

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOCKERILL ANGLO-EUROPEAN COLLEGE**

Dunmow Road, Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117598

Principal: Dr Robert B Guthrie

Lead inspector: Denis Pittman

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 261825

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE**

Type of college:	Comprehensive
College category:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11-18 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	700
College address:	Dunmow Road Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	CM23 5HX
Telephone number:	(01279) 658 451
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Carole Pluckrose-Oliver
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE**

Hockerill Anglo-European College (HAEC) is a multicultural and multilingual, smaller-than-average comprehensive school. There are 700 students on roll - the college has more than doubled in size from 1996 to 2003. It is one of the largest state boarding schools in the country (220 boarders). The college has a significant international dimension with boarders coming from all over the world. It is the only maintained boarding school that offers solely an International Baccalaureate (IB) programme to sixth form students. The college is heavily over-subscribed. Ten per cent of the students are selected on the basis of a language aptitude test and attainment on entry is broadly above average. The college achieved Specialist Language College status in 1998 and has received three awards from the Specialist Schools Trust. Hockerill is one of the best schools in the country for value added. It was established as a 'Training School' in 2000. The proportion of students with first languages other than English is above average. Students come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds but, broadly, these backgrounds are above average. The overall proportion of students with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, is well below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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13786	Susan Walsh	Lay Inspector	
1779	David Leonard	Team Inspector	Science, physics, chemistry
10288	John Richards	Team Inspector	Design and technology
10895	David Wasp	Team Inspector	History, religious education, theory of knowledge
12499	Marie Durkin	Team Inspector	English
15163	Eric Deeson	Team Inspector	Business education, biology
16042	Paula Haes	Team Inspector	German
17201	Vikki Harray	Team Inspector	Physical education
17404	Judith Tolley	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages, French, Spanish
20527	Brian King	Team Inspector	Mathematics
22501	Susan Jones	Team Inspector	Music
22685	Natalie Moss	Team Inspector	English as an additional language, personal, social and health education
28002	Susan Taylor	Team Inspector	Special educational needs
30545	David Castell	Team Inspector	Citizenship, geography
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31129	Jeff Pickering	Team Inspector	Art and design
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Hockerill Anglo-European College (HAEC) provides an excellent quality of education.** The college's international ethos, high quality boarding provision and wide-ranging extra-curricular opportunities combine very effectively to provide a distinctive holistic education. The leadership of the Principal is outstanding – his vision and driving ambition have created an innovative community dedicated to the principles of inclusion and international understanding. Overall, standards achieved are well above average when compared with national figures at the end of Years 9 and 11, and international data for the Baccalaureate programme. Students achieve very well as the result of very good teaching. Students' personal development is significantly enhanced by the multicultural dimension of an excellent curriculum provision. The prevailing ethos is supportive, yet also based upon high expectations. The staff show a strong commitment to shared objectives of continuing improvement. Relationships are very good; this is reflected in high standards of behaviour and the developing maturity of students. **HAEC is an exceptional college, which gives very good value for money.**

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in tests and examinations are well above national and international averages; standards are also significantly above similar schools. Students' achievement is very good, but is unsatisfactory in music in the earlier years.
- The leadership and management of the college are excellent. A climate of innovation, challenge, support and improvement has been successfully created.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; this promotes very effective learning amongst students. The quality of teaching in modern foreign languages and history is excellent.
- Pastoral care is very strong and promotes very positive relationships within the college. The boarding provision is excellent.
- The curriculum provision and extra-curricular opportunities are excellent. ICT is used well in some areas of the curriculum, but lacks consistency in some subjects.
- The ethos and provision in the sixth form is of a very high quality.

The college has made remarkable improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved significantly; the college is one of the most improved schools in the country. The quality of teaching has been strengthened. An innovative curriculum is meeting the needs of students very well; the sixth form is now formally recognised. Considerable development of the site has taken place. New accommodation enhances and promotes a dynamic learning environment. New facilities are now provided in humanities, arts, design and technology, science and the sixth form centre, and computing capability has been expanded.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	A	A	A	A*

*Key: A\* - top five per cent nationally; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Standards are broadly above average on entry to the college, although there is the full spectrum of ability. Examination test results over time show continuing high standards and an improving trend. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above average in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science). These exceptionally high standards are also reflected in the results for modern foreign languages-many students achieve GCSE success at the end of Year 9. Overall

achievement in GCSE examinations is **excellent**. Generally, achievement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is **very good**. There is some variation in the achievement of boys and girls; girls out-perform boys. However, this is not too significant as boys are doing particularly well in comparison with their own gender nationally. All groups of students make very good progress.

Students respond very well to the college's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This results in their personal development being very good. Relationships between each other and with staff are very good. Behaviour and attitudes are very good; exclusion rates are low. Students' enthusiasm for their work, excellent attendance rates and mature attitudes promote very good learning and achievement.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the college is excellent.** The college is very effective in identifying the individual needs of students. **The overall quality of teaching is very good and helps promote high standards of achievement.** Teaching in modern foreign languages, history, science, and design and technology are of a consistently high standard. Teachers' detailed planning and subject knowledge helps to promote and develop students' skills very well. The college has successfully created an ethos for learning based upon high expectations and positive working relationships. The active encouragement of teachers helps motivate students and leads to high productivity. Students are keen and interested learners. The assessment framework is effective in monitoring progress. Target setting and marking procedures have significantly improved in some subjects, but there is a lack of consistency in others.

The college provides students with an excellent, wide-ranging and full curriculum, which meets the needs of students in the twenty-first century extremely well. The improvement in provision for students of all aptitudes and needs has been outstanding. The positive and supportive ethos evident in all aspects of the college's life ensures that students emerge as mature and enriched adults when they leave the college. The provision for extra-curricular activities is also excellent.

The college has a very effective pastoral system. Students are very well supported and any underachievement is quickly identified. Very good care, support and guidance contribute significantly to students making major gains in academic achievement and personal development.

The college is very popular and is significantly over-subscribed; it enjoys a very good reputation in the local and international community. The college has very effective links with parents in this country and abroad.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The college is very effectively led and managed. The leadership of the Principal is excellent. He is very ably supported by a very strong team of senior and middle managers. Governors are fully involved in the running of the college and fulfil their roles very well. They are very supportive and bring a substantive range of experience to the governance of the college. The financial management of the college is excellent.

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

The college works very effectively with parents to support learning. Parents feel a very strong sense of partnership based on mutual trust, and have great confidence in the college. They are very satisfied with almost all aspects of its work. Parents are provided with a good range of information about the activities of the college. Students enjoy being at the college. They feel that they are taught well and they are very helpfully supported in their academic and personal development.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The things the college should do to improve are:

- Raise achievement in music for Years 7 to 9.
- Ensure greater consistency in the use of target setting and quality of marking.
- Continue the development of the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- The accommodation in physical education limits the scope of the physical education curriculum.



## THE SIXTH FORM AT HOCKERILL ANGLO-EUROPEAN COLLEGE

The International Baccalaureate Diploma programme is the only course of study in the sixth form. The sixth form is average in size, with 134 students, from a wide variety of international backgrounds. Students achieve very well and attain high standards, most going on to continue their studies at universities in Britain and abroad. This high level of achievement is made possible by the multicultural ethos of the college, good teaching and the very positive attitudes students have towards their learning.

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Provision in the sixth form is **excellent**.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- Students' attitudes are very positive.
- Teaching is good and learning is very good.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- The curriculum is very well suited to the needs and aspirations of the students.
- There is very good support and guidance, especially regarding university applications.
- Assessment data is not used effectively to track and plan students' progress and ensure they achieve as well as they should.
- The students' views are not always taken sufficiently into account.

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English	Very good. Standards are well above average. Learning is very good and students achieve very well. Leadership and management are very good.
French	Excellent. Standards are very high and students' achievement is excellent as a result of excellent teaching. Leadership and management are excellent.
Spanish	Very good. Standards are very high. Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching. Leadership and management are excellent.
German	Very good. Standards are very high. Teaching is good and students achieve very well. Leadership and management are excellent.
Mathematics	Good. Standards are above average. Students achieve very well as a result of good teaching and their very positive attitudes. Leadership and management are good.
Biology	Good. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management of the subject are good.
Chemistry	Good. Standards are above average. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Leadership and management are good.
Physics	Very good. Standards are well above average. Students achieve very well because teachers encourage them to think for themselves.

	Leadership and management are very good.
Computer science	Very good. Standards are outstanding. Students achieve very well because of very good teaching and their very positive attitudes. Leadership and management are very good.
Geography	Very good. Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning, and therefore students' achievement, are very good. Leadership and management are very good.
History	Excellent. Standards are well above international norms. Teaching and learning are very good and sometimes excellent. Leadership and management are excellent.
Design and technology	Very good provision. Standards are above average. Achievement, teaching and learning are all very good. Leadership and management are excellent.
Visual arts	Good. Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well. The subject is very well led and managed.
Business and management	Very good. Standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good.
Theory of knowledge	Excellent. Standards are very high. Teaching is very good. There is excellent leadership and management of this innovative course.

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

In addition to the focus subjects, lessons were also sampled in Japanese and music. In Japanese, standards were very high and students made excellent progress because of outstanding teaching. In music, standards were average and students achieved well because of good teaching.

## **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Very good. Students have access to very effective support and guidance, which helps them achieve high academic standards. There is exceptionally thorough preparation for applications to university.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Very good. Leadership of the sixth form is excellent, the head of the sixth form has a clear vision of the way forward and her energy and strong management skills have resulted in a successful and innovative curriculum, which matches the needs and aspirations of the students. Assessment data could be used to better effect to ensure all students achieve their full potential.

## **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students enjoy being in the sixth form. They have excellent relationships with their teachers and appreciate the help they are given by them. They appreciate the opportunities afforded them by the curriculum. They do not feel that their views are always taken sufficiently into account or that they are adequately involved in decision making in the sixth form.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Examination and test results over time show continuing high standards and an improving trend. **Achievement** at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 **is very good**. There is some variation in the achievement of boys and girls, with girls outperforming boys. However, in comparison with national figures, boys are doing particularly well. All groups continue to make very good progress. Standards in all the core subjects are well above average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 9.
- Standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) and modern foreign languages are particularly high.
- Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations placed the college in the top five per cent nationally. In comparison with similar schools, standards are very high. In 2003, these standards have been consolidated.
- Standards attained in the International Baccalaureate (IB) are well above average when compared to international averages and those of similar schools.
- Overall achievement in both key stages and in the sixth form is very good, reflecting the hard work of students and staff.
- Achievement in music is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9; it improves in later years.
- Overall standards have continued to improve since the last inspection. The value added is significant, given students' attainment on entry.

#### Commentary

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	College results	National results
English	35.0 (34.0)	33.3 (33.0)
mathematics	38.8 (37.5)	34.7 (34.4)
science	37.7 (36.5)	33.3 (33.1)

*There were 108 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, the combined results were well above the national average. In mathematics and science, standards were well above average, and above average for English. Overall standards in these subjects were above those of similar schools. The overall trend in test performances is above the national picture. The results for 2003 show a significant improvement and, in relation to their prior attainment, students' performance is well above average. At the end of Year 9, achievement in the higher levels in English lags behind that of science and mathematics. In general, however, students achieve very well and make significant progress in their studies.

## Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	College results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	84 (63)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (88)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (90)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	60.4 (47.9)	39.8 (39.0)

*There were 109 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. There is a rising trend in GCSE results. The examination results in 2002 for the higher grades were well above average and were significantly high in comparison with similar schools. Examination performance in most subjects was significantly above national figures, with very good standards being achieved at the highest grades in biology, graphics, Japanese and Italian. Overall achievement in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good. Examination results for 2003 indicate that the college has consolidated its high level of performance. The targets for 2002 and 2003 have been very challenging but were successfully met.
3. Students who enter the college in the early stages of learning English achieve very well and rapidly, because of the level of support they are given. The multilingual ethos of the college prevents them from being alienated and they respond very well to both the class teaching and the individual teaching they receive. As a result, their language skills very quickly advance to the point where they are able to participate and learn well in all lessons. Their results in the Cambridge examinations in English are good. Students with special educational needs achieve well in their lessons and in small groups, where tuition focuses on the development of skills. More able students are identified according to assessment criteria and the names are notified to college staff. In lessons, extension work provides increased challenge; work and resources are used to extend students' experiences within the classroom. In languages, there is excellent provision through bilingual lessons and early entry to GCSE examinations at the end of Year 9. Overall, more able students achieve very well.

