modification of work between attainment-related sets but there is no modification for pupils within sets. Modification of tasks and materials is not built into most departmental planning through schemes of work. The learning of pupils with statements of special educational need for literacy-related problems receives effective support in many lessons. There is a large team of generally well-briefed learning support assistants though the contribution of some of the support teachers is limited. The support assistants help their pupils appropriately with written work, keep them on task and ensure that they behave well. They allow their nominated pupils to work on their own when appropriate and they then assist other pupils in the class.
- 30 Small groups of pupils are withdrawn from lessons for some group or individual teaching. They are well taught, most enjoy the individual attention and have good relationships with their teachers so they learn well. The special educational needs department is teaching the Progress and Booster units for the National Literacy Strategy in Year 7. Lessons are very well prepared and delivered and pupils' literacy skills are improving.
- 31 Gifted and talented pupils are taught in mixed attainment groups for most of their subjects and in lessons where the behaviour of other pupils is unsatisfactory, their learning is reduced. There is little modification of teaching strategies for them to ensure that they reach their potential. Some extension tasks are used in design and technology and mathematics, and religious education and science are developing

some good practice in this area. In other subjects gifted and talented pupils are, in effect, expected to produce better work of their own volition without further guidance, so inevitably under-achieve.

Sixth form

- 32 Teaching in the sixth form is generally very good. This is characterised by very good teaching methods; very good levels of subject knowledge which leads teachers to teach with confidence and engenders respect from students; very good lesson planning which ensures sharply focused work; very effective management of students to maximise their learning, and good use of resources particularly in information and communication technology.
- 33 In mathematics teaching is a strength. In all lessons seen teaching was good or very good. Teachers are hard working and committed to their students. They give clear explanations and relevant examples where appropriate. Teaching in biology is always at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers work hard to prepare appropriate materials for the course and they have excellent up to date subject knowledge. The teachers use information and communication technology well to explain complex theoretical ideas. The teachers of business studies work hard and with dedication. The quality of the teaching and learning in information and communication technology is good or better with well planned schemes of work. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and a wide range of experience and skills. Teaching is good in leisure and tourism; leisure and recreation and travel and tourism and health and social care. Teaching in art is satisfactory overall. Despite areas of strength the deployment of staff creates very long projects for the students and detracts from motivation. In English literature teaching is very good overall and never less than good. Subject knowledge is very good and teachers' skills complement each other well. They are confident to lead students into high level discussions which possess intellectual rigour.

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

- 34 The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow a broad and balanced curriculum covering all the subjects of the national curriculum as well as religious education, drama, and personal, social and health education. The time allocation for most subjects is broadly in line with that found in most schools. However, provision for pupils to study modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory as the time allocation for French is below that allocated in most schools and there is no opportunity for any pupils to study a second modern foreign language. The provision for information and communication technology is good. Pupils in Years 7 and 9 are allocated one lesson each week to study information and communication technology. In Year 8 it is taught through a cross-curricular approach and pupils are given the opportunity to develop their skills through its use in other subjects.
- 35 The organisation of pupils into teaching groups for subjects across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The size of the groups is too large to facilitate good quality learning opportunities for all pupils. Provision is made to set pupils by attainment in English, mathematics, science and French which helps alleviate this problem somewhat but this provision is not available in other subjects.
- 36 Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the core curriculum and choose additional subjects from a wide range of options that includes subjects such as ceramics, dance and

sociology, and vocational courses that are accredited through GNVQ and other awarding bodies. A new course has begun in Year 10 for an identified group of pupils who are poor attenders and/or are disaffected. It is supported by government funding and tutored by experienced ex-army staff. The course successfully supports the development of pupils' self esteem and self reliance and leads to nationally recognised certification. To date, it has had a significant impact on improving pupils' attendance and behaviour. Small groups of pupils follow a single science course. This variety of choice provides well for the wide range of pupils' needs.

- 37 However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of collective worship, modern foreign language and religious education for all pupils. Although there is a successful short course in religious education that is followed by all pupils in Year 11 this is not provided in Year 10 and there are no adequate alternative arrangements to provide religious education. Only twenty-five pupils in Year 10 and fifteen in Year 11 study French. Some one hundred pupils have been properly disapplied from the requirement of the national curriculum to study a modern foreign language in order to follow vocational courses. However, a further one hundred pupils do not study French, nor have they been disapplied from the requirement for a specific purpose, as the regulations require.
- 38 Provision for the teaching of literacy is good. A literacy consultant has provided appropriate training for all staff. Pupils enter the school with standards of literacy well below the national average and the need to develop those standards to meet the literacy demands of the whole curriculum is clearly understood by the college. The National Literacy Strategy is in place and teachers have been trained in its methodology. Teachers and support assistants in the special educational needs department are providing the progress and booster units in literacy for pupils who achieved low grades in their Year 6 tests. Two teachers have particular responsibilities for the development of literacy in subjects other than English. There are key word lists in classrooms, dictionaries are available in every room and there are planned opportunities for improving reading, writing and spelling in morning tutor time. The strategies for teaching the skills of numeracy are developing, with regular support from the local education authority's numeracy consultant. Although they are taught effectively in mathematics the teaching of numeracy skills in other subjects is unsystematic and most departments do not have a policy to guide their implementation.
- 39 It is a high priority of the school to be socially inclusive by offering equal opportunities to all its pupils and the governors curriculum committee is keen to develop an active approach to combating racism and overcoming gender stereotyping. The school has an ethnically diverse intake, and seven per cent of its pupils, including a number of asylum seekers and refugees, speak English as an additional language. The school works closely with a number of external agencies to offer support to all these pupils' very varied needs. The proportion of pupils learning in English as an additional language at the college is increasing. The college provides sensitively and well for their needs and is well placed to deal very effectively with this increasing demand. Boys and girls can participate equally in all that the school does. The school is aware of the under-achievement of boys nationally and has appointed a teacher to a post of responsibility for raising boys' achievement.
- 40 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. In religious education there is a good unit of work which addresses promises and vows in marriage and reflects upon 'until death us do part'. Pupils are encouraged to consider how beliefs affect their lives. A particular project in art explored the horrors of war, while other art projects investigated the spiritual qualities in Aboriginal art and the expression of

mental illness and breakdown in Edward Munch's 'Scream'. The college has introduced a "thought for the week" to encourage reflection in morning tutor-time and in assembly. The thoughts are planned by the guidance team leaders and are printed in the pupils' planners, in the weekly bulletin and displayed in all classrooms. The thoughts are linked to times of the year, anniversaries and specific festivals of significance to Christian and other world faiths.

- 41 The provision for pupils' social development is good. In several subjects pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs and small groups and to exercise responsibility in practical situations. They are taught to have patience and to share resources. In art there are opportunities to discuss each other's work and in religious education there are opportunities for group work and for encouraging group discussions. Many subjects promote visits and expeditions to places of interest and recreation which create further opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. Pupils in both geography and biology are able to experience field studies at an outdoor centre, while the drama department encourages pupils to make regular visits to local theatres. Holiday time visits to France and Italy, including day visits, have been very popular and have also provided important links to other cultures.
- 42 Awards and presentation evenings give the opportunity to celebrate pupils' achievements in many areas of college life and also enable pupils to hear some well-chosen speakers. Bridging the transition from primary school to secondary school was the objective behind a most exciting Year 7 project in the first month of the college year. Before the formal time table came into effect the whole year group spent a month on a programme of enrichment and social activity aptly named "Reach for the stars". For each week there was a different visiting artist, poet or author 'in residence'. Pupils develop team spirit on away-days at activity centres or experience awe and wonder at the National Space Centre. Currently the college is benefiting from involvement in the "University of the first age" project and many pupils are giving support to the numerous activities which take place in the after college hours. The project has provided funds for cookery clubs, art activities and a karaoke singing club, amongst many other interests on offer.
- 43 The overall provision for moral development is satisfactory. The college teaches pupils to respect the rights of others and to cooperate and meet deadlines. The code of conduct is well displayed through a series of posters in all classrooms. Many subject areas actively promote moral development: in design technology, for example, pupils are encouraged to listen to other peoples' views and to be aware of other peoples' beliefs and feelings. In religious education there is much explicit consideration of moral issues including the rights and wrongs of being faithful in marriage. In Years 10 and 11 there was discussion of Christian views about stewardship of the world and issues of cloning and animal experiments. The physical education department has extensive display addressing racial inclusion, drugs awareness and gender issues, and in the English department a display points out that "positive people don't put others down"! The impact of the college's hard work in this area is reduced by the negative role models provided by a minority of pupils.
- 44 The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Many subjects make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development: in design technology, food studies enables pupils to research into foods of other countries and in textiles there is good analysis of cultural influences upon dress design. In art classes pupils study work from Africa, India and South America. Pupils' awareness of world faiths is developed in religious education and in English pupils have the opportunity to learn about the work of the first world war poets. These are supported by an enrichment programme

of expeditions away from college together with the equally valuable experience of visitors coming into college.

- 45 There is an interesting display of a visit to the Tate Modern, organised by the art department, whose pupils were also able to experience the excitement of having their work displayed at a local art gallery. The college has also benefited from artists-in-residence who have created new paintings in college and led workshops in Indian music. A visit by the jazz musician Courtney Pine was a recent highlight. Leicester Schools Theatre Company performed "Macbeth" for Year 9 and the college mounted its own production of "Pinafore Pirates". Year 7 have visited the National Space Centre and members of Years 10 and 11 have been on a poetry writing week at in West Yorkshire. The local rugby team brought in all their trophies and talked to the pupils about achievement. Viva, a local arts initiative, enabled a number of older students to work in dance and theatre studies with pupils with special educational needs from Ellesmere College. This project culminated with a presentation of a production involving all the students, together with Prunella Scales, at a local theatre.
- 46 The school devotes a significant proportion of curriculum time to its personal, social and health education programme through one lesson each week, and twenty minutes tutor time each morning that the school includes as part of its taught time. The governors' curriculum committee takes an active role in the development of the school's curriculum and was involved in drawing up the policies on drugs, sex and health education that are now in place and implemented through personal, social and health education. Form tutors teach personal, social and health education and although in some lessons seen pupils' learning was good or very good, in others, their learning was less valuable. In order to improve the overall quality of pupils' experience the school is developing a team of specialist teachers to teach the programme next year.
- 47 Provision for careers education is satisfactory. It is taught as part of personal social and health education from Year 7 onwards, with support from the careers service for pupils in Year 11. Pupils in Year 9 are given advice for their option choices for Years 10 and 11 in the context of guidance on their careers. This approach to careers guidance is continued to help pupils choose appropriate courses if they return to the sixth form or go to college. Work experience placements are organised for all pupils in Year 11. They are very successful for most pupils.
- 48 The college has good relationships with its partner primary schools and other nearby post-16 providers. As part of the project to help transition arrangements the learning mentors visit all primary schools with members of the Year 7 team, as does the special educational needs co-ordinator. Relationships with the local community have been challenging but the college is determined and they are being successfully fostered, particularly by the work experience programme, and by the vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. The college has sought the assistance of the local community in its efforts to improve attendance and shopkeepers have agreed not to serve pupils during school hours.
- 49 The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Many pupils have very low standards of literacy and the college has implemented a variety of strategies to improve this situation in order to increase their access to the subjects of the curriculum. However, they are taught in large classes which are mainly mixed prior attainment. Their teachers have no particular expertise in teaching pupils with special educational needs so their curricular needs are not met as well as they could be.

- 50 There is some good additional curriculum provision. A significant number of pupils from Year 7 follow the Progress and Booster units of the National Literacy Strategy; small groups of pupils are withdrawn from a number of lessons for six week blocks to improve their mathematical skills; a specialist teacher works individually with dyslexic pupils; pupils in years 10 and 11 are withdrawn from some lessons to complete coursework requirements and the department has a successful record of helping pupils re-integrate into college after serious personal problems. The college has a networked computer integrated learning system but its use needs to be further developed.
- 51 A number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 have been disapplied from the requirements of the national curriculum to follow externally accredited, work related and vocational courses, appropriate to their needs. The course, financially supported by the Ministry of Defence, provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem and self-reliance.
- 52 The college is participating in the Excellence in Cities project to improve the attainment of gifted and talented pupils. Ten per cent of pupils have been identified as gifted and talented and a range of valuable extra curricular enrichment activities, including two summer colleges, visits to universities, master-classes, and a residential visit to Yorkshire have taken place. The college recognises that the most important form of provision for these pupils is through appropriate challenge in all their lessons and has plans to improve this.
- 53 An extensive range of extra-curricular activities enhances the taught curriculum. Subject departments run a number of clubs, such as sports, performing arts, and the Shakespeare club in English and art. There is also open access to the library and computer facilities at break, lunchtimes and after college for independent study. The independent study programme is well supported by the academic tutor funded by the Education Action Zone. Many departments arrange subject revision opportunities prior to examinations. Good social opportunities are provided by theatre trips, sporting competitions and visits to museums and galleries, as well as an annual visit to France organised by the modern foreign languages department. These extra-curricular initiatives attract varying degrees of support from students. Girls are slow to take opportunities in sport, for example, and there is a local culture of leaving college promptly when lessons end.
- 54 A notable development in extra-curricular provision, since 2001, is the college's involvement in the University of the First Age initiative within the Education Action Zone partnership colleges. New Opportunities Funding has been made available over three years to support this exciting project. This currently includes a wide range of activities, from Harry Potter Magic to Green Sculpture. An After College Clubs Fayre, to publicise the events was well supported by over two hundred pupils. The karaoke club attracted fifty-one students during the week of the inspection, and the cookery club has been particularly well supported. The teachers organising the project know that there is a need to encourage students to widen their horizons, and attend the clubs, in order to challenge the culture of leaving college at three o'clock.

Sixth form

- 55 The school operates an open sixth form in response to its commitment to social inclusion. There are no formal requirements for entry other than students' commitment to their continuing education, and effective counselling ensures that students take appropriate courses. Although a relatively small proportion of the school's pupils, around one quarter, return to the sixth form and fewer than half of

these students stay for two years, the college manages to offer an adequately wide range of courses for them. There are GCSE repeat courses in English, mathematics and science, fourteen AS and A2 subjects in subjects such as English and geography and in subjects such as sociology and psychology and physical education. Additionally there are AVCE or GNVQ courses in a further six subjects, including performing arts, health and social care and combinations of travel, leisure and tourism. Over the two and a half years that the college has been open the proportion of students taking A level courses has reduced while that of vocational courses has increased. Provision has matched this changing demand with an increase in the number of vocational courses available at all levels. The college has clear plans to develop the range of courses further. Class sizes in many subjects are inevitably small but they will be enlarged, and the range of courses will be secured and extended next year, when the school will share some of its sixth form provision through a consortium arrangement with a neighbouring school.

- 56 Enrichment opportunities in the curriculum are currently limited. The weekly tutorial session and the morning meetings with tutors enable the personal social and health education programme to be addressed which includes careers guidance and applications to further and higher education. In addition there are some opportunities for extra curricular experiences. A number of sports are available, which are well supported by boys. Students are also offered the option of taking a sports leadership course that leads to extra-curricular involvement in working with primary school pupils. The performing arts faculty also offers a range of extra-curricular opportunities, and students are entitled to attend appropriate clubs in the University of the First Age programme. There are some opportunities for students to join a variety of trips and visits, some of them taking place abroad, as well as in Britain. Sixth form students have good access to independent study facilities in the library, and to computers.
- 57 The college has clear plans to extend the range of these enrichment opportunities for next year and to timetable them into a coherent programme. Physical education is not provided for students although a wide range of extra-curricular sports is available. Religious education is not provided for students so the college is in breach of its statutory responsibilities. Teaching in key skills is provided for the majority of students through their GNVQ/AVCE courses, but for students who are not following these courses, there is no specific provision. The school is planning to introduce an enrichment programme on Wednesday afternoons next year and this will include provision for key skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 58 The college has sound policies and procedures to ensure the welfare of pupils. Good systems for child protection are in place and the staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. Heads of Year and their assistants, along with form tutors provide a network of support for pupils and pupil guidance teams operate throughout the school to support pupils who have attendance and/or behaviour problems. The school has a well-staffed attendance support team, which operates within a well-structured system. They monitor attendance and cases of unauthorised absence are followed up through letters and home visits. The attendance support staff work closely with the education welfare officers to investigate cases of persistent absenteeism.
- 59 As a result of the importance which the college attaches to social inclusion, the rate of permanent exclusions is kept deliberately low, but as a consequence there is a high rate of fixed period exclusions. Many pupils enter the school in Year 7 with very low levels of self control and a poorly developed understanding of the impact of their

behaviour on others. There is an in-house pupil referral unit, (4 Real), which works with pupils who have particular behavioural problems. The unit works hard to increase pupils' self esteem, and to develop their social skills. It has a high rate of re-integration of pupils into mainstream classes. Although the unit currently operates with Years 7, 8, and 9, it is hoped to extend the work of the unit to the whole school.