### Sixth Form

4. Standards attained in the International Baccalaureate (IB) are well above average when compared to international averages and those of similar schools. Achievement in relation to prior attainment is very good overall. Students achieve up to one level better than average in biology, physics, geography, information and communication technology, English and Spanish and up to two levels better in design and technology, history, French and German. Achievement in relation to prior attainment is excellent in French, German and the theory of knowledge, and very good in biology, physics, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design, geography, English and Spanish. It is good in all other subjects. An analysis of the average points score of the students who took IB examinations in 2002, compared with their average total points scores in GCSE examinations, reveals that they made very good progress in the sixth form. A preliminary analysis of IB results for 2003 indicates that high standards have been maintained.
5. Over the past two years, results have been well above average in comparison with results internationally. In 2002, standards achieved were well above average overall. Examination results were very high in design and technology, history, French, German and the theory of knowledge, and well above average in biology, physics, geography, information and communication technology, English and Spanish. They were above average in chemistry, average in mathematics and below average in art and design. In 2003, results have improved.

6. In the 15 subjects chosen for inspection, standards seen were very high in French, German, information and communication technology (ICT) and the theory of knowledge; well above average in English, Spanish, physics, geography, history, art and design, and business management; and above average in mathematics, biology, chemistry, and design and technology. Standards have improved in all subjects in 2003.

### **Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Students respond very well to the college's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Behaviour is very good and exclusion rates very low. Attendance is very high and students are unfailingly punctual to lessons.

### **Main strengths and areas for development**

- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. In the sixth form, behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- Students are rarely absent from college and they arrive very punctually to lessons.
- Students are very willing to participate in activities, both in and out of the classroom.
- There is a very good formal programme of social, moral and cultural education across the college.
- The college's ethos, the extensive range of activities and the boarding and other residential provision strongly promote moral and social education.

### **Commentary**

7. Nearly all students enjoy college life and wholeheartedly join in the very wide range of activities. They are very willing to assume responsibility for running the college where these opportunities exist. There is a relaxed and civilised atmosphere in the college community, based on very good relationships and freedom from harassment. In the classroom, students listen very attentively and work with enthusiasm in small groups and pairs. Students have a very high regard for the quality of teaching they receive and all feel that they are expected to do their best. The college instils in students a strong desire to learn, which results in very high levels of motivation and very good achievement.
8. Students with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning, despite having difficulties with some of their work. Generally, their behaviour is good, although inevitably there are some lapses in concentration. Students for whom English is an additional language approach their learning of English with interest and effort. They are anxious to learn the language as quickly as possible and work with enthusiasm to that end.
9. Discussions in lessons, societies and the College Council reveal that students have a high level of self-awareness. Opportunities for reflection on the fundamental questions of life exist in several subjects. The spiritual content of the "Thought for the day" and of the assemblies is more limited. Assemblies do, however, promote very strongly the social and moral education of students. Social and moral themes are prominent across the subjects and reinforced by the personal, social and health education programme and by tutor time. Social and moral skills are fostered by the boarding facilities and by the many residential visits offered to all students. Students are very aware of their rights and obligations as members of the flourishing college community, and this awareness is strengthened further by the citizenship lessons. The college lays great emphasis on developing students as world citizens. In an international environment, students learn to appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions, and to respect diversity.

### **Sixth Form**

10. Students in the sixth form are very eager to learn. The excellent relationships in the classroom establish a climate in which discussions of outstanding quality can be conducted. Staff and students operate as equals and show immense mutual respect. Nearly every student in the

sixth form finds the teaching challenging and demanding, but students meet that challenge with commitment and enthusiasm. They play an invaluable role in helping to run the college. The ethical content of the International Baccalaureate (IB) courses makes an outstanding contribution to the moral and social education of students in such diverse subjects as business education and biology, for example. The creativity, action and service course within the IB has a vast range of activities and is meticulously organised. The extensive involvement with people in college and charities, and the wealth of new experiences, powerfully enrich the students' moral and social education.

## Attendance

11. Students of all ages have excellent attendance rates and are always punctual to lessons.
12. Very regular attendance and excellent standards of punctuality ensure that students miss very little schooling and promote continuity of learning. Parents ensure that their children attend college regularly. The monitoring of attendance is appropriate for the college.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
College data	4.4	College data	0.1
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of students*

### *Exclusions in the last college year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	476	22	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	56	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	10	1	2
Mixed – any other mixed background	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	28	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE

The quality of education provided by the college is excellent. Students achieve very well because of the high quality of teaching. The commitment to learning, which is shown by students' attitudes to work, is conducive to high standards. Staff are provided with detailed information, which allows them to track students' progress accurately.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of **teaching is very good** and consistently promotes high standards of achievement. Students are keen and interested learners.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very effective planning and subject knowledge help to promote and develop students' skills very well. Standards of attainment are high.
- The active encouragement of teachers helps motivate students and leads to high productivity.
- Teaching methods are very effectively geared to students' different levels of ability.
- The management of behaviour is very good and is built upon the very good relationships that exist in most classrooms.
- Assessment systems in most subjects are detailed, but do not always provide students with sufficient guidance as to how to improve. Assessment procedures in music are not sufficiently developed.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 143 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
13 (9.1%)	45 (31.5%)	55 (38.5%)	28 (19.6%)	2 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

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

13. Students are taught very well throughout the college. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, with examples of excellent teaching. For example, teaching is very effective and stimulating in art and design, modern foreign languages, history and the theory of knowledge course in the IB programme. The minimal amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen was mostly related to insufficient diversity of activities to reflect the different levels of capability within the class.
14. A particular strength is the consistency of high quality teaching across subjects. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the students and the college. They form a self-evaluative group, supporting one another well. The college has a rigorous programme for teachers' professional development and training. Members of the leadership team support other teams of teachers. The college has set clear aims for improvement in teaching and learning.
15. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, expertise and show enjoyment of their subject, which is often enthusiastically shared with their students. In the best lessons, teachers set suitably challenging tasks. Another strength of the teaching is the teachers' use of discussion and activities, enabling students to express their own views and ideas. The following is an example of this:

#### Example of outstanding practice

**In a Year 10 Italian lesson, students made excellent progress as a result of a very well planned series of presentations and activities.** These included an imaginative use of guessing games and a 'Pavarotti mask'. By the end of the lesson, all students were confident in describing people in detail in Italian; new language was presented very clearly and students were given immediate opportunities to practise informally in pairs. They rapidly grew in confidence, and were very effectively supported by the teacher and the language assistant working with individuals to help where necessary, and to encourage higher attaining students to extend their range of language. By the end of the lesson, all students conducted a survey collecting details about each others' families. Students had excellent relationships with their teachers and clearly enjoyed their learning.

16. The very good teaching evident in lessons enables and consolidates students' learning. Explanations are clear and questioning is effective in moving students' learning forward and helping them to recall previous learning. Starter activities promote stimulating beginning to the lessons. For example, in an excellent Year 9 French lesson, students made excellent progress in expressing possibility and necessity because of very skilful questioning by the teacher, which enabled students to use structures themselves to express these ideas. A lively and amusing debate in French followed, with students keen to share their ideas, using the structures they had just learned. The structures were then clarified, using a PowerPoint presentation, with students anticipating what was about to appear. Students' learning was very effective because they had already worked out the patterns for themselves. There followed the opportunity for students to put this learning into practice by working in pairs to produce their own sketches, using the structures they had learned. Students were thoroughly engaged by



this activity, and prompted only by symbols and simple illustrations, performed a series of detailed sketches. Students participated enthusiastically and their enjoyment was clear.

17. The prep (homework) set is purposeful, challenging and used well to reinforce learning. Good opportunities are provided for accelerated learning in lessons. An extensive range of visits and visitors to the college motivates students and promotes their learning. The most able students are also challenged and encouraged to extend their thinking beyond the confines of the syllabus. The evidence from students' work over a period of time confirms the consistency of the very good teaching students receive.
18. Students are keen to achieve well. They make clear advances in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are developing very well.
19. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. These improvements are largely due to the way the college has focused on students' learning and the monitoring of outcomes. Staff training has been directed towards encouraging students to think about how they learn and to be fully involved in their learning. Highly stimulating teaching is a particular feature of modern foreign languages, and bears fruit in consistently high examination results.
20. The quality of teaching and learning in small group withdrawal lessons in the learning support department is good and this, together with on-going assessment, enables activities to be pitched at the right level so that students learn well, misconceptions can be sorted out and good progress made with learning. Good quality, informative, individual education plans (IEPs) are produced by special needs staff, but these are not used sufficiently by teachers to plan to meet students' needs or to measure the progress they have made towards their individual targets. Teaching assistants provide very good support in lessons and monitor the progress of the students they support. However, teachers generally rely too heavily on their skills, along with setting, to meet students' needs, rather than planning adapted teaching strategies and resources for students with special educational needs in lessons. Additionally, there is not always sufficient use of planning by teachers so that teaching assistants are used to best effect.
21. Students who enter the college in the early stages of learning English receive very good teaching, not only in normal classes, but also through the staff of the learning support department. Learning is rapid, through the dedication and approach of the language teachers and language teaching assistant. Assessment of their levels of competence is thorough and regular, and used very well to plan for individual learning.

### **Sixth Form**

22. Students achieve particularly well in French, German, the theory of knowledge and history because they are given challenging work and they are well guided in meeting its demands. Students have frequent opportunities to undertake in depth research and report their findings to others. Their investigations and discussions in the theory of knowledge course provide an excellent basis for other studies and underpin their learning very effectively.
23. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use assessment very well to guide students about how to improve. Students are encouraged to work independently, participate fully in debate and use their knowledge of the subject to solve problems.

## Example of outstanding practice

**An excellent Year 13 history lesson was observed. It took the form of a historical debate on Stalin's domestic policies in the 1930s.** Students were paired in order to argue for or against the constructive or destructive transformation of the USSR during this period. Students debated these issues to considerable depth, using a full range of independent learning and research skills. The debate was orchestrated and summed up with expertise by the class teacher, using a very high degree of subject knowledge. This lesson was an excellent preparation for an examination question on the topic and was also instrumental in developing students' communication skills.

24. In most subjects, students' written work is of a high standard, presenting their arguments in well-informed and organised essays and project work. All teachers have high expectations of achievement. For example, in a Year 13 French lesson, students were involved in listening to and evaluating each other's interviewing techniques. The high expectations of the teacher were mirrored in students' critical analysis of their own work, and their constructive comments were supported by clear guidance about how to improve and concrete examples of structures and vocabulary, which could be used to improve their performance. Students displayed their ability to take part in a very high level of linguistic debate and made excellent progress in increasing their range of language and understanding of register as a result.

## Assessment

25. The overall quality of assessment procedures is good. The efficiency of the procedures enables managers to identify any underachievement by students accurately and quickly. This system involves a central collation of information on academic progress for students, together with previous national test and examination results, and an assessment of potential. These data are then analysed to predict future examination results and to set targets for all students. The process is efficient and effective, with appropriate action being taken for students who are falling behind.
26. The assessment data is made available to departments and to pastoral staff, allowing teachers to keep a close track of students' progress. Reports to parents are very good and contain relevant information on progress and on students' attitudes to their work.
27. Whilst the processes of assessment for the whole college are good, there is some inconsistent practice in the work of departments. For example, modern foreign languages and humanities makes full use of the provided data and analyse it in many ways to monitor achievement. However, in music and citizenship, the evaluation progress is more limited. There is also an inconsistency between departments in the use of target setting with students.
28. The marking of students' work is regular and diagnostic comments are used very helpfully to show how students may improve their work, but again there are some inconsistencies in this practice.

## The curriculum

The college provides students with an excellent, wide-ranging and full curriculum, which meets the needs of students in the twenty-first century extremely well. The improvement in provision for students of all aptitudes and needs has been outstanding. The positive and supportive ethos evident in all aspects of the college's life ensures that students emerge as mature and enriched adults when they leave the college. The provision for extra-curricular activities is also excellent.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum includes an exceptionally broad range of learning opportunities, in keeping with its status as a Language College.
- The curriculum is highly and successfully innovative and is constantly developing.
- All students, whatever their needs or interests, are fully included in the life of the college. There is very good provision for students for whom English is an additional language and for those who are gifted or talented.
- Students are very well prepared for the transition to further stages of education.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent, as is the support students are offered outside the normal college day.
- The college has a very good number of teachers and support staff to fulfil the demands of the curriculum.
- The college's accommodation and resources are generally good.
- The personal, social and health education programme is in the early stages of full development.

## Commentary

29. The college fulfils all statutory requirements and responds to all areas of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The range of courses and learning opportunities offered to students is more than usually wide, since students benefit from the bilingual programme of study which is at the heart of the college's philosophy and vision, under the inspired Director of the language college. By the end of Year 11, most students are fluent in two or three languages, such as English, French and German. Even in their early years in the college, students are taught bilingually in some other curriculum subjects, such as geography and history. Many students are able to sit GCSE examinations in French and German at the end of Year 9, and do so with great success, enabling them to begin advanced studies two years earlier than they would otherwise have done. As a result, students become good linguists, they have the confidence to speak well and articulately, and the number of study visits abroad, exchanges with other countries and international events attended helps them to become mature and thoughtful members of the community. In addition, the technology area of the curriculum offers a high level of challenge and support. The success of the college's curriculum is to be seen in the great over-subscription for places.
30. The college has been, and still is, inspirational in its innovations to the curriculum in recent years. These innovations provide students with relevant and excellent opportunities to extend and make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum is very well planned, organised and managed. Particular emphasis is laid on the continuing development of an imaginative and challenging curriculum, which enables students to gain significantly in their understanding of the world, as well as their learning of basic skills.
31. All students have equality of access to the curriculum. Students with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as their peers, although there is a little withdrawal teaching focused on the development of skills. There is very limited use of ICT within the special needs department, due to a shortage of computers, and this inhibits the range of activities. There are good relationships generally between the teaching assistants and students, which help promote independent learning and confidence.
32. The college keeps a careful register of students who are gifted and talented in a variety of ways, and these students receive very good support from the learning support department and from their tutors. Special extension activities are provided for them, as well as master classes or other extra activities to suit their needs. The few students who enter the college with little or no English language experience are very well catered for. They are assessed, placed in groups where they will receive good support from their peers, and they receive a high level of individual or group teaching periods a week until they are able to cope for themselves. Even then, they are regularly reviewed and encouraged. These students are welcomed into the college as enriching the multicultural atmosphere which abounds there.

33. Not all students stay at the college to continue their sixth form studies. Those who leave are very well prepared for the transition to other schools or to employment by their academic successes, their linguistic expertise and their maturity of thought and behaviour. The college provides a regular programme of work experience for these students and takes pains to invite representatives of industry to the college to talk to students on 'Industry Days'. Some students obtain vocational qualifications in information and communication technology.
34. The college provides students with an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The vast majority of students are involved in a wide variety of sporting activities, of both team and individual nature. Students have many opportunities for performance in musical activities, through the college orchestra and choir, and through instrumental tuition, and for dance. One of the latest innovations is in drama, which has recently become a subject in its own right. The college is also in process of launching an expressive arts programme. In addition, students take part in residential trips and visits, largely abroad, to a variety of countries. They participate in international sport, such as netball and rugby. There are strong links with Theatre in Education; productions such as 'Antigone' are presented by the college. Partly because of the strong boarding element of college life, there are always opportunities for enriching activities after the college day and at weekends, which are enjoyed by both day and boarding students.
35. The college has a very good number of teachers and support staff to carry out its demanding curriculum. The most remarkable feature of the staffing lies in the high number of multilingual teachers who have the flexibility to teach in more than one language, and who foster in students the knowledge and maturity of a world vision. Support staff also add to the ethos of interested and effortful work by the sympathetic and encouraging help they give.
36. Students' personal development is evident in all the college's activities. However, the personal, social and health education programme has only recently been newly structured and planned to provide sufficient and appropriate topics and units of work. Although satisfactory, the provision is rapidly developing to become challenging and exciting in content and delivery.

### **Sixth Form**

37. The college follows exclusively the International Baccalaureate programme of studies in the sixth form. This is a very demanding course of study, leading to the award of a Diploma, which is accepted for entry to universities throughout the world, as well as those in Britain. Students study six subjects during the two-year course, as well as the theory of knowledge. In addition, they write an extended essay based on their own research and they participate in a Creativity, Action and Service programme. The college's Diploma results are well above average worldwide.
38. Many students from other countries join the sixth form. This adds to the internationalism of the college, its cosmopolitan outlook and its dedication to bilingualism. This strength at the top of the college provides a very good role model for students in the rest of the college, who benefit greatly from the resultant mixture of nationalities, languages and ideas. They learn to work and think across cultural boundaries.
39. Students in the sixth form receive the same high degree of support as in the rest of the college, as well as being fully included in the life of the college. Most who come from other countries have already studied English for several years, so that they are able to participate fully in their studies on arrival. They take advantage of the same wide range of extra-curricular activities as other students.
40. The college prepares its Diploma students very well for higher education, helping them with university applications in Britain and in the rest of the world, and providing them with the opportunities to take an interim year working for such bodies as voluntary charities before they go on to university life.

## Resources

Resources for learning are **good**.

### Main Strengths and weaknesses.

- Good procedures exist for departments to access resources related to their priorities for improving students' learning.
- Modern foreign languages are very well resourced, particularly in the sixth form.

### Commentary

41. The amount of financial resources allocated to subject areas is above average. Most departments have ample good quality textbooks and appropriate specialist equipment. Some departments, notably design and technology, science and modern foreign languages, have good ICT resources that are used very effectively. The whole-college ICT network allows students very good access to their work in several locations. Most other areas of the curriculum have at least one computer and some have interactive whiteboards. These are used effectively to enhance learning. However, some departments have difficulty gaining access to the computer suites for whole classes. The range of ICT resources in music inhibits students composing and performing work.
42. Students with special educational needs have appropriate texts and multi-sensory materials to support their learning. However, opportunities for these students to use specific ICT resources, related to their needs, are limited.

### Resources in the Sixth Form

43. Most subjects have good quality textbooks. Appropriate specialist equipment is available in, for example, design and technology, computer science, science and visual arts. Students have good access to ICT facilities for developing their own learning. The book resources available for student research in the library are limited.

## Accommodation

The accommodation provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The campus atmosphere contributes to students' learning.
- The premises for boarders are very good.
- The new accommodation for humanities is very good.
- The accommodation for physical education (PE) is inadequate and has a limiting effect upon the curriculum provision.
- Provision in some areas of science and art and design is inadequate.

### Commentary

44. The college comprises well-maintained buildings and grounds with mature trees, creating a tranquil, learning atmosphere. New buildings have been designed with a view towards architectural neighbourliness and sit well alongside the original college buildings. The new building for humanities has provided large, spacious teaching rooms. Students who have English as an additional language enjoy a dedicated area where they might meet with their teachers. The PE department's programme suffers from a lack of a hard surface for certain outdoor games and inadequate indoor areas, further reducing curriculum options. Unusually, the college has neither a sports hall nor a pool; changing facilities remain inadequate. Five

science rooms shared by seven teachers are spread out across the campus, making communication difficult, while one of the art rooms is too small for larger teaching groups.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The provision to ensure students' care welfare and health and safety is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are comprehensive arrangements for child protection and to ensure students' health and safety.
  - Support for academic achievement and personal development is very good.
  - Induction procedures are very good.
  - Careers education in Years 9, 10 and 11 is underdeveloped.
45. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for child protection. Daily routines are carefully planned and carried out. There is very good regard for health and safety. The college environment is of a very high standard. It is very well maintained, and helps promote an excellent ethos for learning. There are effective arrangements to ensure the safety of students using the Internet.
46. Staff have good relationships with students and a very good understanding of students' achievement and development. Very good induction procedures ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary school. Students receive very good advice and guidance about how to improve their college work. Many teachers are willing to offer students personal support. Students feel safe and secure. The form tutor time is not always used as effectively as it might and there are plans to develop the role of the form tutor.
47. At present, the planned programme of careers education in Years 9, 10 and 11 is underdeveloped. The support from the connexions service is also limited, compared to the level of provision seen in other schools. The newly appointed careers co-ordinator is well aware of these deficiencies and hopes to use his depth of experience of a full range of post-16 opportunities to enhance careers education. Already, a dedicated careers room has been established and there is very good support for careers education in the sixth form.
48. Students are consulted about their views and have access to a college council. Staff listen to students and treat their ideas with respect. However, some students feel that their suggestions are rarely acted upon. There are plans to further develop the role of the college council.

### **Sixth Form**

49. Students receive effective advice before they join the sixth form. They are interviewed individually and also have the opportunity to shadow sixth form students and get a first hand experience of lessons and expectations. Students are well aware of the high expectations of the courses and dropouts are rare. Students receive good personal support during their studies. They receive very good well-informed support and guidance regarding university applications.
50. Assessment is regular, fairly rigorous and supportive. Students are carefully monitored and those who need extra help are quickly identified and supported via a system of regular reviews. Reports to parents and carers are thorough and give a clear indication of a student's strengths and weaknesses.

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

The college is popular and over-subscribed, enjoying a well-deserved, very good reputation locally, nationally and internationally. An effective partnership with parents and the local community enhances students' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with very good information, especially about their children's standards and progress.
  - A very effective partnership between home and college, including well-directed and well-supported prep, promotes high academic standards.
  - The modern foreign language department has excellent links with local schools and schools in a wide range of EEC countries.
51. The college works very effectively with parents to support learning. Parents feel a very strong sense of partnership based on mutual trust, and have great confidence in the college. Parents are provided with a good range of information about the work of the college. Reports on children's progress are of a high standard and make it clear what students have to do in order to improve their grades. Parents are very supportive of their children. Heavy commitment to well focused tasks, to be completed as prep, has a considerable positive impact on standards. Parents have been consulted and their views are taken into account. Complaints are rare and are handled sensitively.
52. Students attend a very wide range of primary schools, but arrangements for the transfer of information remain effective. The modern foreign language department has excellent links with other educational institutions that help promote high standards. French lessons are provided for primary-aged students and many students are well prepared for French lessons in Year 7. There is an impressive range of formal and informal links with a wide range of schools on the continent. Involvement with the teacher training programme at Nottingham University has enhanced provision and kept the college at the forefront of teaching and technological development.
53. The special educational needs department has very good links with specialist agencies outside the college.
54. The effective links with primary schools enable needs to be identified prior to entry and plans made. Students are involved in reviews of their progress and they help to set their own targets.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The college is led and managed very effectively. The leadership of the Principal is outstanding. He is supported by a very strong team of senior and middle managers. Governors are fully involved in the running of the college and fulfil their roles very well. The financial management of the college is excellent.

### **Main strengths and areas for development**

- The leadership of the college by the Principal is outstanding and based on excellent skills of strategic management.
- Senior and middle managers carry out their roles very effectively and efficiently.
- The college makes a very valuable contribution to initial teacher training and introduces staff to new roles very effectively.
- Governors make a major contribution to the effective leadership of the college.
- The leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent.

- Financial management is very efficient; it supports effective decision-making.

## Commentary

55. The Principal is an outstanding leader with strong intellectual and personal skills. His powers of strategic planning are a key factor in the college's success. Appointed as Principal of a college declining in numbers and reputation, he brought with him to the post a wealth of experience. In partnership with governors, he analysed the weaknesses and strengths of the college, and the needs of potential students and parents in the locality, the country and abroad, in a strategic review, which is repeated at regular intervals. The results of the analysis informed the development of the college: the setting up of the boarding facilities; the creation of the sixth form, with its outstandingly broad and deep International Baccalaureate curriculum; and the establishment of the college as a Specialist Language College. Governors and Principal have built strong and effective teams to execute the plan. The Principal constantly analyses the talents of the staff in post and adapts the management structure and individual roles to play to strengths.
56. Developments in the college are based on excellent financial planning, which is necessary in the rapidly evolving situation. The Principal has the ability to articulate the college's mission statement to all its members: to be an "exemplar in the world".

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,144,906	Balance from previous year	175,546
Total expenditure	4,211,199	Balance carried forward to the next	109,253
Expenditure per student	6,160		

57. The vision of the Principal is put into practice by a very strong team of senior staff, with very efficient systems for managing the college. The team works well together and shows a strong commitment to the objectives of the college. It exercises its delegated responsibilities well, conducting monitoring and review activities systematically and efficiently. The quality assurance procedures that operate within the college are of a particularly high standard. This rigorous review of performance for each subject leads to targets being drawn up for both the whole college and individual subjects. Each target has clear criteria so that its success or otherwise can be measured and the level of planning for meeting these targets is particularly detailed. Consequently, the standards achieved by the college have continued to improve significantly. The leadership and management of history, design and technology, theory of knowledge, modern foreign languages and the boarding provision are excellent.
58. Governors show a very strong commitment and are very knowledgeable about all aspects of the college's work. They support the college very well and have been particularly active in promoting improvements to the college buildings and its environment. The governing body is a very effective team and working relationships with the staff are very good. Annual meetings with parents are carefully minuted; these show the care governors take to explain the college's work to parents. Helpful information on the required areas is given in the annual report. The prospectus is a very attractive and informative document, which reflects the college's values and work very well.
59. The college's staff performance management process is very effectively structured and is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants thrive on a vigorously delivered programme of professional development, taking account of individual,



department and whole-college priorities. The Principal, senior managers and governors have worked hard to recruit, train and deploy staff very effectively. There is a highly effective system for introducing staff to new roles on appointment or promotion. The college acts as an excellent centre for the training of teachers, in partnership with Nottingham University. This is an arrangement which is of mutual benefit for both partners and greatly enhances the quality of education.