- 60 There is a comprehensive and well-structured mentoring system. The learning mentors provide valuable support for those pupils who have learning and behaviour problems. The majority of pupils who have received support from the mentors appreciate the help given. They regard their mentor as a friend; most pupils said that they would feel happy to approach their mentor if they had any setback in school. One pupil said that he now recognises his problems and he feels better able to cope with life in the main school. Parents of mentored pupils appreciate the support given by the mentors.
- 61 The school uses a sophisticated electronic system of registering attendance and registration is carried out at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Attendance is not consistently recorded for every lesson, and pupil's absence from lessons can therefore go unrecognised.
- 62 The complex and extensive layout of the buildings and the size of the site make supervision at breaktimes difficult. This contributes to the, often poor, behaviour outside the classroom. There is a lack of consistency in approach by staff when dealing with inappropriate behaviour at breaktimes. Bullying, usually in the form of name-calling does occur, however, those pupils affected feel that when such behaviour is reported it is satisfactorily dealt with by the staff. Bullying is not generally racially motivated and the college uses the recording and reporting procedures of the local education authority to monitor any racial incidents.
- 63 Pupils are provided with student organisers, these are rarely used and do not provide pupils with any guidance for their personal development. The college is piloting a system of electronically recording aspects of pupils' personal and academic progress, which will further improve the college's pupil support system. There is a good personal and social education programme that encourages pupils to consider their individual role in the wider community. In a Year 7 class pupils were learning about facing the consequences of their actions. Pupils in a Year 8 class were discussing choices and how personal actions are linked to ambition.
- 64 There are good procedures to ensure that the transition from primary school is a smooth process. The process of information gathering through close liaison with the partner primary schools gives form tutors valuable information. This provides a good basis for the future guidance of the pupils.
- 65 Annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational needs are carried out by the special educational needs co-ordinator in accordance with statutory requirements. Provision for these pupils is made in line with the requirements of their statements. The college enjoys good relationships with the local education authority, Nottingham University and a wide range of external support agencies. The amount of support that some agencies are able to give in practice is very limited and they rarely attend the statutory annual reviews.
- 66 The college has a variety of procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and placing them on the register. Most pupils are initially identified by their primary schools. The college enjoys close working relationships with these schools to the extent of attending the annual reviews of pupils due to join the college. The

college screens all its pupils through a series of attainment tests, after which some further pupils are placed on the special educational needs register. Diagnostic tests are then used to identify specific difficulties. Finally, there is a referral system in college by which teachers can recommend placement of pupils on the special educational needs register.

- 67 However, there is a significant shortcoming in this referral system. It is evident that many teachers do not recognise that pupils who display considerable behavioural problems are pupils with special educational needs who should be placed on the register. Instead, they regard the pupils as being simply badly behaved and therefore a problem of discipline, rather than demonstrating a need that requires support and guidance for both teachers and pupils. The overwhelming majority of pupils on the special educational needs register are recorded as having learning difficulties relating mainly to poor skills in literacy and numeracy. This emphasis by the college on literacy and numeracy as the basis of special needs is in part due to the college's response to the termly monitoring it has been receiving. In practice the main learning difficulty of a significant number of pupils in the college, many of whom are not yet on the register, relates to their behaviour.
- 68 Good individual education plans are in place for all pupils for whom they are required. They are clear, easy to use, and are shared with pupils and their parents. They contain short-term targets for each pupil and are regularly reviewed. Teachers are required to add a target, specific to their subject, to each plan, which is stuck into the back of pupils' exercise books. This allows easy monitoring by all concerned. This system has only recently been introduced, however, and although the plans are in pupils' books, most teachers have not added their own targets, nor shown signs of implementing the requirements of some of the general targets. In spite of good planning and much hard work in their compilation, they are not yet guiding teachers' work with sufficient consistency.
- 69 Systems to monitor the academic progress of pupils are good and the college has clear plans for developing this further. The college has collected a substantial amount of data which is being used to analyse the performance of all pupils. The college is now looking to use the data more consistently and systematically to inform planning of teaching and learning. A very comprehensive assessment calendar, which has been produced by departments, is a good and effective way for senior management to evaluate performance.
- 70 Good use is made of information and communication technology, especially the electronic grading and registration system, in order to link assessments made by individual departments to reporting and target setting for individual pupils. At present the science and information and communication technology departments make good use of their systems to record and analyse data and set challenging targets for pupils. These systems are planned to be used as models to support further development in other departments. All year groups have been set very challenging targets based on prior performance and the college is presently monitoring the effectiveness of the system.
- 71 In music pupils are given booklets which enable them to be involved in self-assessment at the end of each project which is then discussed with the teacher and a level of performance agreed. At the end of the year the grades lead to an overall teacher assessment level for individual pupils. All staff have access to a computer to record assessment data and to produce reporting statements. The setting of homework is inconsistent but is currently being monitored with a view to reviewing policy.

Sixth form

Assessment

- 72 A good and comprehensive system to monitor the progress of students in the sixth form is being piloted with one tutor group. All the documentation is in place and the college intends to have the system running in the next academic year. The college uses the Durham University system during the induction of students into the sixth form to predict future A and AS level grades based on their GCSE results. These grades are then used as the minimum expected standard for individual students. Each term the students negotiate their report based on effort, attendance and attainment and they are set a target to achieve in their final examination. This is then compared with the prediction and an action plan is written based on the difference between the grades. This is effective in ensuring that both teachers and students are fully aware of how well students are progressing and what support they need to improve. Good use is made of learning mentors and curriculum support teachers when action plans are being written. Reports are given to the students' tutor and progress is discussed with students and their parents. At present the college considers that it is effective at collecting data but is keen to develop further the use of assessment in planning for learning.

Advice, support and guidance

- 73 The school has an open access policy for entry into the sixth form, and is developing links with other post-16 colleges in the area. The sixth form operates a tutor system, which students feel prepares them well for study methods in Further and Higher Education. The college is conscious of the fact that many students work to support themselves and this is recognised in the sixth form timetable. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, they are allowed time off site for curriculum research or work. The students appreciate the separation of the sixth form centre from the main college. However, the poor behaviour of a proportion of main college pupils affects some lessons as staff are diverted to deal with incidents. Relatively low attendance remains a problem in the sixth form and has an effect on the learning of those pupils concerned.
- 74 Careers guidance for students is currently unsatisfactory and this situation is seen as unhelpful by the students. Staffing difficulties have compounded a poorly developed service. Students have to rely too heavily on the informal information from subject teachers, albeit sometimes of good quality, and their own initiative to obtain the guidance they need. The school has clear plans to rectify this situation by September 2002, and is piloting the National Progress Files this year to help pave the way for this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 75 At both the pre-inspection meeting for parents and through the returns from questionnaires sent out to parents the majority of parents were very critical of many aspects of the school. Staffing levels, and in particular the reliance on supply teachers, is a concern for many parents. The school publishes a well-produced and regular newsletter, which informs parents of school activities, however the reliance on pupils to deliver the newsletter limits its effectiveness. The pupils' planner contains a home / college contract which sets out expectations and responsibilities.
- 76 The progress of individual pupils is reported to parents through annual end of year reports. These provide useful information to parents about their child's progress, and

give guidance for future action. The school is currently piloting a project with Year 7 to improve the quality of reporting to parents. An annual parents evening provides an opportunity for parents to discuss their children's work with the staff. There is a comprehensive induction programme for pupils transferring from primary school that involves parents throughout the whole process. In addition an open evening is held for the parents of Year 7 pupils as part of the induction process. This meeting enables parents to discuss any early concerns with the head of Year 7 and form tutors.

- 77 Parents appreciate the well-organised system of support and guidance, especially for those pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Many of the parents of these pupils feel that their child's behaviour has improved as a result of the intervention of the mentoring team. Members of the pupil support team meet parents to agree on plans to improve behaviour and to support learning. However, the contribution made by many parents to pupils learning through supporting their work at home is unsatisfactory. The setting of homework across the school is inconsistent.
- 78 The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed good working relationships with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Their attendance at the annual review meetings is very good. Parents are kept well informed of additional provision, such as the Progress Units, that are to be offered to their children, and are frequently invited to college to discuss their children's progress and any difficulties. There was good attendance at the recent meeting to inform parents about the Progress Units. Parents have responded positively to the co-ordinator's invitation to evaluate the quality of the department's relationship with them and have provided useful feedback.
- 79 The governing body is working hard to develop the relationship between the college and parents. Parents have two opportunities each term in which to meet the governors to discuss any areas of concern and ideas to improve the college. The governors hope to extend the scope of these meetings in the future in an attempt to forge stronger links with the local community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 80 It is clear that after a comparatively short time New College is beginning to develop into a cohesive unit, and overcome some of its daunting initial problems centred around the size of the establishment, the organisation of staffing and resources, and the behaviour and management of pupils. This has been achieved through the clear vision and leadership of the principal and her senior colleagues. They have set effective procedures in place for the college to move forward and to continue to develop and improve its performance. Very effective leadership by the principal has resulted in a remarkably unified senior team which is committed to promoting and improving the developing standards which the college achieves.
- 81 The governors are thoroughly committed to the college and take an active interest in its progress. They assume their role as critical friends of the college and are very effectively involved in its strategic planning and financial management. It is apparent that the governing body is aware of where the college's strengths and weaknesses lie, and give full support to the senior staff in their efforts to take the college forward. Governors meet with parents on a regular basis, are involved in faculty discussions, and meet with members of the senior team in the college to keep abreast of financial and other issues.

- 82 The college's development planning is of a very high order, and the principal and her senior colleagues are justifiably pleased with its effectiveness over the first thirty months of the college's existence. The planned actions for improvement are on schedule, and the college is moving forward. A telling effect of the quality of leadership is the way in which other staff with management responsibilities support the initiatives which are taken, and contribute fully and effectively themselves to the leadership and management of the college.
- 83 Financial matters are effectively and efficiently dealt with. The college is involved in a large number of schemes and initiatives to raise attainment and to improve the quality of education which it can provide for all its pupils. The grants obtained from these initiatives are appropriately spent. Spending is closely geared to improving the college's performance, either through developing teaching and learning or through the improvement of the learning environment, and developments are evaluated to ensure that value for money is achieved. The college has launched initiatives to improve boys' performance through increasing self-esteem, and learning mentors have been recruited through the Excellence in Cities project with a view to improve all pupils' attitudes to learning.
- 84 The college has very effective measures in place for monitoring and evaluating its academic performance, including a rolling programme of faculty reviews, which are centred on the quality of education which they provide. As a result of each review an action plan is drawn up and acted upon effectively. In addition, senior staff regularly review whole-college issues such as assessment and develop action plans for improvement. There is a well-established culture of constant review and improvement. However, there needs to be a greater integration of performance management into the strategies for evaluation and review.
- 85 Appropriate measures are taken to ensure the successful induction of teachers new to the profession and to help other teachers new to the college to settle in. Newly qualified teachers have a planned programme of induction and meet on a weekly basis to examine key aspects of the teaching role. Their classroom performance is monitored at faculty level, and guidance on supporting new teachers is provided. There is as yet no monitoring by the staff training co-ordinator of the quality of support which new teachers receive across the faculties. The continuing professional development of teachers is effectively linked to the college priorities. There are in-house training events but professional development outside these areas is insufficiently well co-ordinated, monitored or evaluated in terms of value for money.
- 86 There are significant difficulties in some subject areas in terms of the number of suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff available to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum. The college has tried very hard and employed a wide range of appropriate strategies in its attempts to recruit new teaching staff. However, in English, science, history, information and communication technology, design technology and religious education staffing shortages have had an impact on the quality of education which the college is able to provide. This is especially so where the subjects have had to be taught by supply staff and non-specialist teachers. In some subjects the college has temporarily deployed instructors to help support the curriculum. In information and communication technology, such staff carry out the majority of teaching 11-14 while the more experienced staff in the faculty have timetables devoted mainly to post-14 teaching. The college has been able to recruit and retain sufficient staff to sustain its sixth form courses.
- 87 The effective deployment of teaching staff needs to be improved. Although the pupils per teacher matches the average for a college of this type, class sizes are well above

average. The impact of this situation is greater than in some schools because of the proportion of pupils of all ages who display challenging behaviour. Standards, and the progress which pupils can make, are adversely affected by the classroom management difficulties which this creates in some lessons. Teachers new to the profession or with comparatively little experience are asked to manage large classes which would challenge the skills of experienced teachers anywhere. At present the college does not make the most effective use of its teaching force, and staff should be deployed with a view to bringing class sizes down and thus easing the burden of class management.

- 88 The leadership and management of the department for pupils with special educational needs are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the work of a large and effective team of learning support assistants and specialist teachers and meets with them regularly. Their roles and responsibilities have been well defined and their deployment is well organised. Statutory requirements in regard to pupils with special educational needs are well met. The nominated governor for special educational needs takes a very active approach to her responsibilities and chairs a governors' committee on special educational needs. She visits the college weekly and is helpfully well informed about the department and its development. She is clearly conscious of the responsibility of governors to ensure that the provision for pupils with special educational needs meets their requirements.
- 89 However, the college's system for monitoring provision is not as effective as it should be. The co-ordinator does not directly monitor pupils' learning experiences in the classroom. Monitoring is through reports from support assistants and through reviews of the individual education plans which are brief and subjective. Professional guidance, advice and support to teachers would be strengthened if this was based on her own identification of areas for development.
- 90 The college premises are very extensive, and this presents some severe management problems, especially outside lesson times. A number of organisational strategies have been employed since the college opened, and there are plans to rationalise the site still further. Before the opening of New College, significant improvements were made to the existing accommodation. This investment has provided the college with some good teaching and learning areas. Particular strengths are an outstanding theatre, the library and a suite of excellent science laboratories. The accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum in all subject areas. Many classrooms are enhanced by good quality displays, although in some parts of the buildings, opportunities are missed to bring out the richness of the curriculum, for example in the corridors. Some of the physical education area is outdated and in need of refurbishment. This will be rectified during the planned building programme which includes a sports hall.
- 91 Social facilities for pupils are good. Sixth form students have the benefit of their own attractive social area, and provision for peaceful independent study, which they appreciate. The college has taken on its own cleaning contract, and the quality of the accommodation owes much to the hard work and care of these staff, who take pride in their work.
- 92 Resources are well managed and deployed in the college. During the amalgamation a range of resources became available and the college is still in the process of working through these in a number of faculties. Financial resources for faculties are effectively targeted using formula funding related to pupil numbers with a weighting towards expendable and re-useable materials. In addition there is a bidding system for faculties linked to the priorities in development planning. The college priorities for

resources at present include the library, support to heads of faculty, improving the learning environment of classrooms and to upgrade or renew information communication technology hardware for administration and curriculum delivery. The business manager is aware of the importance of seeking a balance between staffing and non-staffing costs and seeking best value at all times.

- 93 Resources in the library are not yet complete and there is a "Double Dewey" system operating at the moment. This results in no subject index for staff or pupil reference and pupils involved in independent research are more likely to rely on staff help. The information communication technology facilities attract many pupils at break, lunchtimes and after college. There is a satisfactory range of fiction books and lower attaining readers are well catered for with an emphasis on graphical literature. There is, however, a shortage of good modern fiction. In faculties, book resources are generally satisfactory and good in science. In Art there is a shortage of information and communication technology resources and no ceramics work is undertaken in this faculty. The religious education faculty makes good use of a local centre which has a multi-faith unit from where resources can be borrowed. In design technology there are limited resources for delivery of control technology and there are no computer aided design and manufacturing facilities.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

- 94 The leadership and management of the sixth form is very good, it is well organised and effective. The Director of Continuing Education is appropriately qualified and experienced and works well and closely with the Vice Principal responsible for the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and Post-16. They have a very clear view of the current performance of the sixth form and have clear plans to strengthen the areas that need developing. Financial management is well organised and well integrated with the finances of the main school, being brought together by the Business Manager.
- 95 The post-16 development plan is a clear well focused document which identifies realistic and appropriate areas for development, such as to increase staying on rates and increase the quality of the curriculum offered to students.
- 96 The school has a deliberate policy of encouraging students into the sixth form and has marketed this aggressively in the city. They are keen to maintain the academic provision through AS and A levels and are actively developing a broad range of vocational courses. In order to widen the range of courses on offer the school has already entered into partnership with other post-16 providers and is currently finalising arrangements with another. This creative approach is effective at offering the students a broad and increasing range of courses in both academic and vocational areas.
- 97 Performance management arrangements for staff in the sixth form are currently poorly developed but the school has clear plans to improve this. The roles of team leaders in the monitoring of teaching and learning need to be further developed. Staff turnover has been relatively high and the school has done all it can to reduce the impact of this on students' work.
- 98 The sixth form is very effective at achieving its aims within the framework of the college aims. The number of students on some of the courses is very low due in part to the low priority given to further education in the local community, and competition

from long established sixth forms nearby. The open access policy, which is appropriately designed to establish this new sixth form, results in students of relatively low prior attainment starting courses. These factors together result in the current cost effectiveness of the sixth form being unsatisfactory. With the strengths of the leadership and management, and the high levels of staff commitment and clear plans, the college is well placed to raise the cost effectiveness in the future. The range and use of resources in the sixth form matches that of the main school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

99 In order to improve the quality of provision and the standards attained by pupils, the governors, principal and staff should address the following:

1. The behaviour of a significant number of pupils, especially when out of classrooms, needs to be improved by:

- (1) identifying more effectively those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and providing them with appropriate support;
- (2) improving the consistency with which misbehaviour is dealt with;
- (3) improving the management of behaviour outside lessons;
- (4) reducing the size of some classes.