60. The programmes of study for students who speak English as an additional language are very good. The head of the learning support department ensures early assessment and individual education plans are tailored to suit each student's needs. These plans are regularly reviewed and used to move students on to the next stage of learning.

### **Sixth Form**

61. The Principal is very ably supported in all his work by the Vice Principal, who is responsible for the leadership and management of the sixth form. She has an excellent grasp of the needs of students and the college, and has overseen the establishment of the highly successful International Baccalaureate course. Her own contribution to the teaching of the theory of knowledge within the course is outstanding. She uses her involvement in the course to ensure that students from all backgrounds and nations are given equal access to the educational provision at the college. The social and academic progress of students is monitored very carefully: for example, the "settling in" reports in Year 12 are followed up assiduously in individual interviews with students. The Vice Principal regularly reviews the performance of each subject in the sixth form and ties in the findings with the college's performance management system, for which she is also responsible. Areas for development are highlighted and supported by appropriate training.

### **COMMUNITY PROVISION**

Community provision throughout the college is exceptionally good and visionary. At the college, community is regarded in its most comprehensive form, that of a world community, as well as the local community.

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

- The college provides an excellent vision and example of a real sense of community.
- Partnerships with other educational establishments throughout Europe are very strong.
- The college supports learning in the local community extremely well.
- Links of many different kinds benefit the local community.

#### **Commentary**

62. The college has partnerships with many other educational establishments in Bonn, Muenster, Tokyo, Berlin, Liege, Aix-en-Provence, Dagneux, Iasi, Madrid and Pellevoisin. Exchange trips are organised to all these places, with every year group in the college having the opportunity to go to another country. Equally, students from these establishments come to Hockerill, thus broadening the horizons of all students, as well as helping with their language and cultural studies. The college also has a very strong link with a deprived special school in Romania and works extensively, not only to raise funds for the school, but also to send students there to help improve the physical conditions. It is this ethos of support and understanding which characterises the college's links with the community.
63. The college is extremely popular in the local community. It is over-subscribed, and parents are delighted with the breadth of education their children receive and the success they achieve. The college itself is a strong community, with the boarding element ensuring that clubs and other extra-curricular activities fully involve all students during the day and after the college day.

The college is of a size which allows staff and students to know each other well and this adds to a sense of citizenship and belonging, which students learn to extend to the outside world.

64. The college does much to provide positive links with the local community. It provides after-college language classes in French, German, Spanish and Japanese for primary school students in Year 5 and Year 6, using a variety of absorbing methods and the opportunity to use the college's Multi Media Language Laboratory. Master classes in languages are held at the college on Saturdays. There are daytime adult classes in French, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and German, which are very popular. The college also provides two local secondary schools with language assistants. There are very strong links with Nottingham University, who work closely with the college in the training of new teachers. All these activities contribute a great deal to the cultural dimension of the local community.
65. The college shares its Astroturf sports facility with the local hockey club and a number of football clubs. Boarding facilities are used for many purposes and by many organisations. Speech days and open days are frequent and students participate in the youth section of the Rotary Club. The college is at the heart of the community and sees its primary function to be that of making links, providing support and encouraging interaction between fellow human beings. It is extremely successful in these aims.

## **BOARDING PROVISION**

The standard of boarding provision is excellent and makes a very significant contribution to boarding students' personal development and the high academic standards they achieve.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
  - Students are very well supervised and there is a very high regard for their health and safety.
  - Personal development is excellent.
  - Very good student monitoring, very well organised prep and good time management makes an excellent contribution to promoting high academic standards.
  - Students have access to an excellent wide range of social and cultural activities during evenings and weekends.
  - The accommodation is of a high standard.
66. Provision matches very well with National Care Standards. The college has responded quickly and effectively to the very minor issues recently raised by inspectors from the National Care Standards. The quality of food has improved.
  67. A vision for very high quality care is very effectively planned and results in constant improvement. There is a very precise match between the well thought out policies and everyday procedures. Very careful monitoring results in a very good consistency of practice whilst still allowing each boarding house to develop some character of its own. House staff know individual students well and are fully aware of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. Relationships are warm and caring, and staff respond to students in a very supportive way. There is a highly developed awareness of health and safety procedures amongst students and staff. Supervision is excellent and is appropriate to students' ages and emotional maturity. Procedures for child protection are very thorough and constantly updated. There are appropriate arrangements for the care of boarders who fall ill. At present, there is an absence of a discrete register of the administration of drugs.
  68. Accommodation is of a high standard in all houses and provision in Thames House is outstanding. Students are accommodated in very attractive and well-furnished bedrooms. There is limited personal space for younger students, but older students usually have their own bedrooms and a level of privacy appropriate for their age. There are plans to renovate the elderly bathrooms for younger boys and recreational space is being developed.

69. Prep sessions are very well supervised. There is good, but very carefully monitored access to information and communication technology, including the Internet. The very close links between the boarding provision and the main college provision, very effective time management and careful monitoring of students' academic and personal progress provide excellent support for very good academic achievement.
70. Students have access to a wide range of enjoyable, interesting and exciting social and cultural activities during evenings and weekends. The reward system of privileges promotes responsibility. There are high quality relationships between students and very supportive relationships between students and staff, which result in students enjoying their time in the boarding houses. The outcome of excellent provision is happy, well-adjusted students, who mature into delightful young people, with excellent social skills and very high aspirations, who are capable of great things.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average standards because of strong, focused leadership.
  - Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
  - The curriculum is rich and varied and students are encouraged to think and reflect.
  - Students are not all aware of how to improve.
  - Students do not have equal access to the ICT facilities.
71. Results and current standards reflect continuing improvement. Students' achievement is good, taking into account the 2003 results as well as work seen. The head of department, who started at the beginning of the year, has succeeded in developing a shared vision for the improvement of teaching and learning, and consequently results are better.
72. In work seen, students' attainment by the end of Years 9 and 11 is well above average. This represents good achievement and improving standards because when the students joined the college, their overall standards were above average. Standards in literacy, especially at Level 6, have improved, showing particularly good achievement. Most students have a very good knowledge and understanding of literacy skills by the time they have been in the college for three years. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and in formal situations. Writing standards are well above average; most students have grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and their work is very well presented. Writing is creative and poetic. It is critical and analytical, reflecting the department's encouragement of reflection. The standards of all students are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing differentiation in lesson planning. The use of ICT is patchy because it is difficult to access the ICT suite and there are insufficient computing facilities in the department.
73. Attainment in English by the end of Year 11 is well above average. Students write with understanding and critical appreciation of Shakespearean texts and literature from different cultures. They can evaluate character and theme to a sophisticated level. A minority of students rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is lacking in detailed understanding and insight. Students with special educational needs and the able and talented achieve well.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and sometimes very good. In a small minority of lessons, students learn less than in others because the students are not involved enough in their own learning, or classroom management strategies are less strong. In the very good lessons, there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Students enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. Students respond well to their teachers' care for achievement and this helps develop the good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 11 lesson on short stories, the students thoroughly enjoyed exchanging ideas and analysing the best possible structure for their work. Consequently, they presented their findings in a deeply felt and expressive manner, because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. In a Year 8 lesson, students spoke meaningfully to the class and each other, and rejoiced in the enthusiastic response of the teacher and their peers.

75. The leadership of the department is good. The relatively new head of department has developed a cohesive team. The head of department has a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and students. Teachers are beginning to share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they are regularly discussing what is best for the students. Procedures for assessment are clear and used by the head of department to set individual students' targets. This is not consistent in practice and ongoing assessment is sometimes bland and lacking in specific targets to guide students' improvement. Some students are not aware of their standards or targets and therefore are not sure how to improve.
76. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Students' achievement has improved and literacy teaching has been used effectively to target further improvements in English language. This exemplifies the department's commitment to avoid complacency and further improve standards. Standards are rising, and, with the shared commitment to sharing good practice and attention to identified areas for improvement, the department has the capacity to succeed even further.

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

77. Management in departments has been successful in putting into practice the improvement of students' literacy skills. The appointment of a new literacy co-ordinator should help to sharpen whole college management of improving literacy, especially in the 'catch up' programme. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary, especially in modern foreign languages, science and English. The English department has dictionaries available in each classroom; key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise students with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows students to research topics in detail. Students discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly in most subjects and show respect to their peers and staff by listening attentively. More developed discursive and analytical writing is not consistent, however, in subjects where literacy teaching is less emphasised. In mathematics, for example, opportunities were missed to correct mechanical accuracy. Reading fluency is encouraged and seen to particular effect in English and modern foreign languages. Most subjects undertake the teaching of basic literacy skills conscientiously as a means of improving standards.

### **Modern languages**

Provision in modern languages is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in all languages are very high and students achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Leadership and management is excellent.
- The curriculum provision is outstanding.

### **Commentary**

78. Standards in French and German are very high; in GCSE examinations in 2002, the proportion of candidates achieving A\*-C grades in French were very high, and in German, they were above average. A large proportion of students take GCSE examinations at the end of Year 9 and then go on to achieve standards required for A/S and A level examinations at the end of Year 11. In GCSE examinations, girls perform better than boys. Standards achieved in Spanish, Italian and Japanese, after 2 years of study, are also very high. In work seen, students have an excellent understanding of grammar and apply it accurately to express their views. Standards seen in German are well above average and improving because staffing is

now more stable. Students achieve a high degree of independence and fluency in the languages they study. By the end of Year 9, the majority of students participate fully in debate in French or German in history and geography lessons, and this is a major factor in raising standards in languages. They express their views in detail and justify their opinions. They display a very good range of vocabulary and structures and a very good understanding of grammar, which allows them to manipulate the languages successfully to suit their own needs. Reading and listening skills are very well developed; students skim and scan texts effectively and respond appropriately and in detail to speech at normal speed and, by Years 10 and 11, higher attaining students are beginning to make inferences. Writing is accurate and students use the language creatively in Years 10 and 11. Students make very good progress in lessons and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

79. The quality of teaching overall is very good; students have very positive attitudes towards their learning and have excellent relationships with their teachers. As a result, the quality of learning is very good and students achieve very well. Very well planned and sequenced activities enable students to build very effectively on previous learning. Teachers have high expectations. The very effective and exclusive use of the target languages effectively reinforces previous learning and anticipates next steps. This, coupled with frequent opportunities for students to use the language themselves, allows students to achieve very well and develop a high degree of fluency and independence in the languages being learned. Resources such as the overhead projector and PowerPoint presentations are used effectively to present new language and clarify patterns. Information and communication technology is used very well to enable students to work at their own pace to consolidate and extend learning. In a minority of lessons, the needs of lower attaining students are not always adequately addressed, and this slows the pace of their learning.
80. Leadership and management are excellent. The head of department has clear vision of the way forward, and the department has been very successful in developing an innovative curriculum and raising standards. Effective action has been taken to address issues raised in the last inspection and there has been excellent improvement in all areas. Standards continue to be rigorously analysed to raise standards further. The very effective monitoring and development of teaching and learning, supported by links with Nottingham University, results in a high level of consistency across the department and has a significant impact upon the standards achieved. The department works very well as a team, sharing ideas and spreading good practice.
81. The department provides an excellent and innovative curriculum, which caters very well for students' needs and aspirations, both for native English speakers and native French, German, Italian and Spanish-speaking students, and is enriched very effectively by access to native speakers in all languages (teachers, language assistants and students' peers). The department makes an outstanding contribution to the development of students' cultural awareness, enriched considerably by a wide range of established trips, links and exchanges abroad. The department provides excellent opportunities for students to learn languages at all levels. In addition, the bilingual section in history and geography makes a significant contribution to students' language development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very high standards are being attained in national tests at the end of Year 9.
- GCSE results at A\*-C are above national averages, but few A\* grades are gained as yet.
- The attitude and diligence of students is very good.
- There are some inconsistencies in marking of work and in the use of ICT.