(Paragraph numbers: 13 - 15; 18; 23 - 27; 31; 59; & 62.)

2. Standards of attainment need to be raised by:

- (1) continuing to implement the college plans in this area including the work on literacy;
- (2) improving behaviour;
- (3) improving attendance and punctuality;
- (4) raising the expectations placed on pupils in some subjects.

(Paragraph numbers: 4 - 12; 38; 49, & 87.)

3. Greater emphasis in the support given to pupils with special educational needs should be devoted to those whose difficulties relate to behaviour by:

- (1) identifying more effectively those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- (2) reviewing staff deployment and providing staff development to ensure that teachers and support staff are well trained to deal with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

(Paragraph numbers: 19; 24; 59; 67, & 77.)

4. Staff deployment needs to be reviewed in order to reduce the size of some classes by:

- (1) reviewing the cost effectiveness of staff deployment;
- (2) implementing strategies to increase some group sizes in the sixth form.

(Paragraph numbers: 24; 28; 35; 54, & 87.)

5. Despite the college's best efforts, attendance and punctuality are poor and are impacting negatively on standards and achievement and need to be improved by:

- (1) continuing to implement the college plans in this area backed by the extensive systems and resources already in place;
- (2) ensuring a greater consistency in the use of the electronic registers in lessons;
- (3) reviewing the timetabling of rooms to minimise the distance pupils have to move between lessons.

(Paragraph numbers: 16; 20; 22; 36; 48; 60; 61; 72, & 73.)

6. The college needs to do more to encourage parents to work in partnership with the college by:

- (1) continuing to implement the college strategies in this area;
- (2) organise further opportunities for dialogue with parents;
- (3) explain more effectively: the successes of the college; the challenges it faces and why it tackles these in certain ways, and the ways in which parents can play a greater part in their children's education.

(Paragraph numbers: 16; 68; 72; 75 - 79, & 81.)

Sixth form

1. Careers guidance needs to be improved by:
 - a. continuing to implement the college plans in this area;
 - b. providing a comprehensive service which makes full use of outside agencies.(Paragraph numbers: 56 & 74.)
2. Curriculum enrichment needs to be further developed and brought together in a coherent programme by:
 - a. continuing to implement the college plans in this area.(Paragraph numbers: 56 & 57.)
3. Cost effectiveness needs to be improved by reviewing group sizes on some courses by:
 - a. continuing to implement the college plans in this area;
 - b. reviewing current timetable arrangements by amalgamating some groups.(Paragraph numbers: 55 & 244.)

Minor issues

In addition to the above key issues, the school has a number of less significant weaknesses which governors should consider including in their action plan:

1. The college needs to revise its curriculum to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements for modern foreign languages and religious education by:
 - a. exploring the potential for introducing a second modern foreign language;
 - b. ensuring any disapplication of pupils from the National Curriculum is carried out in accordance with national guidance;
 - c. providing religious education for all in Years 10 and 11.(Paragraph numbers: 34; 37; 57, & 198.)
2. A daily act of collective worship needs to be provided by:
 - a. exploring and implementing appropriate strategies to ensure all pupils experience a daily act of collective worship.(Paragraph number: 37.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	135
	Sixth form	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		167

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 – 11

Number	0	23	56	49	5	2	0
Percentage	0	17	41	36	4	1	0

Sixth form

Number	0	5	20	6	1	0	0
Percentage	0	16	63	19	3	0	0

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

Information about the college's pupils

Pupils on the college's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the college's roll	1632	115
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free college meals	478	-

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	102	0
Number of pupils on the college's special educational needs register	720	2

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	107

Pupil mobility in the last college year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	120
Pupils who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	124

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	11.3
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	5.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	146	142	288

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	62	46
	Girls	50	56	40
	Total	90	118	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	31 (27)	41 (43)	30 (34)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	10 (10)	12 (20)	7 (10)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	55	53	51
	Girls	63	52	52
	Total	118	105	103
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	41 (49)	36 (41)	36 (31)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	13 (15)	16 (18)	14 (6)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	129	147	276

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	19	68	98
	Girls	25	93	114
	Total	44	161	212
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	College	16 (11)	58 (53)	77 (81)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	College	19.2
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	College		43
	National		n/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A level or AS level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	19	43

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
College	Number of candidates	24	19	43
	Average point score per candidate	8.1	14.3	10.9
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.8	17.4

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
College	Number of candidates	24	19	43	6	5	11
	Average point score per candidate	6.0	12.1	8.7	8.7	10.5	9.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	36
Black – other	11
Indian	55
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	6
White	1331
Any other minority ethnic group	179

Exclusions in the last college year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	12	0
Black – other	39	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	543	8
Other minority ethnic groups	19	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	93.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	54
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1,819

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 2	n/a
Key Stage 3	28.3
Key Stage 4	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	5,266,129
Total expenditure	5,590,390
Expenditure per pupil	3,330
Balance brought forward from previous year	(116)
Balance carried forward to next year	(324,377)

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	88
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	172

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	10
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	632
Number of questionnaires returned	225

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	20	48	16	12	3
My child is making good progress in college.	24	43	14	14	5
Behaviour in the college is good.	20	24	19	28	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	27	25	31	4
The teaching is good.	11	33	25	20	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	12	27	29	31	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	22	40	19	13	7
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	32	41	8	10	9
The college works closely with parents.	8	25	32	27	8
The college is well led and managed.	9	24	21	31	14
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	14	39	19	20	8
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	31	18	16	18

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- The strong commitment and dedication of the teachers in the faculty.

Areas for improvement

- Raise pupils' attainment in all years.
- Review schemes of work to include specific reference to provision for pupils with special educational needs; those learning in English as an additional language, and the gifted and talented.
- Develop further systems for assessment, targeting and tracking of pupils' progress.
- Extend the monitoring of teaching within the faculty.
- Develop the use of information and communication technology within the English curriculum.

- 100 Pupils come to the college with levels of attainment which are well below average. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average and well below those achieved by similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above was 31 per cent, which was an improvement on the results in 2000. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was very low, six per cent in both years. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. English achieved slightly better than science but slightly less well than mathematics.
- 101 The results of the 2001 GCSE English examination were well below the national average. Thirty three per cent of pupils entered achieved grades A*-C. The percentage achieving grades A*-G was in line with the national average. These figures were very slightly better than the results in 2000. Some pupils failed to complete coursework or were absent for the course and the examination.
- 102 In the 2001 English literature GCSE examinations 26 per cent of those pupils entered achieved grades A*-C compared with a national average of 56 per cent. The number achieving grades A*-G was in line with the national averages. Boys achieved slightly better than girls but the difference was not significant. These results were slightly lower than those of the 2000 examinations.
- 103 Work seen during the inspection was well below average overall in the three attainment targets: speaking and listening, reading and writing. At the end of Year 9 speaking and listening standards are well below average overall. Many pupils lack the skills and the vocabulary to speak effectively in varied situations. Apart from most of those pupils who are learning in English as an additional language, many find it difficult to express themselves adequately in Standard English. Responses are often very brief and many pupils lack confidence in their speaking abilities. By the end of Year 11 standards overall are still well below average but a substantial minority have improved their ability to speak appropriately and relative to purpose. A minority in Year 11 are fluent and persuasive speakers, expressing themselves confidently.

- 104 By the end of Year 9 reading skills are well below average and remain so by the end of Year 11. A minority of older pupils have average reading skills and are able to interrogate GCSE texts thoughtfully and intelligently. These pupils are able to detect, discuss and analyse relevant features of an author's style, commenting on characterisation and themes. Lower attaining pupils often have difficulty in reading for meaning and detecting implied meaning. Their range of active vocabulary is limited. Most of these pupils do not possess an adequate conceptual framework from which to develop their ideas on plot, character and language use, for example.
- 105 Pupils' writing skills are well below average by the end of Year 9 but by the end of Year 11 are below average. A minority are average by the end of Year 11 and can write well about personal experiences and construct stories and poetry. This work is well structured and developed. Throughout the school to the end of Year 11 the majority, however, lack a sense of audience and purpose when writing. Their writing is often flawed by repeated errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The lowest attaining pupils produce very limited work, without structure or development.
- 106 Progress is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Many pupils make better progress in lessons than they do over time as their retention of knowledge is weak. Progress is better for older pupils because they have a more positive attitude to their work. Most behave well, pay attention to the teacher and make some effort. Younger pupils, especially those in Year 7, often lack concentration and self discipline. As a result they sometimes behave inappropriately in the classroom and their progress is affected as a result. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress relative to their prior attainment. Although pupils start from a very low base on entry they achieve well because of skilful and dedicated teaching.
- 107 Teaching is good overall. The majority of lessons seen were either good or very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Lessons sometimes begin with a short language based activity, in line with the National Literacy Strategy framework and this is helping to raise standards of literacy. Major strengths of the teaching are good planning, with lesson structures which encourage learning and interest. For example, a Year 9 lesson required pupils studying 'Macbeth' for examinations, to construct a suitably phrased defence speech for Macbeth and then to deliver it to the rest of the class. This ensured good learning of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. Most teachers have very good classroom management skills which often enables calm learning to take place in potentially difficult situations.
- 108 Lessons have a good sense of pace and purpose; for example, a Year 11 group revising the novel 'Roll of Thunder', were challenged by a variety of activities which compelled them to recall what they had learned previously and make use of this information. Teacher-pupil relationships are generally good, resulting from the commitment and dedication shown by the staff of the faculty. Lessons usually have a good level of challenge; for example, a Year 7 group were challenged to develop the opening of 'Great Expectations' using empathy and prediction to direct their writing. Tasks are usually varied and interesting but on occasions more use could be made of active independent learning. Where teaching is less strong there are some weaknesses in behaviour control, sometimes arising out of inappropriate lesson planning. Marking is good. Work is marked in detail and comments are supportive and show how the pupil can make progress. There is usually a specific target for the pupil to aim at.
- 109 Leadership and management of the faculty is sound. The head and the second in department are both competent and dedicated. The members of the faculty work

together well as a team. Satisfactory progress has been made to improve provision since the college opened; an ethos of high expectations has been created, staffing has been partly stabilised, although this remains a problem, professional development of the staff has been encouraged and suitable testing has been introduced to allow accurate setting to take place. The department has well-considered development plans which are appropriately focussed and detailed.

- 110 The faculty now needs to explore ways to improve the attainment of pupils in all years. Some of the factors which affect this - such as negative attitudes to learning and extensive absence - are, however, beyond the sole control of the faculty. The department needs to explore how to convert the percentage achieving grades D to C grades by tightly focussed examination preparation. The faculty needs to develop its systems of assessment more fully so that full use is made of data for tracking and target setting as well as analysis of examination results. Faculty schemes of work need to be revised to take into account more fully the needs of pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils who are gifted and talented. Monitoring of teaching would enable the Head of Faculty to track the development of teachers and offer appropriate advice on lesson planning and behaviour management. Whilst some information and communication technology is used in English its use is not yet fully developed or integrated adequately into planning. Given the commitment, quality and dedication of the teachers, the English faculty is well placed to continue to improve.

Literacy

- 111 Literacy levels are low overall. Technical accuracy in writing is often weak. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are common throughout all years. Writing skills are generally underdeveloped with many younger pupils unable to effectively undertake extended writing. Higher attaining pupils are, however, able to compose writing which is longer and more appropriate to its purpose. Reading skills are well below average. A majority of pupils have reading ages which are below or well below their chronological age. Some lower attaining pupils have difficulty in reading for meaning; levels of active vocabulary are often very low. Speaking and listening skills are, overall, weak. Many pupils lack the vocabulary and confidence to speak at length in an appropriate form. Their oral responses are often not in standard English and very brief.
- 112 Provision for literacy is good and developing steadily. There is a college-wide focus on improving literacy standards. An appropriate literacy development plan contains a relevant focus on success criteria and time and resource implications. The literacy consultant and the literacy co-ordinator are effective and work well together to manage this development and the college is well placed to continue to make improvements in this area. The LEA has provided a range of support to the college and most staff have been involved in LEA training for literacy. Because of the low levels of literacy on entry, Literacy Progress Units have been incorporated into specially extended morning registration periods. These are effectively delivered but often suffer from pupils' absence and lack of punctuality. Speaking and listening has been tackled by introducing a 'Circle Time' into registration periods for younger pupils when they are given opportunities to speak and listen to each other. Other literacy skills such as note making and comprehension skills are also taught in these periods.
- 113 The provision for literacy in departments is not yet fully developed. Some departments have departmental policies for literacy whilst others do not. Most make good use of key words to highlight subject specific vocabulary. Errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation are not consistently corrected in most departments. In one

or two departments, such as English and drama, pupils are encouraged to draft work to encourage accuracy but this technique is not yet sufficiently common. Many departments do not require pupils to produce extended writing, although where this occurs, (English, drama and art), pupils benefit from the opportunity to practise using appropriate language for a specific purpose. Similarly, although design technology requires some pupils to read beyond the immediate information requirements of the syllabus, this is not common practice. Most departments do, however, encourage speaking and listening skills by providing question and answer sessions, discussions and role-play. The use of the college library and information and communication technology facilities to assist in literacy provision is developing satisfactorily.

Drama

- 114 Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are well below average. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment in Years 7 to 9 is broadly in line with the levels expected nationally, and in Years 10 and 11 it is average. For those pupils who attend school and participate in lessons, this represents a good level of achievement given their prior attainment.
- 115 The standards of work seen in Year 8 are broadly average. The majority of pupils co-operate well in group work and listen carefully to instructions and advice. Most groups produce a mime, using appropriate body language, but a significant minority does not participate in the lesson. Girls achieve well in a Year 7 lesson. Most girls understand what a 'moral dilemma' is. They decide how they are going to depict this, adopt roles and rehearse in small groups, effectively. High attainers take a leading role and perform to a good standard with creative flair. The poor behaviour of most of the boys, in this lesson, has a negative impact on their learning. They find it difficult to work cooperatively, and show a lack of awareness of the impact of inappropriate behaviour, like pushing and laughing, on an audience.
- 116 GCSE results, in 2001, are in line with the national average. Pupils gain better results in drama than they do in many of the other subjects that they study. Drama and dance are popular subjects at GCSE, and pupils show a developing maturity in their approach to the subject. Standards are satisfactory, and they make good progress. There is a growing awareness of how to use body language, lighting and acting levels to create a variety of dramatic effects, for example, Year 10 pupils create a definition which describes the horror genre, and evaluate each other's work with a degree of success. High attainers stay in character well, realise that the horror genre creates dramatic tension and can sustain this in performance. Year 10 pupils attain average standards in dance. Almost all pupils show good control and body tension, as they perform in the role of animated dolls. They synchronise their movements well, and high attainers show precision, fluency and good quality of movement. Year 11 pupils, creating their own dramatic piece of examination work for GCSE, perform convincingly. There are some talented and creative pupils who are able to produce sensitive interpretations of given situations. Some are able to discuss aspects of drama, such as Brechtian techniques and symbolism, with confidence. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in drama lessons, and make good alongside their classmates. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are given appropriate attention in lessons.
- 117 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There are no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make appropriate use of drama to explore social and cultural issues such as drugs and aggression. They have good strategies to manage difficult pupil behaviour, and ensure pupils get a sound grounding in a wide range of acting techniques. Relationships between staff

and pupils are good, and this creates a co-operative learning environment. Most pupils enjoy the practical work, and have satisfactory attitudes towards the subject. A range of teaching strategies is used, effectively, to involve pupils and give them a share of responsibility in their own learning, well illustrated in a Year 8 lesson, where pupils evaluated their own and others' work, confidently.