## Commentary

82. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are significantly above national averages, and the trend over several years rises faster than the national picture. The 2003 SATS results saw further noticeable improvement. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. GCSE results at A\*-C in 2003 were below those of 2002, but there has been an upwards trend in recent years, with results above national figures. The number of students gaining grades A/A\* at GCSE remains relatively small.
83. When compared to the attainment of students on their entry to the college, these results indicate very good achievement by the end of Year 9, and good achievement by the end of Year 11. A group of Year 9 students is being fast-tracked to further raise standards, and the good opportunities given to students in all year groups for investigative coursework will also prove beneficial. Initial difficulties with the modular syllabus contributed to the dip in 2003 GCSE results. These have been overcome and prospects for current students look very good. Students in all years are attentive and co-operative, diligent in study, and the quality of their work is high.
84. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The best lessons are well planned, have a prompt start, and involve quick-fire question and answer sessions, with rapid movement into the main focus, thorough explanation often involving student participation, clear reinforcement and challenge, and effective review. These features were seen in very good lessons in Year 7 on correlation, in Year 10 on congruency and Year 11 on cumulative frequency and quartiles. Students explain or interpret answers to the class, thereby confirming understanding, which is very good practice. Very good work in algebraic techniques was also seen with a Year 11 low-attaining group. At all levels, numeric work is enhanced, actively promoting learning in all attainment targets of the subject. Overhead projectors are frequently used, although some acetates prove difficult to read from the back of the classroom. Prep (homework) is regularly set and followed up. A very clear work ethic prevails, and relationships within the classroom are very good. Boys and girls contribute equally, as do members of different ethnic heritage, whilst students with special educational needs receive good additional support in a number of lessons.
85. Assessment strategies are good, with regular testing and review, though many students seem unfamiliar with the level at which they are working. Ongoing marking of students' exercise books is very good by some teachers, but insufficiently rigorous by others. This inconsistency in applying departmental marking policy results in some students sitting tests not having had previous work appropriately checked, so their progress is restricted. Very good usage of ICT was seen in some coursework and in wall displays, but limited use of ICT occurs within mathematics lessons. There is a departmental suite of four rooms, but with five sets in most year groups, one class has to be taught elsewhere. Leadership and management are good, with drive and enthusiasm being particularly strong features. Schemes of work and other documentation are clear and supportive. Performance management is satisfactory, but mutual lesson observation does not yet take place. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; the department is well placed to further raise standards.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

86. Students have a good command of numeracy. In mathematics lessons, students receive regular instruction and checking of skills, especially via starter activities. This sound background in numeric competence has positive benefits in many other areas of the curriculum. Mental recall is good and calculators are used where appropriate. Students are confident in the use of decimals, fractions and solving equations. Higher-attaining students can determine surface areas and volumes, and have satisfactory algebraic understanding. Lower-attainers receive good assistance in raising their ability in number work and measurement.

87. Very good graphical work occurs in many areas of the curriculum, notably in geography, science, and design and technology. An impressive application of ergonomics was seen in a textiles lesson, and strengths and weaknesses in graphical techniques were well addressed in geography. Whilst a cross-curricular policy as such is only an outline at present, its absence does not significantly affect overall performance – nevertheless, a more detailed framework needs to be in place.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are well above average.
- Very good, and occasionally excellent, teaching leads to very good achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Students behave and concentrate very well because they have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Inconsistency in teachers' planning leads to work that is not always well enough matched to students' capability.

### Commentary

88. Examination results in 2002 were well above national averages. They were similar in 2003 at the end of Year 9. However, they were a little lower at the end of Year 11 because a small number of students failed to complete coursework. The proportion gaining the highest (A\* and A) grades was disappointing. Results for students taking courses in the separate sciences are consistently high. In comparison with results in the previous stage of their science education, students did very well at the end of Year 9, and a little better than expected at the end of Year 11.
89. Standards in lessons and students' written work are a little above average when they enter the college in Year 7. However, by Year 9, they are well above average, reflected in recent National Curriculum test results. Standards in Year 11 are also well above average, similarly reflected in recent GCSE results.
90. Students' overall achievement through Years 7 to 9 is very good. However, in mixed ability groups in Year 7 their achievement is less good because teachers do not plan well enough for the wide range of students' capabilities, particularly higher-attaining students. Work is sometimes too easy for these students, as when classifying natural and synthetic materials from a set of pictures. On the other hand, students' achievement in Years 8 and 9 is occasionally excellent. In Year 9, all students in a lower set worked to full capacity because the teacher ensured that the pace was fast yet appropriate, and planned work which was challenging for all. Students continue to achieve well in Years 10 and 11. However, in some lessons, higher-attaining students achieve less than they could because they are not encouraged to extend their learning beyond the main lesson content, while in others, the work of learning support assistants is not well enough focused on ensuring that lower-attaining students meet their targets.
91. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11, following a similar pattern to pupils' achievement. Teaching and learning are occasionally excellent. Teachers make their expectations of good behaviour and high work rate clear at the outset, and students respond very well by concentrating throughout the full length of lessons. They take pride in their written work, resulting in very well organised exercise books that help in subsequent preparation for examinations. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly with helpful comments on how it could be improved, but follow-up to ensure that they act on the



advice given, is inconsistent across the department. Lesson planning does not focus sharply enough on the expected learning outcomes for different groups of students.

### Example of outstanding practice

**In this low-attaining Year 9 science set, the teacher made excellent use of the National Curriculum requirements and levels to challenge all students in the group.** Frequent references to current levels of performance and what they needed to do to move forward to a higher level were very effective in encouraging all to work to their full capacity. The learning support assistant helped the teacher draw several students fully into the whole class question and answer part of the lesson, while at the end of the lesson higher-attaining students were encouraged to work separately on more advanced material drawn from the Year 10 programme.

92. Leadership and management in science are good. Teachers work well together as a team and the small decline in 2003 results from those in 2002 has been addressed by ensuring that students have already completed coursework requirements for the 2004 examination. However, the very good and excellent practice within the department is not widely enough shared to ensure that students' experience is consistent across the department.
93. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Results are similar now, but standards in lessons have improved. Teaching is significantly better; about one-fifth of lessons were unsatisfactory then, but none are now. Accommodation remains unsatisfactory because one laboratory is remote from the others and results in loss of lesson time when students arrive late.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good improvement in the overall provision since the last inspection.
- Students are very keen to learn and their teachers support them very well.
- Students achieve very well.
- Clear leadership and very effective management have led to improved standards and resources.
- Very good teaching has led to very high standards in examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Further development of the use of ICT, in some subject areas, is required.
- Standards need to be improved still further by the greater use of target setting procedures.

### Commentary

94. At the end of Year 9, students' standards in ICT are well above average. Students want to learn and take full advantage of the opportunities they are given. This is a major reason for their very good achievement. They tackle challenging tasks with enthusiasm. For example, they know how to use complex formulae in a payroll spreadsheet to model different situations. In Year 11, student attainment overall is also well above average and achievement is very good. Those who do not follow examination courses in ICT nevertheless use it very well. They transfer their skills into many other areas of the curriculum very effectively. Examination results in Year 11 have been outstanding in the past two years. Work observed during the inspection shows a similar level of attainment. Most students have well above average literary skills. These are evident in the sophisticated, analytical reports that they write on, for example, the use of ICT in the community.
95. Teaching and learning are good between Years 7 and 9. Teaching, in these years, is most effective when delivered by specialist subject teachers. Teaching and learning are very good in

Years 10 and 11. Teachers are enthusiastic, which engages students' interest. Tasks and questioning are challenging so that all students are constantly made to think. Students are often engrossed in their work because of the pace and demands of the lesson. Teachers support individuals, especially those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, very well. As a result, these students make very good progress. Relationships are excellent. Students help each other willingly. Lessons are well planned so that activities develop students' knowledge and understanding in sequence. Prep is used very effectively as an integral part of teaching; therefore, lessons make very good use of the time available. The marking of students' work is good. However, students are not given targets related to National Curriculum or GCSE levels, so they are not clear how to improve. Higher-attaining students achieve as highly as other students, even though there is only limited extra provision, such as more demanding tasks that would extend them still further. In lessons, there is little difference in the learning of girls and boys.

96. The department is very well led and managed. There is a focus on improving standards. These have improved enormously over the past few years. There is a clear vision of how the department should develop. Teaching is very well monitored and supported. The development planning process is now much more accurate than at the time of the last inspection. The improved ICT resources are very well managed and maintained.
97. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

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

98. The inadequate use of ICT across the curriculum was a major issue at the last inspection. This position has improved considerably, but some subjects still find it difficult to gain access to the computer rooms, as they are used extensively for ICT lessons. As a result, their use of ICT is limited. The head of department has developed some innovative and effective methods to try to alleviate this problem, by, for example, linking curriculum delivery in PE and RE with ICT lessons. The lack of ICT resources in music inhibits students composing and performing work. However, a number of departments make good use of ICT and others have good plans for its future development. Modern foreign languages, for example, make very good use of ICT through their multi-media centre. This makes a significant contribution to the overall development of students' ICT capability.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- Very good leadership has created effective teamwork.
- A rapid improvement in provision is now taking place.
- Although teaching overall is good, there is a limited range of teaching and learning styles.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 needs further development.

#### **Commentary**

99. A small number of students took the full GCSE examination in 2002 and their results were well below the national average, but the results in the 'short' GCSE examination were well above average. In 2003, results in both the full and 'short' courses were provisionally in line with national expectations. However, in the 'short' course, there was a significant variation between the high level of attainment of students in the Section Bilingue and the students, generally of lower prior attainment, who were taught in English.

100. Standards seen during the inspection were in line with expectations in all year groups. They were higher in the Section Bilingue. Achievement of all groups of students is good, including the higher-attaining students. Some students with special educational needs are achieving very well. Students acquire good geographical skills in Years 7 and 8, so that they can use sophisticated techniques for analysis of data at an earlier age than is usually seen.
101. Teaching is good overall and students learn well in all years; some of the Section Bilingue teaching seen was very good. Geography lessons are well planned and have a brisk pace, which ensures that students work well. However, in a Year 10 class in the Section Bilingue, one group of girls, for whom geography had not been their preferred option, was under-achieving. Marking is very thorough and helpful, but arrangements for assessing progress and moderating attainment across the department in Years 7 to 9 are only just being put into place. Attention is now also being given to increasing the variety of teaching and learning styles.
102. Leadership and management are very good. A change of leadership has brought about rapid progress. The subject is now co-ordinated by the head of humanities and, although she does not teach geography, she has an excellent vision for its development. The changes taking place are based on very thorough monitoring and evaluation, and on fostering close teamwork, which had previously been missing.
103. Schemes of work take account of the subject's role in promoting literacy, citizenship and social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Geography makes a particularly good contribution to the teaching of numeracy. The use of ICT is increasing so that, in a Year 8 lesson, students were able to use Excel and Word programs effectively to correlate and describe the relationship between levels of development and literacy.
104. The number of students studying geography in Years 10 and 11 has been small. The need to raise the profile of the subject, and to provide a wider range of learning opportunities in Years 7 to 9, is recognised.
105. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, especially since the recent change of leadership.

## History

Provision in history is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the GCSE full course examination have been consistently high.
- Improvement since the previous inspection has been excellent.
- The department has excellent leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards their studies.
- The bilingual history classes are an innovative feature of the department's work.
- The subject makes a very strong contribution to personal development and citizenship skills.
- The use of ICT needs further development.

### Commentary

106. Results in the full GCSE examination, over time, have been well above national averages and, in 2002, nearly one-third of candidates entered achieved the highest grades. In lessons seen and work analysed during the current inspection, standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 9 and this represents good achievement. Students develop historical skills rapidly from the start of Year 7. They can examine sources critically and can write for a variety

of purposes. In this context, some excellent independent studies were seen from Year 8 students on the development of parliamentary government. These standards are improved on in Years 10 and 11, when students learn to hone their historical skills of analysis and investigation to considerable depth. This has addressed very successfully issues arising from the previous inspection concerning lack of skills development. Students in both the bilingual and English language classes exhibit very high levels of achievement at this stage. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well.

107. These high standards are underpinned by the quality of teaching which is, without exception, very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this to advance the learning process and to encourage all students to become budding historians. There is an air of purpose and rigour to lessons and this gives students confidence to air their opinions and participate fully in all classroom activities. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 7 lesson using role-play to excellent effect in order to demonstrate how William I took control of England after 1066. The previous inspection report found serious weaknesses in history teaching. This is no longer the case. Teachers have very high expectations of all students and use a variety of methods to stimulate and enhance students' learning. As a result, students work with enthusiasm and maturity. They have very positive attitudes towards learning and there is a clear ethos of mutual respect in the classroom.
108. The department has many strengths, including excellent leadership and management. The sense of teamwork and the rigour of assessment procedures are also noteworthy, including a high commitment to students' self-assessment of their written work. The subject makes a very strong contribution to the development of students' personal and citizenship skills, and the bilingual classes are a particularly innovative feature of the department's work. ICT, however, has yet to make a full impact on the subject curriculum.
109. Overall, the department has made excellent progress since the previous inspection. The creditable GCSE results and the very high uptake of the subject in Year 10 are testament to the dedication and hard work of the teaching team. The subject is now a considerable strength to the college.

## Religious education

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in all year groups.
- Teachers create a very positive learning ethos in classrooms.
- The subject makes an excellent contribution to personal development and multifaith education.
- The quality of boys' written work needs to be improved.
- Students participate fully in classroom activities.
- The department is led and managed very well.
- Assessment techniques are very thorough and self-assessment is used very well.
- Students would benefit from opportunities to visit religious sites.

## Commentary

110. In recent years, students entered for the GCSE 'short' course examination have performed consistently above the national average in both the A\* to C and A\* to G range. In the most recent examination, girls performed significantly better than boys. In lessons seen and from work analysed, most students attain standards that are above, and sometimes well above, those expected by the locally agreed syllabus in all years. Students achieve well as they move through the college and acquire a thorough understanding of Christianity and other world

religions. For example, Year 8 students have produced some very detailed and well-presented projects on religious pilgrimages. In Years 10 and 11, these high standards are maintained and students also develop their ideas on spiritual and moral issues in considerable detail. In this context, Year 10 students have produced some very impressive notes and extended writing on medical ethics. In all years, oral work is very good, but boys achieve less well in their written work than girls. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well in all years.

111. The overall quality of teaching is good; it is often very good. The specialist teacher uses subject knowledge very well to plan lessons and motivate students. Classroom management is very strong and teachers create a clear learning ethos in the classroom that encourages students to contribute to lessons and listen to the views of their peers with respect. As a result, students have very positive attitudes towards their learning and participate fully in debate and discussion. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 9 lesson using paired work and class discussion to examine the arguments for and against capital punishment. The pace and variety now present in lessons have addressed fully a concern expressed in the previous inspection report on these issues.
112. The department is led and managed very well. The previous inspection report noted deficiencies in planning and lack of detailed schemes of work. This is no longer the case. Assessment techniques are now very detailed and thorough, including a strong emphasis on self-assessment. The department makes an excellent contribution to the development of literacy skills and to the personal development of all students, especially in the area of multifaith education. ICT is now playing an increasing part in the work of the department; for example, the work in Year 7 on Sikhism runs parallel with ICT lessons involving a virtual tour of a Gurdwara. Students would benefit, however, from opportunities to visit local historical sites.
113. Overall, the department has made very good progress since the previous inspection and its particular strengths are in the areas of personal development, departmental leadership and the learning ethos in classrooms. The key issue now is to improve the achievement of boys, particularly at GCSE.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Management of the department is excellent. There is knowledgeable and innovative leadership.
- Students' achievement is overall very good in both key stages; the vast majority of students across the attainment range are working up to their individual capabilities.
- Standards overall are well above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Very high standards are reached in GCSE electronics and graphic products.
- Learning is enhanced by good links with the community and other countries, and the department makes a significant contribution to students' personal development.
- Teaching and learning are overall very good, some are excellent.
- Further curriculum links with designers and design movements could enhance the cultural and international dimension and help promote even higher standards.
- Assessment procedures need strengthening to improve planning and help students understand how they can make progress.
- Resources are needed to keep pace with technological developments, and some areas of the department's accommodation need improvement.

### **Commentary**

114. This is a strong department achieving high standards at all levels, and contributes significantly to the life and international dimension of the college. A good range of courses are offered in all years, including graphics, product design, food technology, textiles and electronics.
115. Students' achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9, and students across the wide attainment range are working to their individual capabilities. By the end of Year 9, standards overall are well above national expectation. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is also very good, and high standards of designing and making are evident in the best work in all areas of the subject. In recent years, GCSE results overall have been very high with the number of A\* to C grades being well above the national average. In 2003, all students gained a grade in the range A\* to C in the GCSE electronic products examination.
116. In Years 7 to 9, students follow the design process well when designing and making products. Students in Year 7 show a good understanding of the 'power' of logos and trademarks. They readily identify some international companies from trademarks shown to them on an overhead projector. They design logos based on their own initials, which shows creativity and a very good understanding of letter forms. Students in the same year have started an egg carrier project. They show great enthusiasm and, in a very short time, produced original designs, with detailed drawings of the side and end views of the carrier. Year 9 students' designs for CD covers and stands are designed and made to a high standard, showing well researched market requirements, and very good understanding of the properties and use of various materials and media.
117. Year 10 students show good knowledge of publishing software when designing packaging for a corn flakes packet. They use the Internet effectively for research, and produce some strikingly original and imaginative graphic work, balancing shapes, colour, and typography very professionally. Year 11 design sheets for textiles course work, show high productivity and strong commitment to the subject. When designing dresses, students show very good understanding of the importance of market research and designing to meet clients' requirements.
118. The overall quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 11, where there are examples of excellent teaching. Teachers plan projects extremely well, and they have very good command of their subject specialisms. This promotes interest and very good learning and achievement. Strengths of teaching in Years 7 to 9, are clearly stated lesson aims and objectives, and very good teaching methodology, with well established procedures to gain attention and maintain firm control, within a pleasant and enjoyable working environment. There is a strong emphasis on health and safety rules and ongoing assessment. Student self-assessment is used effectively, and National Curriculum levels are referred to throughout the key stage. Strengths in Years 10 to 11 are question and answer sessions, used very effectively to draw out ideas, reinforce learning and aid ongoing assessment; the excellent use of ICT for creative design graphics; and the setting of realistic assignments with good links to environmental issues. Areas for improvement in a minority of lessons in both key stages are strategies to improve pace and increase student participation in questioning.
119. Leadership and management of the department are excellent, and high standards are promoted and gained in all areas. There is clear vision of how the department needs to progress. Team spirit is excellent. Development plans are appropriate and forward-looking. It is intended to strengthen assessment procedures, and curriculum links with work experience, and to further develop ICT applications. The curriculum could be further improved with more references to design movements, which would further promote the cultural and international dimension.
120. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. All issues have been tackled and major improvements made. Notably, the introduction of textiles and electronics. Further improvements are needed in the accommodation and resources. The design and technology

department is in the oldest part of the college and there are related problems. The annual budget has been reduced, and it is difficult to find funding for new initiatives. However, the unsatisfactory progress of low attainers has been addressed, and the use of different cultures is now in place through food technology, product design, and textiles. Students' personal development is greatly enhanced by the many links with other countries, the community and local commerce.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' achievement and their willingness to learn.
- The atmosphere for learning.
- The teachers have good subject knowledge and manage their classes well.
- The teaching of drawing lacks rigour.
- Students do not make good use of sketchbooks.
- There is insufficient access to computers and specialist software.
- The 2002 GCSE results were above average and the 2003 results were very similar.

### **Commentary**

121. The work at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the national expectation. Students have above average knowledge of art, but their writing about artists is descriptive rather than evaluative. Students' achievements are good, typified by paintings from digital photographs in the angular, Cubist-style of Picasso or Monet's Impressionism. The difficulty accessing computers prevents further electronic manipulation of these images. Their drawing and sketchbooks are not well used for experimentation and investigation. The work in Year 11 is above average. Students' knowledge of other artists is increasingly impressive. Their observational drawing is much improved but remains another way of making a picture rather than to gather information. Visual essays explore the human condition, linking homeless people with the sad figures in Picasso's Blue Period. Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11. Those who are least able or who have English as an additional language also achieve well, their teachers offering good support. The most able achieve very well and almost twice the national average gained A\* GCSE grades in 2002.
122. Teaching and learning are good, and occasionally excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and students accept responsibility for their learning. Good relationships promote industry and productivity. Occasionally, students are less committed and a pottery lesson was severely disrupted when half of Year 11 students had not done their homework. Year 7 students made excellent progress in response to an animated, energetic presentation highlighting Francis Bacon's portraiture. The task became one of critical analysis with students recording their liking or disliking of Bacon's portraiture. They then drew their faces reflected in a Christmas bauble and were photographed with their faces pressed against a window, causing Bacon-like distortions.
123. The use of assessment is very good indeed. Students know how well they are doing and teachers add their own judgements alongside students' self-assessment. Targets are updated regularly. Assessment data is used to analyse boys' achievement, to inform development planning and the curriculum. Marking sometimes offers insufficient guidance for improvement. The innovative curriculum, including visits to The British Museum, promotes a broad understanding of European and multicultural art and artists.

124. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Strategic planning and detailed self-analysis are thorough and aimed at raising attainment. Schemes of work build on prior knowledge. While two of the rooms are large the third room is too small to accommodate larger classes. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teaching is much improved, but there remains a need for further investment in computers and software.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to students achieving well in Years 10 and 11.
- The wide range of specialist instrumental and vocal tuition provided by the music school.
- The range of extra-curricular activities and performance opportunities is extensive.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 are not achieving as well as they should.
- Procedures for assessing students' work in Years 7 to 9 are not fully in place.
- There is a lack of resources for music technology to meet National Curriculum requirements and to support the development of composing skills in all years.

### Commentary

125. The department is currently being ably managed by a newly qualified teacher, who is the only full-time member of the department and, at the time of the inspection, had only been in post for a few weeks. The head of department has been absent, due to illness, since the summer term.

126. Results at GCSE are improving, with students achieving as well in music this year as in their other subjects, but numbers are small.

127. Standards in Year 9 are below expectations and students are not achieving as well as they could, given their attainment on entry to the college in Year 7. Students' composing skills are particularly underdeveloped and students do not use music vocabulary when writing about their own music. This is because of the current situation in the department, teachers' expectations, which are not always high enough, and under-resourcing of the department. In the current Year 11, standards are average, but students' achieve well because the teaching is good. Students show a good understanding of their areas of study, such as musicals, and their performing skills are above average overall. However, students do not extend their ideas enough in their compositions.

128. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The use of assessment in lessons is good and students taking GCSE receive helpful written and oral feedback on their compositions and performances, which helps them to improve their work. Varied activities are planned and resource materials are well chosen to develop students' musical learning. As a result, students collaborate very well when performing or composing in groups. However, expectations of students in Years 7 to 9 are not always high enough, especially of the more musically able students, and planning does not always take into account students' previous learning and build on their skills. Consequently, students do not always make enough progress.

129. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory overall. There has been some recent improvement in resources, but the lack of ICT resources remains the same as before. However, assessment procedures are not yet fully in place that will lead to secure judgements about students' attainment at the end of Year 9. The numbers of students receiving instrumental and vocal tuition has doubled, reflecting the good leadership and management of



Hockerill Music School, and there is an extensive range of activities and performance opportunities to develop students' skills further.

## **Drama**

The provision in drama was not inspected in detail but some lessons were seen.

130. The teaching of drama is an asset to the college curriculum. This is because the new head of department has developed learning in lessons and provided a very good contribution to extra-curricular activities. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching of drama not only broadens the curriculum, but also improves standards because students are able to transfer the skills they have learned into other subject areas. The head of department is committed to the subject and emphasizes decision-making skills, and provides opportunities for students to think for themselves. Students learn well overall because the lessons are well prepared and they enjoy the subject. Emphasis on varied activities, personal development and collaborative work enhances the enjoyment and motivation of the students. In a Year 11 lesson, dramatic rehearsals were professional, carefully planned and executed, and skilful. This was because of the high expectations of the teacher and carefully targeted lesson planning. Very good relationships create an atmosphere of achievement and respect.
131. A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes to the positive ethos of the college. In the prestigious annual production, staff and a large number of students work with many departments, which encourages collaboration in different disciplines and develops relationships.

## **Physical education**

The overall quality of physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in GCSE examinations are well above average.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Student participation and commitment in lessons is very good.
- Staff enthusiasm and subject knowledge is good, particularly in games.
- Staff commitment to extra-curricular activities is high.
- The lack of accommodation for physical education adversely affects the breadth of the curriculum.
- Assessment procedures are insufficiently related to curriculum planning.