- 118 Leadership and management of the subject are good, supported by a strong, committed staff team. The drama department is building up its own ethos and traditions. There have been several drama and dance productions which involve pupils of all years, including the sixth form who often help with production. There is also a lively programme of workshops and visits to performances. There are plans for further developments in dance, and improvement in the provision for drama in Year 9. Current Year 9 pupils do not have the opportunity to study drama in the curriculum, which has an impact on continuity and progression in learning.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning.
- The enthusiasm, commitment and team work of the department and the vision of the head of the department.
- Good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- Assessment data which is used effectively.

Areas for improvement

- To continue the improvement in examination results.
- Monitoring of teaching, learning and exercise books.
- Development of the schemes of work, including the development of the use of information and communication technology.

- 119 Pupils enter the college with results well below the national average. At the end of Year 9 standards of attainment of the majority of pupils are well below the national average. Test results at the end of Year 9 show that around 40 per cent of pupils reached level 5 or above and 12 per cent reached level 6 or above in mathematics. These results are well below the national average for similar schools. Achievement by the majority of pupils by the end of Year 9 is good. Pupils with special educational needs also make appropriate progress. Boys and girls perform equally well at this stage.

- 120 By the end of Year 11 standards of attainment are well below the national average. Approaching 20 per cent of GCSE candidates last year achieved grades A* to C. 76 per cent of candidates achieved grade A* to G. Boys and girls perform equally well at this stage. Achievement and progress of the majority of pupils is satisfactory including those with special educational needs.

- 121 Standards of work seen in lessons and pupils' exercise books during the inspection are at the expected level for the majority of pupils. The main problem in mathematics is the lack of retention of knowledge which prevents pupils attaining well. Pupils produce a good quantity of work in the lessons because of their positive attitudes. Pupils with special educational needs are mainly taught in sets comprising lower attaining pupils and while they make satisfactory progress this could be improved if the group sizes were smaller.

- 122 Teaching is a strength of the department, it is mostly good or very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen with a newly qualified teacher. All lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. A Year 7 group were improving their manipulative skills by constructing triangles using ruler and compasses and enjoying this work. Two Year 8 groups were being led methodically to solve equations with unknown values on each side and they were then able to solve this type of equation confidently. In a very good Year 11 lesson on graph drawing the pupils were grouped according to their prior attainment and all were being challenged.
- 123 The development of the three part lesson which is part of the National Numeracy Strategy is becoming normal practice and some good starter exercises were seen. A Year 8 group were asked to draw as many shapes as possible with a given perimeter. Short mental arithmetic tests were used as a starter in a Year 10 and a Year 8 lesson, and these provided good revision work. Mental arithmetic skills are good and pupils use calculators appropriately. Teachers make effective use of questioning during group work and pupils are encouraged and able to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class. Good support is given to the pupils when they are undertaking work on an individual basis. Homework is regularly set, marked and returned to pupils to correct their mistakes and make progress. Good records of individual pupils' progress are kept by the teachers. The pace of work was well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- 124 As a result of effective teaching most pupils acquire knowledge of basic concepts and skills which enable them to work on their own to improve their understanding. The pupils have a positive attitude to their work in mathematics, they settle down to work quickly and behave well in lessons. Pupils answer fully the frequent questions they are asked during group work. Relationships between pupils and with the teachers are very good.
- 125 The department are an enthusiastic, hard working and committed team of teachers who work well together. The teachers have high standards and high expectations of the pupils. They are well led, and in the short time the Head of Department has been in post he is making his mark. He has vision for the department and is very well supported by his senior colleague on the management team who makes a valuable contribution to the department both as a role model and as a mentor. The department development plan is a detailed and practical document with important areas for development outlined. It is closely linked to the college development plan.
- 126 The mathematics curriculum is appropriate and meets the statutory requirements providing equal access and opportunity for all pupils. Teachers are well qualified and have a secure grasp of the subject and its requirements. The quality of teaching and learning could be further improved by the sharing of good practice between the teachers. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used in Years 7, 8 and 9. This needs further development now to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to take part in more investigative and information and communication technology work. Literacy skills are improved by the displays of key words, the use of correct mathematical language and good questioning in the lessons. The department rooms provide a pleasant working environment with wall displays of pupils' work, key words and posters. Some text books in the department are too old and in short supply and new good quality text books would improve the quality of learning.

Numeracy

- 127 Standards of numeracy of the majority of pupils are good. The college's very good response to the National Numeracy Strategy has improved standards of numeracy in the college. The development of pupils' numerical skills forms an increasing aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Lessons in all years involve starting and finishing exercises and pupils show good levels of confidence and skills with number when undertaking these exercises.
- 128 Pupils make a good use of number in a range of subjects. For example, in science, good graphs were drawn from data tables and pupils of all levels of attainment were able to make accurate calculations. In design and technology pupils were measuring, weighing and costing materials. They were able to draw graphs and analyse data in food technology. Good graph drawing was seen in geography. Pupils were able to analyse and interpret data and apply their co-ordinates work to 4 figure grid references. It is clear that pupils are transferring their mathematical learning effectively to different contexts.
- 129 Members of the mathematics department have completed training in numeracy with the local education authority. The numeracy co-ordinator and head of department have delivered good quality inset to the whole college. This included showing the staff some standardised methods used for teaching topics such as basic number work, bar charts, pie charts and graphs. This has been well received by staff. An audit is to be carried out on numeracy work done in other subjects and progress will be monitored in three month's time. Next year numeracy work will form part of the work done in the extended registration period. The numeracy development plan is a good, detailed and comprehensive document. The numeracy co-ordinator and head of department are enthusiastic and committed about the development of numeracy across the curriculum. The college is well placed to continue to make improvements in this area.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Commitment of staff.
- Clear and imaginative leadership.
- Outstanding new science laboratories.
- Teaching often good or very good.
- Strong technical support.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in public examinations.
- Further improvement in management of pupil behaviour.
- Need to reduce group sizes/provide extra teaching support.

- 130 Standards in science on entry to the college are well below national expectation. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below national expectation. When compared to standards achieved by the end of Year 9 and in GCSE, pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in their time at the college. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above in national tests in 2000 and 2001 was well below the national average. In a Year 7 lesson, for example pupils' initial understanding of the ideas underlying investigative and experimental science were very poorly developed. On the other hand, in a Year 9 lesson introducing the way in which plants make food, pupils contributed well to the lesson and were able to derive the word equation for the process of photosynthesis. There is, however, a wide range of attainment across the college. In another Year 9 lesson, pupils were researching individual planets to make a poster for display. Some produced useful posters but others spent so little time on task that their final contributions were of little value. Practical skills are limited in Years 7 to 9, but improve by the end of Year 11.
- 131 Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below the national average. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed examples of some high achievement particularly in the assessed practicals; in a Year 11 lesson on balancing equations all could handle the word equations and whilst some had difficulties with the chemical groupings all were able to complete the final task without any difficulties. Similarly, in a lesson on photosynthesis with a Year 10 group, pupils were readily able to draw and interpret the shape of the graph by reference to the biological processes involved.
- 132 Absenteeism has been very high and this considerably reduces average scores in national tests at the end of Year 9 and 11. The GCSE averages are also reduced by the fact that the college has an entry policy which ensures that almost all its Year 11 pupils are entered for the double science GCSE examination.
- 133 While the college has no previous report with which to compare progress, it is clear that in the short time that it has been open the department has made significant and substantial progress in setting up its curriculum and establishing effective systems to support teaching and learning.
- 134 The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and was good or better in well over half the lessons observed. The quality of teaching throughout the school to the end of Year 11 is very consistent. Lessons are well planned based on department schemes of work and learning objectives are always shared with the pupils and displayed on the board at the start of each lesson. Relationships with pupils are very

good even in cases where there is inappropriate pupil behaviour in the lesson. The majority of lessons are teacher directed but across the department there is a range of teaching strategies employed. Many pupils appreciate being given more responsibility for their own learning for example, in a lesson with a Year 8 class where each pupil chose which disease to research and a Year 11 class where each pupil selected a musical instrument to model.

- 135 Pupils' assessed investigations demonstrated some excellent examples of independent work, which had effectively extended the higher attaining pupils. Support is available in some lessons usually associated with pupils with statements of special educational need. This support can be very good where the support staff are familiar with the content of the lesson. In a Year 7 lesson, most pupils found the task of writing a poem very difficult and much individual encouragement was needed and the support teacher was able to provide this in addition to the class teacher.
- 136 Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in science lessons. Many pupils are interested in the subject and many answer questions well. Listening skills are poorly developed and teachers frequently have to repeat simple points. In a minority of lessons, learning can be inhibited by the inappropriate behaviour of some pupils. A lower attaining Year 9 class producing posters about the planets from information in books were frequently disturbed by a small number of extremely restless pupils who achieved little themselves and distracted the rest of the group. However, other groups work well with little or no disruption. In a Year 8 class working on antibodies there was some minor disturbance from time to time by a very small number of pupils but this had little effect on the lesson and pupils completed the different tasks in the lesson successfully. Similarly, in a lesson as part of a topic on musical instruments, a lower attaining class in Year 11 worked consistently to construct models of musical instruments and identify the different sounds produced by their models. Pupils' attitude to science varies in a similar way to pupil behaviour. Pupil progress is monitored carefully with newly developed central records based on pupil achievement in tests and form the basis of target setting with pupils. Marking of pupils' work is generally of a good quality with many supportive and helpful comments.
- 137 All pupils follow a balanced science course for 12 per cent of curriculum time in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils follow a science course for 20 per cent of curriculum time and almost all follow a double GCSE science course with a very small number following a certificate of achievement course in science. There are clear plans to introduce a vocational course for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 next year. Extra curricular activities are being developed such as a science club, visits to the National Space Centre, and university visits. The curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils.
- 138 The science curriculum covers a number of aspects of the college sex, health and environmental education programmes. The department places strong emphasis on providing opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to consider moral issues related to science. Practical work in science ensures that pupils are made aware of the social needs, rights and responsibilities of others.
- 139 Standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, are very variable across the different classes. The science department has clear policies to develop pupil skills across these areas and all laboratory displays include science word lists and additional word lists were given in some lessons, usually with lower attaining groups. A number of opportunities are made to extend pupils' writing in science. A Year 7 mixed attainment group working on a topic of

variation wrote poems on this theme, some using a format suggested by the teacher whilst others devised their own style. Much emphasis is placed on the understanding of graphs in science and this was seen clearly with a Year 10 group who rapidly drew three graphs from a data table provided. Information and communication technology is developing rapidly in the department as more equipment becomes available and pupils of all ages showed confidence in using information and communication technology. A Year 8 class working on diseases quickly researched a particular disease chosen by the pupil using the Internet.

- 140 The head of department provides clear and imaginative leadership. In less than two terms since her appointment schemes of work have been rewritten to incorporate new developments and the science staff have ownership of these schemes. At the same time many national initiatives have been introduced to support learning. For example CASE, Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education, has been introduced to enrich learning in Years 7 to 9, and the WISE, (Women into Science and Engineering), bus has visited the college to encourage more girls into science-related careers. A science club extends pupils' opportunities. The science staff work well as a team which includes the laboratory technicians who provide outstanding technical support to the department. There is a good balance of gender and age in the science staff and the many staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. At the time of the inspection there were three science teachers absent through maternity leave or illness which considerably stretched the resources of the department.
- 141 The science accommodation is outstanding, all laboratories have been refurbished or are newly built. Laboratories are of a good size and the environment in the science department encourages learning. There is an adequate supply of equipment and materials in science thanks to the careful work of the laboratory technicians. Much equipment in use is old, some dating from before the amalgamation; there is even an imaginative display of old, and obsolete, physics equipment in one laboratory. Facilities for information and communication technology in science are improving rapidly as new equipment is being supplied as part of the new laboratory furnishing. For example, some staff regularly use computer based presentations projected onto large screens.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Rising standards.
- Good teaching.
- The care for pupils.
- Leadership.

Areas for improvement

- The teaching of basic skills of drawing and the reliance on copying.
- The use of sketchbooks for investigation, experimentation and personal research.
- Management of the behaviour of a significant number of younger pupils, who interfere with the learning of others.
- Use of assessment data to recognise weaknesses in the curriculum and set targets.

- 142 Standards of attainment in art by pupils on entry to the college are well below average. Pupils in Year 7 have poorly developed basic skills of investigation, experimentation and personal response through drawing. Teacher assessments of pupils' standards by the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well below average. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrate good understanding of tone on regular figures based on Paul Cézanne's "everything in nature is based on cylinder, sphere and cone". Pupils draw difficult still-life groups of bottles and other man-made objects rather than organic material, which would allow a more personal interpretation. Pupils cannot capture space, form or texture in their drawings. Their use of tone tends to flatten rather than accentuate form on less-regular figures.
- 143 Pupils do not have sufficient personal understanding of the work of famous artists. Much work is unfinished, and reflects many younger pupils' lack of pride in their work. Weak drawing skills prevent all but the best pupils recognising how well they are doing or how they might improve. Pupils are taught the rudiments of colour and use collage to make hot and cold compositions. They have an open-minded approach to new ideas and use mixed media including wool and buttons to create images of the human face.
- 144 Compositional skills are better developed than drawing skills. The most creative images seen in Year 9 were personal interpretations of Monet's "Poppy fields at Giverny", almost expressionist in the energetic use of dabs of colour. Year 9 work is relatively more challenging than in Years 7 and 8. Annotation of work is in its infancy and what there is contains many spelling mistakes. The use of images copied from books, magazines or the Internet is a significant weakness throughout the department.
- 145 Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average overall. The number gaining A* to C grades in the 2001 GCSE examination was below average with the girls doing somewhat better than the boys. However, every candidate was awarded a pass between A* and G, which was above the national average. These results were amongst the very best in the college and an improvement on those of 2000.
- 146 Sketchbooks are used insufficiently and investigation and experimentation are limited although there is increased appreciation of the possibilities offered by varying line quality in drawings of branches, twigs and leaves in pencil and watercolour. Much work gives evidence of good progression from Year 10 to Year 11. Pupils look at still-

life paintings going on to produce their own compositions based on Paul Cézanne's work, often starting from initial drawings in pencil and coloured pencil. These drawings again display under-developed skills but the proportions and compositions are much improved. Similarly, watercolour and Indian ink experiments, again inspired by Cézanne's representation of a plaster bust and drapery show the pupils' progressively improved handling of colour and tone. At the same time there are pictorial compositions based on Egyptian Art but too much work is merely an enlarged image taken from magazines, often enlarged on the photocopier. Pastel work is more adventurous, giving more opportunities to experiment than pencil. A boy's lively interpretation of van Gogh's "Bridge at Arles" in pastel, allowed good insight into the artists' methods.

- 147 The increased challenge and the higher expectations of teachers evident in Years 10 and 11, along with the pupils' more mature attitudes and behaviour, lead to good achievement by the end of Year 11. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 9 and good progress by the end of Year 11. Many of these pupils have behavioural as well as learning difficulties and they respond well to the knowledge that their teachers value them and their work. They feel secure in the art department. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11, thanks to the extra time their teachers make available at lunchtime and after college; and while none were awarded the A* grade in the GCSE examination, above average numbers gained grade A passes.
- 148 Teaching in art is good. The behaviour of a minority of the pupils, who interfere with the learning of their classmates, linked to poor basic skills means that learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, even though teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and invariably present their lesson activities with enthusiasm, hoping to encourage a good response in their pupils. Most pupils recognise their teachers' genuine feel for their subject and respond accordingly. A teacher gave a very good presentation in a Year 9 lesson devoted to Pop Art. She explained Andy Warhol's reasoning behind his paintings of Campbell's soup cans. Her pupils made good, sensible contributions to the discussion, offering keen personal insights, generated by the teacher's particularly good management. When the practical session began this mood of co-operation vanished and the boys, in particular, made it clear that they felt they had done more than enough already.
- 149 Both teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are good and reflect the good attitudes and behaviour of these older pupils. Year 10 pupils made good progress in a lesson devoted to designing a Surrealist room. Again the teacher gave a very good introduction, linked to the television programme "Changing Rooms". The class were very attentive and well focused, listening to the teacher's good explanation of Dali's use of "trompe l'œil" imagery and illustrations from René Magritte. The pupils developed a good feel for the activity and were keen to start. The partnership between the pupils and their teacher was clear for all to see. Experimentation with techniques of drawing was central to the lesson's purpose but copying was central to the pupils' activities. This reliance on copying allows the class to know what they are doing but gives them an unrealistic view of how well they are doing or how they might improve. Homework is not well enough designed to challenge the full attainment range of pupils. Poor attendance is having a noticeable effect on pupils' progress and such pupils often fail to meet the coursework requirements of the GCSE examination board.
- 150 The current curriculum is too narrow and limits creativity. There are no opportunities for pupils to work with clay, even though two of the teachers are ceramics specialists and the college has very good facilities. There could be more opportunities for pupils

to generate or manipulate imagery with digital cameras, computers or specialist software while printmaking and textiles could be further developed. The visits to the Tate Modern in London, working with artists-in-residence, and seeing their work exhibited in Leicester's New Walk Art Gallery, all contribute significantly to the pupils' cultural experiences. Assessment procedures in art are thorough but the information gained could be used more to set short-term targets for pupils or to identify weaknesses in the curriculum. Sketchbooks are issued each year but the use of these could be further developed as reference resources and could be seen open alongside pupils as they work more often. Inside the front cover is a word wall and pupils fill the bricks with new words, such as Aborigine and tone, as they occur. Multi-cultural issues are explored, offering insight into the spiritual qualities of Aboriginal dreamtime paintings and African carved heads but there could be a greater response to the world around Leicester.