### **Commentary**

132. Standards achieved by students in GCSE examinations are well above average and improving. The entry numbers for the subject are relatively small and, in the last year, the boys have closed the gap on the girls in terms of GCSE performance. The dramatic improvement in standards derives from the excellent support programme introduced by staff. National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9 are significantly higher than the national figures. Students are confident and achieve well in this subject. Overall standards of work seen at both key stages are broadly average in dance and above average in games.
133. Because the college offers the International Baccalaureate in the sixth form, there is no opportunity for students to continue with their physical education studies to advanced level in the college.
134. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers have specific areas of strength, which they fully utilise with students, but because of the lack of facilities, other areas

of outstanding staff strength cannot be exploited. Teaching is excellent sometimes, as was seen with a GCSE theory class. Students are fully involved in their learning in the lesson warm up and have a good understanding of the value of health related exercise. In a Year 11 dance lesson, one special educational needs student with a strength in dance, choreographed and led several sessions as part of her GCSE project. This was an excellent example of the use of a student's skills for the benefit of her peers. The work in games is developmental and is carried out in a safe environment. In rugby, safety is emphasised throughout. The delivery of lessons is based upon good teacher subject knowledge and the content is carefully planned.

135. The department is well led and managed. Curriculum review has led to a revision of curriculum content within the constraints of the facilities and staffing, which has resulted in strength in invasion games, the recent introduction of orienteering and the establishment of an in-depth, college-wide programme of dance for girls. Although the technical requirements of the National Curriculum for physical education are fulfilled, the programme breadth is limited, due to the lack of viable facilities.
136. As a result, the programme is weighted towards invasion games, particularly for boys. Although the time allocation for individual lessons is satisfactory for most of the periods of the college day, it is not long enough for students to be taken off-site to enable a broader range of curricular activities, for example, swimming, to be undertaken. The lack of outdoor courts and a suitable indoor hall denies students the opportunity to develop any racquet games. Netball is played on the all-weather pitch, which is an unsuitable surface, with the result that the activity is discontinued as a curricular activity at the end of Year 9, for safety reasons.
137. A comprehensive programme of extra-curricular sporting activities is in place, through inter-house competition. The college has an excellent record of success in its games activities with other schools and colleges.
138. The quality and standards of provision in this subject have improved since the previous inspection. The ethos of the department is clearly one of student support and in that environment, students with a variety of special educational needs are enabled to work successfully and with confidence.

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

### **Citizenship**

Provision for citizenship is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership and management, which, in a short time, has produced very good schemes of work.
- Teachers have a strong commitment to promoting citizenship.
- The ethos and international dimension of the college and other subjects of the curriculum all contribute to students' skills and understanding in citizenship.
- Students' progress is not monitored sufficiently well through the college.

### **Commentary**

139. There has been a statutory requirement to teach citizenship in the National Curriculum only since 2002. The college has responded vigorously by making provision which covers all aspects of the Programmes of Study. Citizenship is taught in the college through timetabled citizenship lessons in each of Years 7 to 11 and through the significant contribution made elsewhere in the college's curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

140. Students' achievement is good in Years 7 to 11 and standards seen in Year 10 and 11 lessons were above average. In Year 10, for example, students showed a high level of knowledge and understanding of propaganda and democracy. They demonstrated good debating skills when preparing a presentation for assembly on renewable energy sources. Higher-attaining students use their initiative to research sources of information. However, some students in Years 10 and 11, mainly boys, had negative attitudes to the lessons because it was not an examination subject.
141. Teaching in the citizenship lessons is good and students learn well. Although teachers insist on high standards of behaviour, in some lessons in Years 10 and 11 some students behave less well and their learning is adversely affected. Teachers have a high level of commitment to the aims of citizenship education and make the aims of the lessons clear to the students. They work well in teams, supported by very effective lesson planning.
142. The contribution made to citizenship education by other subjects has been clearly identified. Examples seen during the inspection included a Year 9 history lesson in which students were discussing capital punishment. Assemblies, form tutor time and the college council, from which representatives report back to their classmates, are some of the other types of provision. In the sixth form, the Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) programme provides a diverse range of opportunities in citizenship.
143. Leadership and management are very good. The new subject co-ordinator has a good vision for the subject based on a thorough evaluation of existing provision. Much progress has been made in the few months since she took over, notably in developing new schemes of work and detailed lesson plans. There is now a need to monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning and to put in place a system for recording students' progress through the college.
144. There was no report on citizenship in the previous inspection, but very good progress has been made since 2002.

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM**

In the inspection, 15 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.

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS**

### **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES**

#### **Mathematics**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Students have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Students' attainment is not analysed sufficiently to ensure all achieve as well as they should.

#### **Commentary**

145. All students in the sixth form follow a mathematics course at either higher, methods or studies level as part of the International Baccalaureate. The standards achieved by students are above

average when compared to A-level results and broadly in line with International Baccalaureate results worldwide. The most able students on the higher course achieve very high standards. They cope with division of polynomials and functions and mappings in the Cartesian plane, and can find the equation of the line of intersection of two planes. They solve trigonometric identities, and integrate and differentiate functions accurately.

146. Teaching is good. Teachers have good mathematical knowledge and lessons are well planned. In some lessons, the use of ICT enhances teaching and learning, for example, the use of graphical calculators to allow students to explore equations of straight lines. The positive attitude of students towards their work enhances their learning experience, which is very good. There is a very good rapport between teachers and students, and between the students themselves, who are always very supportive of one another.
147. Regular testing is used to identify students who are misplaced and a number of students move down from the more demanding higher course to the methods course. There is currently no mechanism for tracking, which includes value added, from GCSE to Year 13. The department is well led and managed. The use of ICT has correctly been identified as an area for development. Software and a digital projector have been purchased and training for staff identified as a priority.

## **SCIENCES**

### **Biology**

Provision in biology is **good**.

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

- Success in the International Baccalaureate, resulting from the teachers' focus.
- The quality and usage of resources are very good (except ICT).
- Access to computers in lessons and for work outside of lessons is inadequate.

#### **Commentary**

148. The standards of the biology students' work in the sixth form are well above average. The most recent IB assessments showed the average points score to be well above the worldwide average and much the same as the college average. This is despite a dip from the previous year, doubtless caused by the major staffing difficulties faced during that period. The standard of students' work, as seen in lessons, in their files and in speaking with them, is always above average, and often well above. For real success, IB expects a high level of understanding of theory and the ability to plan practical work with a careful "technological" approach – these students clearly show both. Thus, in a lesson on human reproduction, most could quickly apply the new concepts to "test-tube babies" and, moreover, almost all engaged in a thoughtful, mature discussion on relevant ethics, appropriately thinking about cultural and gender differences in attitudes.
149. Because of their good growth in understanding, and the ability to apply biological concepts to new situations, the achievement of the students is good. However, the most able students are not fully stretched, due to the lack of thought provoking extension work.
150. Students learn well - they show good knowledge and understanding, an ability to plan, analyse and discuss, and a willingness to work independently. This level of achievement is the result of high quality teaching. Teaching in lessons is almost always good. There are many very good features, such as the teachers' great command of biology (including modern techniques and research findings); the effectiveness of their lesson planning; the variety and value of the teaching methods and resources they bring to lessons; and their use of homework tasks and activities to reinforce and extend what happens in lessons. Teaching is at its strongest when

there is plenty of highly paced and challenging questioning and discussion, for this allows the teacher to assess almost from moment to moment how well the class and the individuals are learning and thus to tailor activities to their real needs.

151. Because of the staffing difficulties of the previous year, biology in the college is now led by the head of the science faculty. This person has very many other responsibilities, but is still able to devote thought and care to this particular subject. Management overall is good, in particular as regards the analysis and use of assessments. In addition, the teaching staff, as well as the very good team of technicians, cope well with the difficulties of having three biology labs spread through the extensive site and also used for other classes. As yet, the use of tools for highly effective teaching and learning, and of computers and new communications systems, is under-developed.

## **Chemistry**

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the world average for IB diploma.
- Students achieve well as a result of consistently good teaching.
- Relationships are very good and students have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers do not always ensure that higher-attaining students are appropriately challenged.

## **Commentary**

152. Results in the IB examination were above the world average in 2002. They were lower in 2003, particularly at the higher level, because a number of students changed their career aspirations, resulting in chemistry becoming a less important part of their programme.
153. When students begin sixth form chemistry courses in Year 12, standards are about average. They achieve well, and by Year 13, standards are above average, reflecting IB results in 2002. For example, they need no prompting in applying their learning to speculate about the electro negativities of elements that are unfamiliar to them. In some lessons, achievement is very good because teachers ensure that higher-attaining students move beyond basic lesson content, as in Year 12 when the teacher encouraged those who had completed the main task to draw electron arrangements for more complex structures. In other lessons, students are not always challenged to work to their full capacity.
154. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers ensure that lesson objectives are clear, resulting in very well organised notes that help students in preparation for examinations. A key feature in students' good achievement is that teachers review existing knowledge before starting new work to ensure that it is built on a firm foundation of what they already know. Students have very positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate their ability to work independently when they carry out in-depth studies of interesting topics for their extended essays, such as investigating the vitamin C content of organically farmed and non-organically farmed fruit. Students say that they particularly appreciate their teachers' accessibility to explain work that they find difficult, the quality of practical work, and encouragement from teachers to read around the subject. However, teachers are inconsistent in their use of assessment information in lesson planning to ensure that all students are fully stretched. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because one of the laboratories is remote from the other and this restricts teachers' opportunities to enliven lessons by using ICT or models.
155. Leadership and management in chemistry are good. The head of department has developed productive links with outside agencies, such as Cambridge University and Glaxo Smith Kline,

that enhance students' experience, for example, through work placement opportunities. However, the quality of lesson planning is inconsistent.

156. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Results then were in line with the IB world average, while in 2002 they were above it.

## Physics

Provision in physics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Excellent attitudes to learning result in students using their time very effectively, both within and beyond lessons.
- Students have very good understanding because teachers encourage them to think through problems for themselves.
- Assessment information is not always used well enough to ensure that all students work to their full capacity.

### Commentary

157. Results in the IB examination were above the world average in 2002 and significantly higher than this in 2003.

158. Standards when students enter the sixth form in Year 12 are a little above average. By Year 13, they are well above average, matching recent IB results. Students' very good achievement leads to secure understanding of physics principles and allows them to apply their learning confidently, for example in explaining the forces acting on an aircraft as it moves along a runway. Their achievement is further enhanced because they have very positive attitudes to learning. They work well independently of the teacher, for example, producing high quality extended projects, such as comparing natural and artificial gliders.

159. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers help students' understanding by planning lessons to build step-by-step on what they already know. A key feature in their learning is that teachers use questioning very effectively to encourage students to think through each step for themselves, for example, the reasoning that led to each stage in the development of atomic theory from the ideas of the ancient Greeks. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it confidently to deliver lesson content; as a result, students have confidence in their teacher's ability to help them. Students say that they particularly appreciate the help they receive when work has not been fully understood and their full involvement in lessons through question and answer. However, some lessons contain too little variety in approach during the one hour sessions and assessment information is not always used well enough to stretch higher-attaining students.

160. Leadership and management in physics are very good. The recently appointed head of department has a clear vision for the future development of the subject, including more effective use of data to ensure that all students are working to full capacity.

161. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards then were in line with the IB average, but now they are well above.

## Computer Science

Overall, the quality of provision in computer science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding standards.
- Students achieve very well because of their excellent attitudes and very good teaching.
- Target setting with students is not rigorous enough to ensure all achieve as well as they should.

### Commentary

162. Computer Science is taught to higher and standard levels as part of the International Baccalaureate. The International Baccalaureate results for 2002 were well above the world average. The 2003 results show a similar pattern. Very few students did not complete the course. In relation to their prior attainment, student achievement was very good.
163. The standard of work of Year 13 students seen during the inspection is also outstanding. Students are achieving very well in relation to their previous standards, due to the very good teaching, and their excellent attitudes towards their work. Their files of work show evidence of initiative, research and depth of knowledge. Very good access to ICT resources, especially for boarders, also contributes significantly to the very good gains made by most students. Most students, especially those of higher attainment, apply the programming skills they have been taught in C++ very well to their project work. This ability to transfer skills and knowledge to different situations is a notable strength. Most students' written work is of a high standard. For example, their analysis of data storage is very clearly written and shows well above average understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of each method.
164. Students in Year 12 are only a few weeks into their course, but are achieving very well. Those who are new to programming are making particularly good progress. Those who have experience of programming in their previous schools find the work challenging and are being extended even further. All students understand how to use the C++ program to analyse statistical data. They review their work critically, recognise their mistakes and correct them appropriately. Again, students are very well motivated. They work independently and with real focus, yet when necessary, they help each other willingly. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
165. Teaching and learning are very good. All students agree that teaching is both supportive and challenging. Teachers show excellent command of the subject in the tasks that are set and in the advice they give to improve students' coursework. Marking is excellent. Specific points are given to help students improve. This is backed up by very good support for all the students. Teachers willingly give of their time in this respect. This is much appreciated by the students. Students are very well prepared for each task. Clear, specific information and instruction sheets give very good guidance that students follow. Activities build upon each other sequentially so that students gain in confidence, knowledge and understanding.
166. The leadership and management of computer science in the sixth form are very good. There is a clear focus on improving standards and evaluating how teaching and learning could be improved. However, setting targets for students, and associated learning goals, based upon their prior attainment, is not well developed.
167. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

### Design and technology

Overall provision for design and technology is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are excellent; courses are well planned and presented.
- Students' learning and achievement are very good.
- In the past three years, all students entered for the International Baccalaureate gained passes, many at a high level.
- Students' study skills and independent research are very good.
- Teaching and learning are overall very good; there is some excellent teaching; and teachers communicate their subject knowledge very effectively.
- Student numbers are increasing.
- Further links with designers and design movements could promote even higher standards, and enhance the cultural and international dimension.