- 151 The management of the department is good and the head of department provides strong, enlightened leadership and an ambitious vision for the future. Training for the monitoring of teaching and learning is completed and is to be implemented next term. Development planning could focus more clearly on raising standards. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory and the shortage of information and communication technology hardware and specialist software inhibits the breadth of the curriculum. The accommodation in art is good with adequate display areas and storage space. The department is making good progress in the short time it has been in existence.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Good teaching overall.
- Good documentation outlining policies and practices.
- Standards in practical work are good.
- Relationships and attitudes of pupils towards the subject are good.

Areas for improvement

- Raise levels of attainment in examination performance.
- Develop control and CAD/CAM in pupils' work.
- Ensure assessment and marking procedures are consistent across the faculty.
- Consider alternative courses at Years 10 and 11.

- 152 From very low attainment on entry pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 7 to Year 9 and there is good progress in practical work. Standards of work by the end of Year 9 are well below the national average. Pupils can use a range of hand and power tools and equipment in a safe and responsible manner. Good achievement in work was seen across all areas of the faculty as in an investigation into different materials such as synthetic, lycra and nylon in a textiles project, good research in a college tuck-shop project in Year 8 and good methodology shown in a food project in Year 9. Good work was also seen in a project looking at foods from different countries. Where the work is weaker it is usually due to poorer presentational skills both graphical and written, lack of depth in research and evaluations incomplete. Spelling errors are seen in much of the work.

- 153 In the 2001 GCSE examinations, results were well below the national average for boys and girls at A*-C and A*-G. Girls are performing somewhat better than boys and are close to the national average for A*-G grades. Individual specialisms had varied

success with food technology performing at a higher level than graphics with resistant materials and textiles particularly weak. All specialisms are well below the national average. The majority of pupils are achieving well.

- 154 Standard of work in Year 11 is below the national average overall. There was a proportion of good work seen in most areas of the faculty, and achievement is often good especially in practical work. For example, in a graphics project researching logo designs, good investigations into existing products in a CD rack project in resistant materials and good analysis of results in a project looking at vegetarianism. In textiles an interesting project looking at cultural influences in design was seen where good use of colour was used together with good investigation of the properties of materials. The best design folders use information communication technology, modelling of ideas and photographs when presenting information. Where the work is weaker there is insufficient depth in research, lack of development in ideas, limited range of presentational skills used or where work is unfinished. Irregular attendance by a significant minority of pupils is affecting their standards and limiting their progress.
- 155 The quality of teaching and learning is always at least satisfactory and is good overall with some very good teaching seen. In the better lessons learning is increased and good progress made because teachers use good subject expertise to develop or expand ideas, use time and resources effectively, lessons have good pace and good pupil management. For example, in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were increasing their technical understanding of product design in food technology, a Year 10 resistant materials lesson where effective teaching strategies and a mix of activities helped to increase practical skills and a textiles lesson where exemplar material and skilful demonstrations were used to increase understanding of concepts and processes. Satisfactory lessons have many positive features but sometimes pupil inattention affects progress and pupils are slow to respond to teacher instructions. Work in some design folders can be rather limited in depth and some marking is over-generous in an effort to encourage pupils.
- 156 Pupil attitudes are generally good. They work well when suitably challenged and especially in practical work. There were instances of inattention and pupils being off task during teacher explanations and demonstrations. Younger pupils can be rather excitable and noisy when working which can distract others. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by the class teacher and occasionally by support assistants. Pupils with behavioural problems know what is expected of them in a practical situation and are generally co-operative. All pupils integrate well and make satisfactory and often good progress especially in practical work.
- 157 The faculty is effectively led and the head of faculty has worked hard to maintain standards during staffing difficulties. Documentation is well prepared and a curriculum audit has taken place. Development planning is good with appropriate strategies to improve standards and pupil progress, in place. Assessment procedures have also been reviewed and have begun to be used in lessons. National curriculum levels are not currently used consistently in Year 7 to Year 9 and pupils are not always aware of how well they are performing. The curriculum needs to be further developed to address control and computer aided design and manufacture. Monitoring takes place but needs a sharper focus to include consistency of marking of pupils' work. The faculty should also consider additional or alternative courses in Years 10 and 11. Literacy and numeracy skills are generally satisfactory and pupils make good use of information and communication technology in their work. The use of differentiated material is being implemented as a support to learning but needs further development for lower and higher attaining pupils. The work booklets used in food technology are a good example of early developments in this area.

- 158 Improvements seen over the last two or three years include a new food technology room, an information communication technology suite added to the area, some upgrading of equipment in resistant materials, schemes of work have been reviewed in-line with new national curriculum requirements and assessment procedures reviewed.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Some good teaching and learning.
- All teaching is at least satisfactory.
- Some good standards of attainment in Year 11.
- Good accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in all year groups.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in all year groups.
- Development of the curriculum to include the better modification of tasks and materials to meet the needs of all pupils; the use of fieldwork in Years 7 to 9; the use of information and communication technology in all year groups.

- 159 In the last two years the standards in the teacher assessed tests at the end of Year 9 have been well below the national average and below those of most other subjects in the college. The proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or above dropped from 2000 to 2001. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls at the higher levels but significantly more boys than girls attain the lowest levels. Standards seen during the inspection are below those expected nationally.
- 160 In Years 7 to 9 pupils acquire an appropriate geographical vocabulary although their spelling of geographical words and place names is frequently inaccurate. They are able to use a range of geographical skills: they can interpret maps, read information from photographs, read data from tables and interpret and draw climate charts. However, these skills are not well developed by most pupils and remain at a fairly basic level. In Years 8 and 9 pupils study processes in physical geography. Their written work is adequate but the diagrams of many are not well drawn and indicate that while their understanding of volcanic processes is satisfactory, they have only modest understanding of the complex processes involved in coastal erosion and deposition. Pupils in Year 9 understand the global impact of football as a business but the work of many lacks depth or subtlety and some are reluctant to empathise with workers in less economically developed countries who are exploited to serve the needs of more economically developed countries.
- 161 In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 the proportion of pupils attaining grades A* - C in 2001 was well below the national average and geography was amongst the lowest performing subjects in the college. Almost all pupils who were entered for the examination gained a pass grade, in line with the national average, although a significant minority of pupils who had followed the course was not entered for the examination because they had failed to complete sufficient work. Standards seen during the inspection were well below the expected levels for pupils in Years 10 and 11 with the exception of one class in Year 11 where the standards of pupils who attend regularly are in line with the national average.

- 162 Pupils in Years 10 and 11 identify and interpret geographical patterns and processes. Pupils in Year 10 read information from photographs and maps of urban areas in order to hypothesise realistically about social problems that arise from living in high rise blocks of flats and suggest reasonable solutions to those problems.
- 163 Pupils in Year 11 understand the different types of poverty experienced in the world and can interpret, accurately, data from a poverty index table. They have a good understanding of the water cycle, of the relationship between rainfall regimes and flooding and can use their knowledge to identify potential problems from the rising water table beneath London. In Year 11 coursework pupils conduct geographical enquiry. They test hypotheses through competent first hand investigation, draw reasonable conclusions from their findings and present them in a variety of formats, using graphs, maps and tables as well as text. A small minority of pupils enhance their presentation through the effective use of information and communication technology. However, in a significant number of pupils' exercise books in both years, much work is incomplete, diagrams and graphs are carelessly drawn and written answers to questions are brief and superficial.
- 164 The achievement of most pupils in relation to their prior attainment in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory although that of perhaps one fifth is unsatisfactory as a result of their poor attendance. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when they receive individual help from a support assistant, but the majority do not receive such assistance and their progress is slowed when writing tasks are too difficult or their unsatisfactory behaviour wastes time. The work of some gifted and talented pupils is markedly better than that of the majority of pupils at the college and is in line with the national average.
- 165 The overall achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory as a result of poor attendance and unsatisfactory behaviour. During the inspection only around two thirds of pupils attended each of the lessons seen and the knowledge of the course of the frequent absentees is incomplete. Many pupils in Year 11 have not submitted their coursework so cannot achieve good results. The achievement of all pupils in many classes is reduced by the unsatisfactory behaviour of a substantial minority of pupils.
- 166 Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In most classes in all year groups, at least a significant minority of pupils is keen to learn and to respond orally to questions and present their work carefully and neatly. However, there is also a significant minority in most classes who are reluctant learners and who behave sufficiently badly as to diminish the learning of all pupils in the class. The achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language is good. They behave very well in class and work hard, often managing to ignore other pupils' poor behaviour and to achieve good results.
- 167 All teaching is at least satisfactory and in a significant number of lessons is good or better. The subject knowledge of all teachers is good and all lessons are well planned. Good lessons have a clear exposition with a lively, engaging style of delivery in which expectations of pupils are high and a sense of pace is maintained. This engages the interest of pupils who think reasonably hard about their work, sustain concentration and learn effectively. In a Year 7 lesson on map skills the activities were presented as fun to pupils who responded with enthusiasm and acquired a good understanding of map symbols.

- 168 In many lessons teachers encourage learning by making effective use of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding such as in lessons in Year 9 on football as a world wide business. Although information and communication technology is generally under-used the Internet and word processing were used to good effect in a Year 11 lesson where the teacher's good skills and well prepared worksheet enabled pupils to develop their understanding of the development of the Grand Canyon. Above all, learning is good where pupil behaviour is good and or is well controlled by the teacher, by such strategies as frequent use of deserved reward, by the physical organisation of the classroom and by insisting, calmly, that pupils follow the instructions of the teacher. Pupils in Year 11 worked hard in a lesson where clear tasks were set, relationships between pupils and with their teacher were good and where the teacher dealt well with pupil misbehaviour.
- 169 Areas for improvement in teaching include the use of better and more stimulating resources that would make the subject more real, appealing and challenging. The work presented to pupils across the attainment range is too similar; there is little extension work to challenge gifted and talented pupils and tasks and materials are insufficiently modified to make them properly accessible to pupils with special educational needs. There are weaknesses in the marking of pupils' books as few spelling mistakes are corrected, there are few diagnostic comments on pupils' work and some work is over-rewarded. The main area for improvement is in the better management of pupils' behaviour through positive strategies, through clarification of and adherence to basic rules of good behaviour and by re-ordering the seating arrangements in many lessons.
- 170 Leadership and management of the subject by the recently appointed head of department are satisfactory although much remains to be done. The appropriate scheme of work which is being developed does not yet incorporate the use of information and communication technology, and fieldwork, for pupils in Years 7 to 9, nor does it indicate how teaching approaches should be modified to meet the learning needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Assessment procedures in general are improving but need further development and standardisation. Monitoring of the work of teachers is at an early stage of development. Accommodation is good in a suite of four large classrooms. Resources are satisfactory. Staffing is unsatisfactory, as there are only three qualified teachers not the four that the timetable requires.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Commitment of the teachers.
- Teachers' dedication to the progress of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE take-up and performance.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning.
- Management of the department.
- Use of information and communication technology in lessons.
- Broadening the range of teaching strategies to develop pupils' ability to work independently and think critically.
- Tackling underachievement by some pupils.

- 171 Pupils enter the college with standards in history well below national expectations. Attainment by successive cohorts in Years 7 to 9 shows a slight improvement. Standards seen during the inspection were below average but show an improvement on past performance. Attainment is well below average at the end of Year 9 and 11. Performance of pupils with special education needs follows the same pattern. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment by the end of Year 9 and pupils learning in English as an additional language make good progress.
- 172 Few pupils reach the higher grades in GCSE although there are indications that a slight improvement is taking place. GCSE results are well below national averages. They are also significantly below those of other subjects in the college, especially where girls' performance is concerned.
- 173 Teaching is satisfactory overall throughout Years 7 to 11 and in Years 10 and 11 is sharply focused on GCSE requirements. Subject knowledge of the teachers is satisfactory and lessons are well planned. In Years 7 to 9 there is a strong emphasis given to managing pupil behaviour. This is usually undertaken successfully but the challenging behaviour of a significant number of pupils, and the often low level of attainment, particularly in literacy, often place restraints upon teaching strategies. As a consequence lessons are often heavily dependant upon teacher direction and are too reliant upon pupils' listening skills. Wider issues arising from the subject matter are seldom discussed and teachers could pursue supplementary questions more frequently. The wide range of prior attainment in classes is usually addressed by directing some oral questions to individuals and by setting additional written work. Higher attaining pupils could be given more opportunities to extend themselves. Where there are no support staff present some lower attaining pupils make slow progress.
- 174 Teaching throughout Years 7 to 11 is focused effectively on the range and depth of historical knowledge. Greater attention to source-based work could be developed, especially in Years 7 to 9 and would lead to greater emphasis on enquiry and interpretation of information. The high absence rate in some classes has a marked impact upon the attainment of persistent absentees. At their best, pupils' notebooks are well presented, but in some instances the quality of written work has deteriorated recently. In the main, the work set is insufficiently challenging. Teachers' scrutiny of pupils' work files and exercise books is not consistent across the department.

- 175 Pupils are usually attentive but in some classes rarely volunteered answers or pose questions. Pupils' poor command of English is a constraint on learning for some. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 can describe and account for events and changes, for example how Northern Ireland came into being, but find it difficult to evaluate sources of information and use them critically to support conclusions. Some effective learning was observed in which, for example, pupils were introduced in a lively fashion to the day-to-day life of a Roman soldier and were given a variety of opportunities of how their understanding of this had progressed. There is much scope for drawing upon the history of the Leicester area and making greater use of facsimiles, artefacts and other original material.
- 176 In the present circumstances, the leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The college has clear plans to appoint a new head of history shortly, which should give the department much needed focus and direction. The history department has suffered from severe staffing difficulties leading to inadequate interim management arrangements. History is managed within a World Studies faculty, which was without a head until September 2001. The college has attempted to deal with the challenge of staffing by creating a history co-ordinator who is a newly qualified teacher, the third person to manage the department since the college's foundation in 1999. The co-ordinator is joined in the teaching of history by a graduate trainee "instructor", a teacher who is also head of Year 9 and, since January, a teacher from the physical education department. The co-ordinator and her colleagues work well together in difficult circumstances to alleviate the problems caused by this lack of staffing continuity. There is a commitment to improving standards and a range of clearly targeted study support material is being developed.
- 177 The subject is satisfactorily resourced overall. The department has adequate teaching accommodation. Wall displays, including pupils' work, are put to good use inside the classrooms. The stock of textbooks is large but often dated, which has an adverse impact on GCSE coursework, and the department has difficulty in finding material suited to the needs of its pupils. A resources bank and video library are being built up. Further exploitation of the potential offered by information and communication technology, for record keeping and targeting, needs to be developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching overall is good or better.
- Good resources with good pupil/computer ratio.
- Recognition of need for further development and appropriate plans.
- Good technical support.

Areas for improvement

- Staffing structure and deployment.
- Development of the curriculum opportunities for all pupils.
- Cross curricular information and communication technology.

- 178 The level of attainment of pupils entering the college is below the national average. Standards in Year 7 are improving and pupils now progress well with a new scheme of work. There is no discrete information and communication technology course in Year 8 and pupils continue information and communication technology in Year 9. As a consequence of the disruption to their curriculum in Year 8, pupils in Year 9 are not

progressing as well as they might and by the end of the current year standards will still be below the national average. Pupils in Year 9 are working on basic graphics topics and simple word processing tasks. They are not yet able to select information for different purposes, nor develop and refine their work. They do not present ideas in a variety of ways, and are not able to use a range of software techniques.

- 179 By the end of Year 11 standards have improved each year, but are still below the national average. In 2001 only 31.8% of pupils gained A* - C grades at GCSE, which is significantly below the national average, with 86.9% gaining grades A – G. This is just below the national average. The number of boys and girls taking GCSE is about equal although the girls gained somewhat better results than the boys. All pupils throughout the school, of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those learning in English as an additional language, make good progress.
- 180 Teaching and learning is good overall or sometimes better among the four qualified staff in the department. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and they plan and structure lessons well so that pupils improve their knowledge and skills. Teachers set appropriate tasks to extend pupils and the pace of lessons is always good. Appropriate homework is set to extend classroom teaching and learning. Teachers manage pupils with care and ensure a good learning classroom environment.
- 181 There are also two instructors in the department and the classroom management skills of the instructor responsible for Year 9 is a cause for concern. There is some planning but the unsatisfactory teaching and the low level of tasks does not allow pupils to extend their learning sufficiently. Pupils currently in Year 9 did not progress satisfactorily when in Year 7 due to further staffing difficulties. Their progress is now adversely affected and their end of year attainment will be below the national average.
- 182 In Year 7 teachers have identified tasks to improve the low level of attainment on entry to the college. At present pupils are developing a range of basic techniques to create and edit their work. They are able to clearly explain what they are doing and how to use the limited facilities of the software. In the current topic pupils are learning how to 'cut' and 'paste' and explain the difference between that facility and 'copy' and 'paste'.
- 183 In Year 9 pupils can use a spreadsheet to produce low level graphs from very simple data. There is no theme to allow progression and pupils do not demonstrate the ability to insert formulae into the spreadsheet or use the spreadsheet for modelling.
- 184 In Year 10 teachers plan well and provide good structured activities. They set tasks that challenge the pupils and allow them to progress their learning. Pace of lessons is good and pupils extend their knowledge and skills in the use of information and communication technology. Pupils are willing to discuss their work and extend previous knowledge and skills. They display competence and a depth of knowledge in the use of software. The current topic is based upon the 1851 and 1871 census of a town near Leicester. A well structured worksheet leads pupils through a series of questions. Pupils interrogate and search two databases to find the answers. They produce a presentation using either word processing or desk top publishing software. Pupils demonstrate a range of skills in searching, sorting and filtering the databases. They handle multiple windows with ease and flexibility and can create 'screen dumps' to enhance their presentations. They explain which facility is the most suitable for any particular question and demonstrate how to use that facility.

- 185 In Year 11 pupils are completing GCSE course work. Teachers plan well and provide specific information for various aspects of the coursework. They give individual and focussed assistance to pupils and encourage them to achieve well. There is a range of attainment, but the good quality teaching should ensure an improvement on the grades of previous years. Pupils are able to explain in detail the focus of their projects and how they have planned and designed the solutions to the tasks. They demonstrate how they have used the facilities in implementing their designs. They describe how they chose appropriate software and demonstrate advanced skills in handling the software.
- 186 Overall, pupils respond well in information and communication technology lessons and behaviour is satisfactory or good, except in Year 9 classes. In these lessons a small number of pupils lack attention and concentration, though the others are determined to work and complete set tasks. In other classes pupils co-operate with and assist each other. They openly discuss their work and are able to explain what they are doing. They can explain how they use the facilities of the software and freely demonstrate their skills. Pupils work independently and are willing to experiment and find out new techniques for themselves. In Years 10 and 11 pupils show independence in managing and presenting their coursework. They contribute to class discussion and concentrate with enthusiasm. They can fully explain the task they are undertaking and can demonstrate how to effectively use the software to advance that task. They also show initiative in the planning and implementation of their projects.
- 187 The department is well lead by an enthusiastic Head of Faculty. There have been a number of positive developments since the college opened. The pupil/computer ratio is 1:5, which matches the national average. Resources are comprehensive and extensive with four well equipped information and communication technology rooms. The library has a good suite of computers; there are facilities in science, design and technology and in the area dedicated to work related subjects. These full resources allow pupils in every class to work on their own computer. However, in most years pupils are taught in tutor groups with more than 25 pupils in each class. Consideration should be given to reducing class sizes.
- 188 Since the college opened, and despite its best efforts, difficulties with the staffing of information and communication technology have affected the attainment of the pupils. Some stability this year has been provided by the current four qualified staff and two instructors. That stability could be further developed by ensuring a department of appropriately trained and qualified staff. The staff should be deployed to ensure all members of the department teach across all years. This is important for continuity and personal staff development. There is good technical support with two technicians who have a wide range of skills and experience. The Head of Faculty has a number of other commitments in the college and it would be appropriate to consider the appointment of an information and communication technology co-ordinator to progress the development of the curriculum across all years.
- 189 Pupils are taught information and communication technology in Years 7 and 9, but not in Year 8. This has a detrimental affect on progress and is one of the reasons why the standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national average. The current Year 9 did not reach national standards when in Year 7 and the lack of information and communication technology in Year 8 has hindered the raising of standards.
- 190 The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is developing. Inspectors observed some good examples of the use of information and communication technology in lessons. A number of departments use information and communication technology effectively such as music and design and technology. A

good lesson in geography used the internet as well as other resources to extend pupils' learning about the Grand Canyon. Others examples were observed in science and biology, English and maths. Most departments would like to develop and extend their use of information and communication technology and have greater access to computers. All rooms can be booked and a number of departments use the information and communication technology rooms and the library resource.

- 191 The current management of cross-curricular information and communication technology is poor. The college should consider setting up a Cross Curricular information and communication technology group with representative membership from every department. A member of the senior management team would be an appropriate chair in the first instance. This group should identify the required elements of information and communication technology and develop strategies for the delivery, monitoring and assessment of those elements.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, provision for modern languages is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching of examination pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 have improved.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers should have higher expectations of their pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The department should develop a shared approach to teaching which provides more support and continuity for pupils to develop their speaking skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to language learning are often unsatisfactory, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Class sizes in French are too big.

- 192 In the teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9, just over half achieved the nationally expected level in 2001, and some exceeded it. This showed a marked improvement over the previous year, but remains well below the national average. At age 16, 54 per cent of the small group of pupils entered for the GCSE examination in French achieved grades A* to C in 2001. This is above the national average.

- 193 Most pupils make a reasonably sound start in Year 7, but their progress is not sustained throughout the next two years, and some pupils' attainment towards the end of Year 9 is very low compared with the national average. Most of the highest attaining pupils fail to reach the required standard. Progress is not generally related to pupils' prior attainment; for example, in classes where progress is satisfactory, all pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs. In Year 7 most pupils make at least satisfactory progress, although standards of work are beginning to tail off in some groups; differences in performance are often directly related to the range of work set and the quality of the teachers' marking. These differences in individual achievement are much more marked in Year 8, where in one group pupils were seen to be able to build quite complex sentences in French, where in parallel groups standards were very markedly lower.

- 194 The differences were most marked in two groups of higher attaining pupils: in the class where the teacher gave pupils ample opportunity to rehearse the language they had learned, pupils made good progress, whereas in the other the teacher made no attempt at the beginning of the lesson to remind the pupils of what they already knew

and could say. In the one class pupils were pleased with their success and eager to respond, whereas in the other attitudes to learning were poor and behaviour was unsatisfactory.

- 195 In Year 9 the progress which pupils make is in the main unsatisfactory whatever their prior attainment. This is due to the low expectations of teachers which sometimes results in unsatisfactory behaviour and poor attitudes to languages learning. Too often energy is spent attempting to control the class and teachers do not make enough demands on pupils to speak the language and to build up sentences through constant, teacher-guided rehearsal and repetition.
- 196 The lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 were very different. They were taught by the most experienced teachers in the department, and showed good planning related to the demands of the examination syllabus. Pupils in both years showed levels of attainment which were around average, and all were making at least satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils can understand French in spoken and written form, and are developing suitable speaking and reading skills.
- 197 Teaching overall in the department is satisfactory, and the teaching of older pupils is good. Where activities are planned to involve the teacher teaching and interacting with the pupils to practise language forms and develop speaking and understanding skills, pupils try hard, enjoy their work and make progress. Where the activities planned by the teacher involve too little actual teaching and class interaction, but move swiftly to written exercises, pupils often switch off because the lesson does not sufficiently capture their imagination.
- 198 The curriculum for modern foreign languages which the college offers is unsatisfactory. Only one language is taught, and all but a few pupils discontinue their study of French at the end of Year 9. The disapplication of language learning for most pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not completed in due form, and is consequently in contravention of statutory requirements. Less time is allocated for the teaching of French in the lower college than in most schools.
- 199 There is a suitable scheme of work for French; it is based on the text-book in use and outlines the learning outcomes, possible teaching activities and expectations of what pupils will know for each stage. There are indications of how the work can be matched to pupils' capabilities. The use of computers, although not built into the scheme of work, is an occasional feature of languages teaching at New College. The scheme of work does not pay sufficient attention, however, to lesson planning and to the basic skills of effective teaching.
- 200 The head of department and half of his staff are new in post in the current academic year, and it is clear that systems of monitoring, evaluation and control which will be necessary if the department is to improve are not yet in place. Some evaluation of the department's performance has taken place as a result of the faculty review, and an action plan has been drawn up which includes the development of teaching and learning strategies. However, the modern languages department would benefit most from more immediate and practical help and support, especially for the two teachers who are new to the profession and who are asked to cope with classes which would tax the skills of much more experienced professionals. Class sizes in modern languages are far too large. This, coupled with the poor attitudes and behaviour of a substantial proportion of the pupils, impacts heavily on the standards which pupils achieve and the progress which they make.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

Strengths

- Teacher subject knowledge is very good.
- The relationship between teacher and pupils is good.
- The department works hard to involve pupils in music.
- Behaviour is managed well.
- The department is well resourced.

Areas for improvement

- Overall attainment is low.

- 201 Many pupils join the college with well below average attainment. They have very limited skills in singing and keyboard playing and pupils' experiences of music outside of the 'pop charts' is very restricted. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in Year 9 is significantly below national expectations and is in line with the last reported teacher assessments, which showed pupils to be working well below the national average. Many pupils are working from an inadequate start in their musical lives and so attainment is still limited in Year 9, but there were signs, in the lessons observed, of improving standards in the earlier years. GCSE results are also well below average when compared to those for all maintained schools. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in the present Year 11 are similar to those of last year but that standards in Y10 are significantly higher.
- 202 Pupils show a lively enthusiasm for music and the response to the new karaoke system was almost overwhelming! It has already been shown to have greatly encouraged singing as an activity and some well chosen songs have provided excellent material for keyboard teaching. In a Year 8 lesson pupils, having first sung a song, were able to quickly play the opening lines on a keyboard. Because of the repeating note patterns many pupils were able to make considerable progress during the lesson and to enjoy a very satisfying performance. In Years 7 to 9 pupils' behaviour can be excitable, and sometimes challenging, but overall they show considerable interest and generally behave well, with most pupils responding satisfactorily to the tasks of the moment. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' behaviour is very good and they respond well to the demands of the work. In Year 10 pupils showed considerable competence in using computers as an aid to their coursework composition. However, in a Year 11 group, where pupils were working on a timed composition exercise, attainment was generally low and understanding of how to make a musical composition was not well developed.
- 203 Overall the standard of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and very good in Years 10 and 11. Throughout all years the good teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher. In the Year 10 class using computers, the teacher's own knowledge of the potential of the program, coupled with his ability to quickly move around the class supporting pupils, clearly gave them considerable confidence in their work. In a Year 7 class listening to an example of Big Band Jazz, the teacher was able to lead and encourage in an animated discussion about the music. His enthusiasm for the music and his knowledge of the style were very clear factors in the pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the music. Lessons are well planned and well chosen material allows pupils to achieve well. In Years 7, 8 and 9 much of the teaching is supported by work-books produced by the teachers. These books provide a well structured course which includes very good and regular self-assessment for pupils. The department is in the process of re-working the books and

the new one for Year 7 is particularly well presented and is effectively used by the pupils.

- 204 Relationships between pupils and teacher are consistently good. The teacher is very much in command. Tasks are well structured and instructions given clearly. Lessons are often effective because of the good preparation and the teacher's knowledge of the pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning in English as an additional language make satisfactory progress throughout all years.
- 205 The progress of many pupils has recently been severely restricted by the long term absence of one of the two permanent members of the music department. Lessons have been covered by a succession of supply teachers but it has been very difficult to maintain continuity of work, which has resulted in inconsistency in progress and standards. The department has been very successful in applying for funding from national initiatives, particularly the University of the First Age. Very large numbers of pupils are supporting the new singing club and pupils have access to string instrumental lessons free of charge. The department makes a considerable effort to involve pupils in music and to facilitate access to music making in a number of ways to which pupils can relate; the new karaoke system being but one example. The quality of teaching and learning has been greatly enhanced by the very good resources which are available. The department has an excellent number of keyboards and guitars which, together with an exciting range of untuned percussion, give support to the very good curricular planning. Equipment for the playing of recorded music is of high quality.
- 206 There is planned provision for the use of information and communication technology in Year 10. There are regular bookings of an adjacent computer room and the group of seventeen pupils is able to access programs which allow exploration of sampled music. The pupils learn how to structure a simple composition using sounds familiar from popular music. As yet there are no regular facilities for computers linked to keyboards within the department itself, nor is there any provision for music information and communication technology in Years 7, 8 and 9. The department is planning to expand in areas of technology when funding is available.
- 207 The department is currently strongly led, with a vision as to where it is going, and it is managed well. There have been considerable staffing problems recently, which, despite the college's best efforts, have had a serious effect upon the consistency of progress and achievement of many pupils but the department is successful in attracting pupils who are enthusiastic for the music which is offered.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching is predominantly good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good.
- Relationships within the department are good.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the staffing structure for girls' physical education.
- Ensure that teaching activities reflect the scheme of work.
- Provide more opportunities for independent learning.
- Improve attainment throughout Years 7 to 11.

- 208 Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 show that standards are well below the national average. During the inspection standards observed in Years 7 to 9 were variable with attainment in three quarters of lessons below the national expectation. In Year 9 soccer higher attaining boys achieve well and can cross the ball with accuracy. In a Year 7 health related fitness lesson the girls could take and record pulse rates before and after activity and explain what had happened to their body after exercise. The majority of boys and girls in Year 7 pass, catch, pick up and put down a ball with control in tag rugby. However, in Year 9 hockey standards are very poor with few girls able to dribble the ball with confidence, even when walking, and their passing shows little control.
- 209 Overall standards in Year 9 soccer and rugby are below the expectation. Despite some higher attaining boys showing good scrummaging techniques, attainment in the small-sided rugby games is unsatisfactory with pupils showing little knowledge of tactics, strategies or positional play. Standards achieved by girls are somewhat below those of the boys. In many lessons there are high numbers of absentees and of those present there are often high numbers of non – participants. Standards of kit are inconsistent and some pupils perform in their ordinary clothes but the department feels that this is preferable to not participating at all. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- 210 In 2001 the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in GCSE physical education was well below national averages. However, boys who took the examination performed better in physical education than in the other examinations that they took. All pupils who took the examination achieved an A*-G grade. Observation during the inspection and predictions by the department suggest that standards will improve in the 2002 examinations. The majority of top set pupils in Year 11 GCSE theory lessons showed good understanding of issues to do with women's sport.
- 211 By the end of Year 11 the attainment of the majority of pupils is below the expected level. Skills are often poorly developed and knowledge of tactics, strategies and positional play are limited. In Year 11 volleyball the attainment of girls is poor and the majority of boys and girls cannot apply their skills at a satisfactory level when playing small-sided games. Attainment in Year 11 tennis is poor even when practising very basic skills from a hand feed. Skills and knowledge of tactics and positional play are poor overall in Year 11 basketball.
- 212 Overall, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and in more than half of the lessons observed teaching was good. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are kept interested, try hard and stay on task throughout the lesson. They have good subject knowledge and give clear instructions and teaching points so that pupils understand what they are to learn. All teachers use good pupil management strategies and behaviour in lessons is mainly good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and boys and girls work well together especially in Year 7 tag rugby when they displayed very good attitudes despite the very cold and windy conditions.
- 213 In good lessons teachers plan well with clear objectives, lesson structure and an organisation, which ensures that pupils make progress and have opportunity to practice and refine skills. Many lessons are teacher led and pupils are given insufficient opportunity to take responsibility or to learn independently. Teaching in GCSE theory lessons is good. In the higher attaining set tasks are well prepared and pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively, discussing issues to do with women's sport and to feed back opinions to the rest of the group. In another GCSE group in

Year 11 the teacher used good questions and practical activities in order to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is good in Year 7 swimming with the use of appropriate aids and activities to enable the small group of beginners to gain confidence and make good progress. In Year 7 health related fitness the teacher uses good demonstrations to make pupils aware of the expectations for quality performance. In a badminton lesson in Year 11 the very small group of pupils are taught about shot selection and tactics to outwit their opponent. Pupils' attitudes are at least good in Years 10 and 11 and in Year 11 badminton are very good. There is a good scheme of work but lesson content does not always reflect the scheme. Too often a reliance on the teaching of very basic skills does not allow for the development of principles of play or more advanced skills and knowledge of tactics, strategies, roles and positions.

- 214 The department has an action plan but better direction and clearer vision for future development would be given if there were not joint heads of department. Relationships between teachers in the department are good. Teachers of boys' physical education are appropriately qualified, permanent and full time members of staff. However, the girls' physical education department has only one full time qualified teacher supported by a part time qualified teacher and two instructors, one of whom is part time. This situation has a negative impact on standards, levels of participation and attitudes to the subject. The accommodation is plentiful and in reasonable condition though some painting is needed in the gymnasia. Extra curricular activities are plentiful and the take up of the boys is good. Football teams have had success in county and city cups and leagues and individual players gain representative honours and attend centres of excellence.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is good.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- The subject is very helpful to the personal development of the students.
- There is good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- There is very good leadership.

Areas for improvement

- The behaviour and attitudes of the students.
- Standards of literacy.
- Assessment methods in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Restoring students' entitlement to basic religious education in Year 10 and the sixth form.

- 215 The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is well below national expectations and those of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Overall, knowledge and understanding are weak, and they are held back by poor literacy skills. However, there is a wide range of attainment and some pupils do reach national levels and beyond. Higher attaining pupils show a good grasp of religious vocabulary. They have secure knowledge and some understanding of topics such as Christian teaching on marriage and how, in all six world faiths, homes and daily life reveal the religious beliefs of the families who live there. From a very low start on entry to the college, achievement is sound in relation to pupils' prior attainment for most pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Most pupils acquire some limited knowledge of key aspects of the major world faiths, why Britain is a multi-faith society, and how beliefs affect moral decisions. They can demonstrate this more effectively orally than they can in writing. They learn in ways that enable them to respond by making links to their own lives. For example, in Year 9, many pupils were able to discuss and explain their views in relation to Christian marriage vows.
- 216 The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in all years where the special needs are related to learning difficulties. This is a result of skilful and patient teaching through suitable tasks. Where special needs are related to behavioural difficulties, pupils do not progress as well as other pupils. There are a significant number of pupils with serious behavioural problems in Years 7, 8, and 9, who are not motivated to learn despite the best efforts of teachers and support assistants. Their progress is poor and often adversely affects the learning of other pupils. In one lesson only, pupils with English as an additional language were observed. They were making better progress than the rest of the class as they were concentrating well and they were keen to learn.
- 217 Standards reached at the end of Year 11 are below national levels. The proportions reaching at least grade C in the short course GCSE religious studies are below the national average. Work seen in current Year 11 classes confirms this picture overall, but achievement is good and higher attaining pupils in particular are doing well in relation to their prior attainment. They are reaching national levels, and a few are clearly exceeding them. Pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment in this subject in Year 11, and this helps teaching to be more effective than in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils were revising during the inspection. Most pupils showed at least a sound grasp of how to answer an examination question effectively on the topic of Christian teaching on care for the environment. They were given some specimen answers to evaluate, they were perceptive in their comments, and they had a sound knowledge on the topic. Lower attaining pupils who attend lessons, and do so promptly, are

making good progress. This includes those with special needs. High absence rates result in small groups, beneficial to those who are present, and they receive teaching that is well adjusted to their needs. Those who do not attend, and those who arrive half way through lessons, make poor progress. There are no Year 10 groups for the short course. This core provision for all pupils has been ended.

- 218 The number of candidates entered for GCSE in 2001 was low for statistical interpretation. Nevertheless, all pupils who entered achieved grades in the range C to G. In the current full course GCSE groups, achievement is good in relation to prior attainment. Year 10 pupils were learning effectively how to develop a balanced explanation and then come to an informed conclusion when studying ethical issues. Most could give at least one sound reason for their view on whether humans should be cloned. As in the lower years, the oral skills of most pupils are ahead of their ability to sustain explanations well in writing.
- 219 Behaviour and attitudes are unsatisfactory overall. In Years 7, 8, and 9, there are a significant number of lessons where poor behaviour and disinterest on the part of many pupils hold back learning. In these years, the pupils who do not want to learn sometimes hinder the progress of others and underachieve themselves. There is a minority of pupils in each year who do not understand the consequences of their behaviour on others and have little self-discipline. There are many pupils who do not value religious education. In the lower attaining groups in Years 11, poor attendance and poor punctuality on the part of many pupils affect their attainment and long-term achievement. Some pupils who are present in lessons in these groups are reluctant to write, but poor behaviour does not hold back learning in Years 10 and 11.
- 220 Teaching is good overall, and some teaching is very good. There is a wide range of qualifications and experience and the subject knowledge of all teachers is at least adequate and sometimes very good. Most teachers are very skilled at managing some very difficult pupils with patience and good humour. They persevere with their lesson aims to ensure that, as far as possible, those who want to learn are able to do so. The extent of learning does not always match the quality of teaching in lessons where there is widespread disinterest or poor behaviour. Some of the difficulties result from classes that are too large and without enough learning support assistants.
- 221 Teachers are working hard to develop positive relationships with pupils. They treat them with respect and dignity regardless of provocation, and they manage pupils' behaviour well in ways that avoid confrontation. Teachers plan well for a careful balance between imparting knowledge and encouraging a reflective response. In most lessons planning is thorough and the level of challenge well matched to what pupils already know and understand. Teachers also take good account of the high numbers of pupils with special needs in many classes. In one lesson judged to be poor, there was ineffective management of very challenging behaviour by an inexperienced teacher, and so very little learning occurred.
- 222 Teachers use imaginative methods and vary activities so that pupils enjoy lessons. Overhead projectors and a highly visual approach are often effectively used. In lessons with Year 7, different artists' interpretations of the crucifixion of Jesus were projected on the board so that pupils would gain an empathetic understanding of the significance of this event for Christians. In some lessons teachers are able to engage the interest of pupils very successfully. This was the case in several Year 9 lessons on Christian marriage vows where the approach was based on case studies shown on video. Pupils participated enthusiastically when there were opportunities to express their views. Time is used well in most lessons, and a good pace kept up, except that there is often a significant loss of time at the beginning through pupils

arriving late. The college has extensive buildings and the religious education rooms are at one of the furthest points. This exacerbates the problems of moving promptly between lessons, and often pupils exploit the difficulties further. Teachers provide brief 'starter' activities at the beginning of lessons to settle the pupils effectively, and to create a climate for productive study during the main part of the lesson when all have arrived. This is good practice.

- 223 There is good provision for the development of literacy in lessons but it is not yet effective enough as literacy skills are generally weak. Teachers are promoting the learning and the use of key subject words well, but there is not enough attention to reading, in order to extract information, and to writing well-structured explanations. There is adequate provision for developing information technology skills. Pupils are learning to apply them effectively for research and also for presenting work. Teachers mark work regularly and in encouraging ways. There is some effective use of targets to help pupils to progress further. Marking and assessment schemes are satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 and done well in Years 10 and 11. The locally agreed syllabus does not have 'levels' for assessment, and so the schemes are not easy to manage in the first three years. In the older years the examination requirements provide good structures for assessment, and teachers have very good levels of expertise in using them effectively. Examination pupils are given self-assessment tasks to help them progress which helps them to understand more clearly how to do better.
- 224 The curriculum meets statutory requirements as outlined in the local syllabus in Years 7, 8, 9, and 11. However, the time allowed in Years 7, 8 and 9 is a little low for meeting requirements given the context of poor attainment. The college has ended religious education for pupils in Year 10, except those who have opted for GCSE, and this will continue into Year 11. Also, there is no religious education in the sixth form. This means that older pupils do not receive their full entitlement to the basic curriculum. Religious education is making a very important contribution to pupils' personal development, so this is a significant loss in these years.
- 225 The recently appointed subject leader is providing very good direction, and has a clear and appropriate vision for future development. Leadership is from the front by example of good practice, and a notable feature is that the leader is gifted in relating positively and productively with the pupils. Leadership follows an effective collaborative style. Much good work has already occurred. The schemes of work are being rewritten to ensure they are relevant to local needs, particularly the need to build an harmonious and inclusive community, with respect and tolerance for the majority and minority groups in the college. There is a clear policy for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The subject's strong contribution to this is being further developed in the new schemes. There are appropriate plans to improve the assessment schemes.
- 226 Management is good, and is a shared responsibility with the faculty leader, also a recent appointment. There are secure procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and for giving support to non-specialist colleagues. However, the procedures are constrained because managers are not free to observe and support when it is most appropriate. The college is reluctant to arrange this because there are high numbers of supply teachers already employed. Staffing is not satisfactory, as the team are not all qualified teachers, and this does affect standards. Resources are supplemented well by the department's good use of the local authority's resource centre. The college library holds a satisfactory stock of books for the subject, but it is too far away to be used readily during lessons.

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

In the inspection, 12 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 college.

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Mathematics	4	75	71.8	0	45.4	1.5	n/a
Biology	6	50	84.8	0	42.8	1.33	n/a
Chemistry	2	100	87.3	50	49.6	3.5	n/a
Information technology	10	70	80.3	0	27.1	1.5	n/a
Art and design	8	75	86.74	12.5	50.1	1.75	n/a
Business Studies	6	83.33	88.0	16.66	33.5	2.33	n/a
General Studies	26	34.6	82.2	11.53	32.9	0.82	n/a
Religious Studies	1	100	91.4	0	45.4	2	n/a
Physical education	5	100	87.9	20	29.2	2	n/a
Psychology	3	66	84.2	0	37.7	1.33	n/a
Science for Public Understanding	5	60	85.3	60	36.3	2.6	n/a
Sociology	4	50	84.2	50	37.7	2.25	n/a
Technology	2	0	84.6	0	30.5	0	n/a

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
English	9	88.88	94	33.33	36	5.33	n/a
Mathematics	5	80	89.4	0	48	3.6	n/a
Mathematics (total)	8	87.5	n/a	12.5	n/a	4.28	n/a
Mathematics (further)	3	33	n/a	33	n/a	2.66	n/a
Chemistry	1	100	91.4	0	47.9	2	n/a
Chemistry (total)	2	100	n/a	50	n/a	5	n/a
Physics	3	33.33	89.6	0	44.7	2	n/a
Information technology	6	100	84.5	33	22	6.33	n/a
Art and design	3	100	95.8	100	47.9	8	n/a
Business studies	8	62.5	91.3	12.5	32.3	3	n/a
Geography	3	66.66	92.8	0	n/a	2.66	n/a

History	4	25	89.2	0	n/a	0	n/a
Psychology	4	75	86.4	0	n/a	3.5	n/a
Religious studies	4	75	93.1	50	n/a	5.5	n/a
Sociology	4	75	86.4	0	n/a	5.33	n/a
Physical education	5	60	91.7	0	n/a	1.6	n/a
General studies	43	55.8	85	4.6	n/a	2.39	n/a
AVCE Travel and tourism (Y12) 6 units	2	100	n/a	50	n/a	6	n/a
AVCE Leisure and recreation (Y12) 6 units	7	85.7	n/a	0	n/a	2.86	n/a
AVCE Health and social care (Y12) 6 units	7	14.2	n/a	0	n/a	0.28	n/a
Advanced GNVQ Leisure and tourism (Y13) 12 units	9	100	85.8	44.44	39	10	n/a

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Intermediate GNVQ (New specification) Health and social care	3G	100	n/a	0	n/a	66	n/a
Intermediate GNVQ (New specification) Leisure and tourism	10 5G 5B	100	n/a	50	n/a	0	n/a
Intermediate GNVQ Leisure and tourism	3B	100	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Intermediate GNVQ Health and social care	3G	100	n/a	0	n/a	66.6	n/a

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students are well motivated.
- The provision is well managed.

Areas for improvement

- The further development of independent study.

227 The number of students choosing mathematics in the sixth form is small but rising. Of the seven students entered for A level mathematics last year six achieved a grade. This was an improvement on the previous year when three out of six achieved a grade. In 2001 in the AS level examination three out of four students achieved a grade. These three students are now in the Year 13 A level group and are achieving

good results in their modular examinations. Considering the prior attainment of these students they are making good progress and achieving well. The scrutiny of students' work showed that work is pitched at an appropriately challenging level. Some well organised notes and examples of worked questions showed good understanding of topics studied at A level such as differentiation and integration. The students work hard and are committed to achieving high standards. They co-operate with their teachers. Homework and tests are set regularly and marked in a sufficiently detailed way to help the students make progress.

- 228 Standards seen in the GCSE resit group indicated that more students would gain an A*-C grade this year than last. The students were working hard to improve their understanding. Standards of work seen in the inspection in the sixth form were above average.
- 229 Teaching is a strength in this area. In all lessons seen teaching was good or very good. Teachers are hard working and committed to their students. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They give clear explanations and relevant examples where appropriate. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on calculus, because of the clear explanation given by the teacher, the students were able to sketch the graphs competently. In a Year 13 lesson on vectors the teacher's more practical method of helping the students understand the vector equation of a line helped them to make progress.
- 230 Lessons are well planned. The pace at which the work is undertaken is well matched to the students' needs. Teachers question the students skillfully and students answer questions confidently showing a good level of understanding. The use of information and communication technology is encouraged.
- 231 The teachers work well together to deliver the different parts of the course and the sixth form work is well managed. Teachers know individual students' strengths and weaknesses well. The mathematics curriculum is appropriate and meets the needs of the students. Students are happy with the provision in mathematics. The number of students studying AS level in mathematics has increased in the last year. The students recognise and appreciate the support given by the teachers. Relationships between students and teachers and between students are very good. A very good sixth form mathematics handbook has been produced. All students are interviewed individually each term by the member of the management team responsible for mathematics to monitor progress effectively.

SCIENCES

- 232 Biology was inspected; one lesson was sampled in physics and one in chemistry. In the physics lesson student attainment was generally in line with national expectations. The lesson was well taught and the students made satisfactory progress. In chemistry the level of attainment was high with very good progress made and the student on track to achieve one of the highest grades at the end of the course. The student was able to describe the electron distribution in the shells of various transition metals in order to explain the likely outcomes in terms of the relative stability of the orbital configurations. Teaching was very good and well matched to the needs of the student who responded with enthusiasm and considerable flair.

BIOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is good.

Strengths

- Enthusiastic teaching staff with good subject knowledge.
- Good relationships with students.
- Good facilities and learning resources well used.

Areas for improvement

- Need to review threshold level for admission to A level course.

- 233 At the end of Year 13 standards are satisfactory and sometimes good. With the very small number of candidates for the A level examinations results are not statistically significant but would be in line with national standards in biology. Currently there are only two students in Year 13 and eight in Year 12 following the AS biology course. Modular results to date suggest that the Year 13 students should achieve high grades at A level but the Year 12 results are weak and some students may be advised to repeat their modules.
- 234 Student achievement in Year 13 was good in a practical session using a choice maze for woodlice. Students were able to discuss the statistical analysis appropriate to the experiment and used this knowledge to plan the experiment appropriately. Achievement in Year 12 is generally sound although some students find some aspects of the course academically demanding. Students show a satisfactory use and understanding of biological terms. Whilst the Year 13 group are very responsive the Year 12 students seem less sure of themselves and are less willing to contribute to discussion. However, most students from this group started from a low level of attainment at GCSE and have had to make significant progress in their time in the sixth form. Students showed a broad understanding of the wider issues related to the course. Year 12 students took part in a debate, which they had prepared, on the issues surrounding the use of genetically modified crops and foodstuffs. They made presentations in teams and then discussed the underlying social and moral issues using their general and specialist biological knowledge.
- 235 Teaching in the biology course is always at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers work hard to prepare appropriate materials for the course and they have excellent up to date subject knowledge. The teachers use information and communication technology well to explain the complex theoretical ideas in genetics and make the content more interesting to the students. New information and communication technology equipment should upgrade these facilities further and extend the opportunities for new teaching approaches. Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are of a very high standard. With small group sizes, field courses for each year are uneconomic but biannual field courses are held with both Year 12 and 13 involved. Laboratory facilities are outstanding with all laboratories either newly built or recently refurbished. Technical support is of a very high standard.
- 236 Biology is managed as part of the large science department, where the new head of department provides clear and imaginative leadership. The A level biology course is taught by two young and enthusiastic staff who work closely together to provide an interesting and accessible course for the students. With the small group sizes and the modular nature of the course, monitoring of students' progress is of a high standard.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Product Design

- 237 Two lessons in Product Design at AS and A2 level were sampled. The teaching was good and the individual attention given by the teachers to students enabled them to make satisfactory progress and increase their learning. A lesson in Year 13 saw the student develop good analytical skills in researching a product including model making and methods of production.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- The commitment of both teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment.
- A more appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

- 238 Student attainment is consistently below the national average. The pass rate is low and many fail to complete the course successfully. This represents unsatisfactory achievement, even given the below average standards of many students when they start the course. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms the below average standards. There is no difference in the attainment of male and female students. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but many are not achieving as they should, having been considerably disadvantaged by significant staffing problems since the beginning of this academic year. Only one of the three new teachers who started in the department in September 2001 remains. Students in Year 13 are making better progress and are benefiting from a more stable staffing situation when they were in Year 12 and the successes they have already achieved in their AS work.
- 239 The two teachers, one of whom is acting as head of subject and the other being a newly qualified teacher, are struggling in the face of considerable challenges. They work hard and with dedication although face conflicting priorities between their work in the sixth form and the main college. The courses on offer are not suitable for all students, especially the lower attaining students, some of whom have no prior knowledge of the subject. Because of the staffing situation and the unsuitability of the course for many, students also cannot be confident that they will be taught well.
- 240 Business education in the sixth form is satisfactorily managed given the very difficult circumstances. Both teachers make a good contribution to the subject's management. They are enthusiastic and work well together. They have good subject expertise and have a clear view about how to move the subject forward and clear plans to do so.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is good.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching overall is at least good and often better.
- Good resources with good pupil/computer ratio.
- Good technical support.

Areas for improvement

- Timetabling.

- 241 A-level results in computing have improved. The number of entries is small, but in 2001, 33 per cent gained A* - B which is above the national average of 23 per cent with 100 per cent gaining A – E – again above the national average. During the inspection AS results for the first stage of Year 12 were received with 16 of the 20 Students entered gaining a grade C or above. These results are above the national average and it is hoped that the majority of these students will continue on to take the A level course.
- 242 The quality of the teaching and learning is good or better with well planned schemes of work and individual support and assistance given. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and a wide range of experience and skills. They plan lessons well and challenge students to manage their own progress and development. They provide individual and focussed assistance and have a good relationship with students.
- 243 Students respond well and control their own work. They co-operate in class and are ready to question and extend their own knowledge. They are committed to achieving good results. They research well using both electronic and paper resources. They are able to explain a range of information and communication technology terms. They discuss openly and positively a range of aspects of information and communication technology and appreciate the need for and value of this subject. The curriculum offers wide opportunities to students and there are plans to extend those opportunities for more students to study a vocational course.
- 244 The leadership of information and communication technology in the sixth form is strong and focussed towards ensuring that students are given ample opportunity to achieve at a high level. Resources are good and the available software is suitable to the advanced activities required. Group sizes are small and consideration should be given to reducing the Year 12 groups to two and the Year 13 groups to one.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 245 Two lessons in physical education were sampled. The teaching is satisfactory, overall. Year 12 students make good progress in badminton, gaining significantly from opportunities to evaluate their own and other's work. Year 13 students make satisfactory progress in their theoretical learning, especially when they are given the opportunity to test the principles of bio-mechanics in a practical context. An area for improvement is the provision of a weekly period of physical education for all sixth form students as part of their enrichment programme and there are clear plans to do this. The focus was on GNVQ Leisure and tourism at Intermediate and Advanced levels,

and the AVCE, Advanced Vocational Certificate In Education, course in Leisure and recreation in Year 12 and the Travel and tourism course in Year 13.

LEISURE AND TOURISM; LEISURE AND RECREATION AND TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Overall, the quality of provision in these courses is good.

Strengths

- Students show good achievement on the leisure and tourism course.
- The wide range of links with the leisure and business community gives relevance to learning.
- The very good attitudes that students show in their work leads to them achieving well.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum plans to improve students' numeracy skills.
- The subjects' contribution to developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

246 In the 2001 GNVQ advanced course students achieved in line with the national average. In the GNVQ intermediate level attainment was above average with half of the ten students achieving a merit level award. Most students on the AVCE leisure and recreation course gained the lower grade of pass and the two students on the travel and tourism course successfully completed the course. The results were broadly in line with those achieved in 2000. Recruitment to the leisure courses is rising but the majority do not proceed to higher levels of the award as they enter employment or training.

247 In work seen during the inspection students' standards of attainment on the GNVQ and AVCE courses was in line with the average. This represents good progress given the below average standards at the end of Year 11. They gain a sound foundation of theoretical knowledge about provision for leisure in the community and learn to apply it to real situations through links with leisure and business providers. They have research skills and make good use of the Internet to learn about the organisation and management of companies such as Thomas Cook. Most students write well and grammatical accuracy is assisted through the use of computers, but there are few opportunities taken to develop handwriting skills. Many students do not make enough use of graphs, charts or data to support the findings of research and average and lower attaining students do not explain answers in enough detail.

248 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers set clear aims for the units of work and plan a variety of learning experiences that encourages self-reliance and opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively on projects. In Year 12 for example, two students worked diligently on a project to plan and manage a football tournament for Year 7 pupils in the college. They drew up planning proposals, identified health and safety needs, prepared a budget and managed the activity. Students make good use of time in lessons and are keen to do well and this leads to most making good progress. Many students, particularly higher attaining students improve the quality of the work because they are given guidance on the quality of assignments and how they can improve the work. On other occasions, however, teachers do not focus students' attention to the opportunities to show numerical skills in projects, particularly in using data such as customer growth patterns or calculating costs.

249 Students' learning is enhanced through links with local leisure providers and students make good use of the organisation structures and marketing skills of Alton Towers,

Heart of England tourist board and local sports clubs as a focus for study. In some work, however, students do not use their knowledge of organisations to endorse theoretical writing and this is not addressed in marking.

- 250 The leadership and management of leisure studies are very good. The faculty handbook informs well on policies and subject practices and the quality of teaching and learning is monitored through a programme of lesson observations by senior staff. The planning of assessment of students' attainment and progress is very good. Students know how well they are achieving and are set targets for improvement. They rise to the challenges that are set for them. The development plan is well conceived but how the faculty measures success is not clear. The accommodation is very good and provides a very positive environment for learning.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- 251 The focus was on the AVCE in Years 12 and 13, plus the GNVQ Intermediate. Students in each year were interviewed, as was the head of health and social care. Work was sampled from each course.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Overall, the quality of provision in health and social care is good.

Strengths

- Well planned teaching.
- Good student behaviour.
- Clear guidance on assignments.
- Good attitudes to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Better attendance.
- Lack of challenge in some lessons.
- Insufficient career guidance.
- More staff development about the AVCE.

- 252 Results in the AVCE in 2001 were below average but were average in the GNVQ Intermediate. In the current year standards seen are average in both years 12 and 13 of the AVCE, with evidence of some good progress from GCSE scores. In GNVQ Intermediate, standards seen were below average.
- 253 In Year 13, students are making satisfactory progress. Results for these students in Year 12 were poor as there were problems of interpretation in the first year of this award, but the students have recovered from this setback to achieve better in the current year. Students have developed good learning skills and can work individually. They can use information and communication technology effectively and enjoy working on material relevant to their everyday lives. They are making more progress than could be expected because they have been made fully aware of the assessment and grading system, which is reinforced by seeing their target grades on the walls.
- 254 Students particularly enjoy the assignment in which they study two young children, comparing their individual development. Their folders show good use of information and communication technology, graphs, drawings and photographs, with some numeracy, relating to this project. Progress is restricted for several by a poor attendance record. Two students are not attending because they are working, but they are studying part time for the three unit award. Overall, the course is meeting the needs of students who, in a socially deprived area, would otherwise not be in

attendance. In this respect, part time work together with the educational maintenance allowance, is working positively.

- 255 In Year 12, AVCE students are making satisfactory progress and are improving on the grades achieved in their GCSEs. There are no boys in this group and the college needs to ensure that good guidance is given in Year 11 to overcome a perception that the course is a continuation of the GCSE in child development. Student folders show good levels of key skills, with evidence of good standards of numeracy, tables, graphs and charts, good information and communication technology, and some good presentation material. They are developing good learning skills and many have a clear idea of how health and social care will help in their future careers. Lower attaining students make satisfactory progress as they receive good individual support and enjoy the content of the course.
- 256 Progress in the GNVQ Intermediate is satisfactory. Students are able to work in pairs and can concentrate well. Their literacy is assisted by the teacher's emphasis on key words and phrases on the board. Their folder work reveals some good work, particularly where they take part in outside surveys, which gives opportunities to use key skills such as numeracy in analysing questionnaires and producing graphs and reports, using information and communication technology. Students with special educational needs make good progress because they enjoy the methods used, and the content, which allows them to choose topics for research. Students make more progress where they can see the relevance of the work to a future career.
- 257 Teaching is good, with well planned lessons which incorporate the key skills. In some lessons students are not given sufficient opportunities to contribute and to become involved in discussion. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are now familiar with the assessment criteria for the AVCEs. They still lack adequate updating in the new awards because the college finds it difficult to release staff because of the challenging problem of staffing which it faces. Lack of understanding of the new AVCEs was the main cause of the very poor results in the first year of AVCEs, which demotivated the students. Teachers now clearly target student grades and the quality of day to day marking is helpful to students and their parents, but there is a need for constant updating about a system which is rapidly changing.
- 258 Students are always well behaved and display good positive attitudes to the subject and to their teachers. They have a clear idea that the course is preparing them for employment, but many of them state that they have had little careers guidance. They work fairly well, but their output is limited by their low levels of attainment. In several lessons they concentrate well, but lose some of their focus towards the end. Many of them, nevertheless, clearly see the courses as a stepping stone to careers in child care or social work.
- 259 The courses make a significant contribution to their progress in key skills. In Year 12, they are accredited up to level two in information and communication technology, numeracy and communication. They have good access to computers, including the use of laptops in class. The accommodation and atmosphere in the vocational suite contribute to their progress, as they are distinctive in the context of the college overall. Their communication skills are also enhanced by their visits outside, by work placements and by formal presentations they are required to make. The courses also make a major impact on their social and moral development, by reference to ethical issues within the course content such as abortion and human rights.
- 260 The section is effectively managed and a good lead is given in interpreting the AVCE specifications. Student work is moderated well, but the monitoring of teaching does

not yet occur, although there are clear plans to do so. The section is improving in resources and expertise. The new AVCEs are better understood and the courses are making a significant contribution to the students' careers. More staff development and the recruitment of more boys are the main priorities.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is satisfactory.

Strengths

- A level results.
- Teachers' methods of encouraging their students.
- The progress of students with special educational needs.
- Accommodation.
- Leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of drawing and development planning to raise standards further.
- Teaching and deployment of staff on sixth form courses.
- Students' attendance.
- The curriculum.
- Use of assessment data to inform curricular planning.

261 Overall, standards in the sixth form are below average. The A level results for 2001 were above the national average and better than in 2000. While the number of candidates was very small, the results were the best in the college. The AS level results in 2001 were less good than the A level results and only one of the ten candidates gained one of the top A or B grades.

262 Some work, such as a student's inquisitive project into tattooing and body adornment, successfully made comment on the current culture. A full-scale fireplace, designed and built by a student, was adventurous in scale, ambitious in concept and a most personal response to Surrealism and the disturbance caused by building activity at home. Other, less ambitious students are most comfortable copying from photographs of buildings in China, Europe or America, while ignoring their own heritage and the many fine buildings in Leicester.

263 Drawing tends to be presentational and descriptive rather than investigative and information seeking. Even small pencil studies are highly finished. Students' under-developed basic skills of drawing, investigation and experimentation, a legacy from Year 11, are inhibiting any deeply felt, personal response to the world around us. This failure to observe, analyse and record the world around us through drawing, prevents all but the best students knowing how well they are doing and how they might improve. Students should be encouraged to recognise the need to draw for a range of purposes. Drawing to create rhythm or capture movement, for planning, or as development for a major work is insufficiently prominent in their portfolios.

264 Some are adept at creating strong, illustrative imagery of African warriors, or of a head with the anatomical detail emphasised in the manner of Leonardo da Vinci. Another student produced a series of large pastel studies of the human back inspired by Matisse's bronze sculptures in the Tate Gallery, London. While these drawings are anatomically flawed they make good use of colour to create a range of cold and

warm sensations. Year 13 students displayed quite astonishing technical skills to make high quality drawings of a tiger, family members and personalities from the recent "Pop Idols" television programme. Students need to read or research more to allow them to develop the personal view of the work of famous artists. This would allow them to make connections with their own work and see a broader range of possible solutions.

- 265 The large majority of students who begin art courses stay at college and sit the terminal AS and A2 examinations. Many of the Year 11 pupils who do well at GCSE accept places in further education colleges. In this context, the achievement of those who do stay at college is satisfactory. Those students who have special educational needs make good progress and their teachers skilfully encourage them to express themselves. Opportunities to work with the drama department in the design and production of scenery, costumes and publicity for college productions, provide excellent opportunities for the students to use their initiative and become increasingly responsible for their personal development.
- 266 Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. Teachers' management of their students is very good indeed while their efficient teaching methods go some way towards compensating for the limited resources on offer. Three teachers each deliver separate parts of the curriculum. This arrangement causes projects to extend over many weeks and students find it difficult to maintain interest. A greater focus on improving students' basic skills of drawing, research and investigation would help them take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. Poor attendance and punctuality also slow their learning. Only four of the fourteen listed students appeared for a Year 12 lesson: one on time, one five minutes late, another nine minutes late, while the fourth arrived sixteen minutes after the start, much to the annoyance of the teacher.
- 267 The curriculum in art is narrow and limits the directions in which students might develop their creative talents. There are no opportunities for pupils to work with ceramics, even though two teachers have specialist skills and the college possesses a well-appointed pottery studio. There are insufficient digital cameras, computers or specialist software to support advanced level art and design. More advanced printmaking methods and textiles processes are missing from the department. Opportunities to visit the London galleries, or working with artists in residence, and seeing their work exhibited in Leicester's New Walk Art Gallery, adds considerably to the students' cultural development while raising the status of the department. Assessment procedures are thorough but the information gained is not sufficiently used to identify weaknesses in the curriculum or set short-term targets for students.
- 268 The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has very good leadership qualities and a clear vision for the future. Training for the monitoring of teaching and learning has been completed and procedures are to be introduced next term. Development planning does not pay sufficient regard to raising standards. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory and the shortage of hardware and specialist software prevents the generation and manipulation of still or animated imagery. The accommodation in art is good with four spacious rooms and sixth form studio space.

HUMANITIES

One lesson was sampled in each of geography and religious education.

Geography

- 269 There are no students in Year 13; one lesson in Year 12 was sampled. Standards attained by students in the A level examination in 2001 and in work seen during the inspection are below the national average. Teaching is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and tailors the approach and content well to the individual needs of students. Students' learn well in lessons but their unsatisfactory attendance record and their passive approach to learning limit their achievement.

Religious Education

- 270 In 2001 the A level results of the four candidates were good. Three of the candidates gained grades A to C. One Year 12 candidate gained D at AS level, a satisfactory result for that student. No sixth form courses were running at the time of the inspection. The AS course will be offered again for the next academic year, but there is no general religious education course for sixth form pupils.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is very good.

Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Very good teacher-student relationships.
- Independent research is encouraged.

Areas for improvement

- Reduce the learning lost caused by teachers having to leave the classroom to discipline pupils from the main college.

- 271 The number of students taking English Literature in the sixth form is very small. In 2001 nine students were entered, of whom eight achieved grades B to E. The small numbers make national comparisons difficult, but these results are in line with national averages. The average points score was 5.33 compared with a national average of 5.28. These results were substantially better than those achieved in 2000 when again nine students were entered, of whom only one achieved a C grade, the rest being grades E (6) and N (2). Standards seen during the inspection were at least average and above average for some students. Scrutiny of students' work shows that work is pitched at an appropriately high standard. Students are able to write critically and analytically to explore thematic and dramatic aspects of texts. They consider the social, moral and cultural contexts of major works such as 'Othello', 'Wuthering Heights' and Blake's poetry. Students use appropriate subject terminology, refer to other critical views and demonstrate evidence of independent research. They understand the need for close textual reference to validate their opinions. Some work is weakened by errors of accuracy and expression and a failure to pursue argument far enough.
- 272 Students' achievement is currently very good as they work hard and co-operatively with their teachers and are committed to achieving higher standards. Students' notes are well organised and show evidence of real effort and independent thought. There is evidence of good research. Some in Year 12 are notably mature in their appreciation of dramatic technique. The subject makes a good contribution to students' personal development, for example when groups work together co-operatively on the study of a common text.
- 273 Teaching is very good overall and never less than good. Teachers are very committed to their students and work very hard to provide good quality learning for them. Their subject knowledge is very good and their skills complement each other well. They are confident to lead students into high level discussions which demonstrate intellectual rigour, for example when studying the social and cultural context of Tennyson's and Blake's poetry. Students are challenged, but also helped, to extend their thinking about and understanding of texts. Lessons are well paced and conducted with an appropriate informality which nevertheless contains rigour and focus. Questioning skills are very good: probing questioning allows students to demonstrate knowledge and deepen understanding. Marking is a strength as it is encouraging, detailed and gives clearly focussed suggestions for improvement.
- 274 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The three teachers are all experienced and work together well to deliver the subject. There is, however, no formal monitoring by the head of faculty. The syllabus is appropriate. Students

express their appreciation of the way in which the course is conducted and the quality of provision.