#### Commentary

168. Overall standards are very high. Students follow the International Baccalaureate course at higher and standard level. Student retention rates are very good. In recent years, there has been a hundred per cent pass rate and this is set to continue.
169. Students in Years 12 and 13 have very positive attitudes to the subject, and have well-developed study skills. Their independent research is of high quality. Computer science is used very effectively for research and presentation. Students are very keen to learn about the properties of materials and design concepts and the quality of learning is very good. Students work well independently and collaboratively. Their achievement is high in relation to their individual capabilities. Year 12 students show a very good understanding of how different materials will behave under different conditions, They show great interest in structures, and understand the meaning of tension, compression, and torsion, in the context of bridge construction. When giving presentations to the whole class, Year 13 students talk clearly and confidently about their product designs. They show excellent speaking and listening skills. Descriptions of their design ideas show good knowledge of how to write specifications to meet requirements, and give appropriate consideration to branding, marketing, and environmental implications.
170. The quality of teaching and learning is overall very good, and some is excellent. Courses are well planned and presented. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject, as demonstrated in a presentation of macrostructures, and a good knowledge of the examination requirements and assessment criteria. They have an innovative approach to the subject and make good use of new technology. Students are encouraged with high quality individual feedback. There is an insistence on high standards of conduct, and a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere is engendered in the workshops. Further links with designers and design movements of other countries could support even higher standards, and enhance the cultural and international dimension of the courses.
171. Leadership is excellent, and high standards are promoted and gained in all areas. The International Baccalaureate courses are extremely well managed and presented. There is clear vision of how the post-16 design and technology provision needs to progress. The team spirit of both staff and students is excellent. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection, and the number of students wishing to join the courses is increasing.



## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

### **Visual arts**

Overall, the quality of provision in visual arts is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' achievement is very good.
- The atmosphere for learning is very good and teachers have very good relationships with their students.
- There is insufficient emphasis on the teaching of drawing for different purposes.
- Students do not make full use of their sketchbooks to investigate and experiment with methods and materials.

### **Commentary**

172. The International Baccalaureate results in 2002 were below average. The 2003 results were slightly above average. None of the students gained the highest grade in either year.
173. The work in the sixth form meets expectations. Students' varied prior experiences are reflected in the breadth of their work. The range of processes they employ is impressive: screen printing, lino printing, ICT, photography, sculpture, painting and drawing. Sketchbooks contain increasingly personal, sometimes shocking imagery, reflecting their interest in contemporary art and visits to London galleries. Students do not draw to collect specific information about light, form or tone, or to experiment with composition. They are more comfortable portraying emotion than usual. A significant quality is their ambition and acceptance of challenge and the easy way they adopt different approaches. They have hugely varied previous experiences of art education and their achievements are very good. Those who have English as an additional language, especially those educated in mainland Europe, with no experience of practical art, also achieve very well, settling quickly to a completely new subject.
174. Teaching and learning in visual arts are good and sometimes very good. Students take the initiative and accept full responsibility for their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enjoy particularly good relationships with their students. Following discussions during the inspection, Year 12 students significantly improved their drawing skills when making a careful charcoal study of a still-life group. Assessment is very good indeed. Students know how well they are doing relative to examination requirements, although their inability to draw for different purposes somewhat limits their knowing how they might improve. Students employ self-assessment and agree targets to advance their work. Assessment data is used to design long-term planning and to modify a curriculum that promotes improving practical skills linked to a broad understanding of visual arts. The very good leadership and management of the subject promote high standards through detailed planning and subject documentation, building on prior attainment. The department is well staffed by teachers offering wide-ranging expertise. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teaching is much improved and the curriculum is much broader.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well and attainment in Year 13 is well above average.
- The teachers' enthusiasm is a key factor in motivating students.
- Very thorough marking and assessment support students' learning.
- There are no major areas in need of improvement.

#### Commentary

175. Geography was first taught in the sixth form in September 2001. The achievement of the first group of 14 students was very good and their attainment in the International Baccalaureate in 2003 exceeded initial expectations. The results of the students at the standard level were well above the world average and the results at the higher level were in line with the average.
176. The high standards seen in Year 13 classes confirm that students are achieving very well. There are no apparent differences in the achievement of boys and girls, nor of the significant number of students for whom English is a second language. The demands of the course are made clear to students and they develop study skills quickly at the start of Year 12. Students' attitudes are excellent; they are highly motivated and well organised. Students research case studies and relate human and physical aspects with a high level of sophistication, such as in a study of urbanised barrier islands in Maryland. They apply statistical tests, such as nearest neighbour analysis and correlation coefficients, confidently.
177. Teaching is very good. Lessons are very well planned and provide a high level of challenge to all students. In a Year 13 lesson on China's one-child policy, the structure of the lesson was planned to provide opportunities for students to empathise with the characters that they were to play in role. Relationships between teachers and their students are very good and the teachers clearly pass on their enthusiasm for the subject; more than one student remarked in conversation that "geography is a lot of fun". The quality of marking is very high. Students are clear about the level of their work and how to progress further, and they speak highly of the support provided by their teachers.
178. The sixth form benefits from the very good leadership provided by the Head of Humanities in the same ways as Years 7 to 11. Management of the subject in the sixth form, which is largely in the hands of the three sixth form geography teachers, is also very good.
179. No geography was taught in the sixth form at the time of the previous inspection. Results in 2003 and evidence from this inspection show that a very good start has been made.

### History

Provision for history is **excellent**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the International Baccalaureate examination have been consistently very high.
- History is a very successful and popular area of sixth form provision.
- The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent.
- Students achieve very well in both years.
- Leadership and management are excellent.

- Students have a very high regard for the quality of support and advice they receive.
- Library resources need to be improved.
- Students would benefit from opportunities to listen to visiting speakers.

## Commentary

180. Results in the International Baccalaureate examination have been very high in recent years at both standard and higher level. They have been well above national and international norms and, in the most recent examination, two-thirds of students entered at the standard level achieved the highest grades (6 or 7) and half the students entered at the higher level achieved the same. The standards, as seen in the current inspection, are well above course expectations, and achievement levels are very high in relation to students' attainment on entry to the courses. In Year 12, students structure their work well and are beginning to use a wide range of historical evidence and source analysis. They are very impressive in oral debate and most are able to replicate this in their essay writing: for example, in some detailed and well-argued essays on the causes of the Russian Revolution and the rise of communism. In Year 13, students build on their earlier achievement by developing higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. In this context, the note-taking and essay-writing skills of higher-attaining students are particularly impressive. In both years, students are articulate and show commendable commitment to their work.
181. The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent. Teachers use their considerable subject expertise very well and plan lessons thoroughly. As a result, students make considerable gains in the range and depth of their historical understanding. Above all, there is a sense of shared purpose and very high expectations in lessons, and there are ample opportunities for students to take part in discussions and debates. This was demonstrated fully in an excellent Year 13 lesson, during which students debated Stalin's domestic policies in considerable depth, using their independent learning and research skills to the full. The very high level of debate was orchestrated expertly by the class teacher. Students are very positive about their courses and are very appreciative of the support and advice they receive from teachers.
182. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The progress of all students is monitored thoroughly so that all students know precisely how to improve their work. The concerns expressed in the previous inspection about the quality of assessment and lack of subject knowledge have been addressed fully. There is a wide range of resources in classrooms to support students, but increasing numbers in both years have stretched library resources to the limits in terms of promoting independent learning and research opportunities. The subject makes a very strong contribution to the development of students' personal and citizenship skills, and good opportunities are provided for students to attend historical conferences. They would benefit, however, from opportunities to listen to visiting speakers.
183. Overall, this is an increasingly popular and highly successful subject, and it is clearly one of the major strengths of sixth form provision within the college. The recent examination results are highly commendable.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### ENGLISH

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average standards achieved by the students.
- In the many very good lessons, there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed.
- The achievement of students is very good, reflecting their excellent attitudes.
- Very strong leadership of the subject provides a clear vision for staff and students that reflect the college's aims.
- A few lessons are not as well paced as the very good lessons, and students are insufficiently involved.
- English is offered at A1 and A2, standard and higher level.

184. Results in the 2002 International Baccalaureate examinations indicate standards that were well above the world average. Results in 2003 are similar and work seen reflects these standards. This represents a very good level of achievement because attainment on entry was broadly average. All students have a very good knowledge and understanding of their work and enjoy the subject. Their oral skills are very good in classroom discussion and only falter when the teacher's exposition is too long and there is insufficient time for reflection. Students make valid and cogent observation and use technical vocabulary in their writing because teaching stresses high order writing skills. Extended writing is a very strong feature of the students' work and their independent research skills are well developed. This is because students are expected to prepare texts for lessons and to research references. The excellent work attitudes that the students bring with them ensure very good learning. They read widely and choose challenging texts. Students sustain textual analysis because of close examination of the set texts in lessons. All students make very good use of information and communication technology to aid the presentation and drafting of their work.

185. The quality of teaching is good and very good in some lessons. Learning is very good because the ethos of the college and the students' attitudes promote high expectations and commitment to learning. In the very good lessons, there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. This is because of the teacher's high expectations, challenge and focus to draw on students' views and contributions. Students enjoy their work with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. In a very good Year 13 lesson, analysing 'Fathers and Sons' by Turgenev, students spoke with insight and confidence. A typical student comment was, "This illuminates the variety and complexity of his craft". This lesson combined vigorous and rigorous teaching to further the learning of the students. High expectations from the staff and the students create an under-graduate atmosphere and an intellectual response. In an otherwise good lesson, students learnt less because of a more pedestrian pace and less skilful probing of students' knowledge. The department makes good use of assessment data for curriculum planning, hence the introduction of new schemes of work that are targeted at individuals. Further development of marking is required to ensure consistency. The study of world and multicultural texts deepens students' understanding of literature and their responsibilities as citizens. Sensitive planning of lessons ensures that all students are given the opportunity to air their views in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Excellent relationships are evident and students respond positively to their teacher and each other, so producing very effective learning.

186. Students are very positive about the course and consider themselves very fortunate. They relish the challenges, the international dimension and the curriculum variety.

187. The very strong leadership of the department provides a clear vision for staff and students that reflect the college's aims. Teachers are mutually supportive and respect each other and the students. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good; standards have risen, learning has improved and ethos is excellent.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

The focus of the inspection was French, German and Spanish, but a lesson was also sampled in Japanese. In the lesson seen, standards attained by Year 13 students were very high and their achievement was excellent, due to excellent teaching.

### **French**

Overall the provision in French is **excellent**.

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

- Standards are very high.
  - The quality of teaching and learning is excellent and students' achievement is excellent.
  - Students' attitudes towards their learning are exemplary and they have excellent relationships with their teachers.
  - Leadership and management are excellent.
  - Mechanisms to set targets and ensure all students achieve as well as they might are not fully developed.
188. Results in the International Baccalaureate examinations in French are consistently very high. There is no difference between the results of male and female students, and most students' achievement is excellent in relation to their prior attainment. Standards of work seen by the end of Year 13 are very high and students' achievement is excellent. The exclusive and very effective use of French in lessons leads to very high levels in speaking and listening. Their range of vocabulary and structures, command of French and understanding of grammar are all excellent. The level of debate is very high, and they achieve a high level of fluency and accuracy in both speaking and writing.
189. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The ethos of the college and the students' attitudes promote high expectations and commitment to learning. Students are clearly highly motivated and enjoy their learning. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and lessons are conducted very effectively and exclusively in French. The teachers plan their lessons very well to provide a high level of challenge. Resources and activities enable students to build very effectively on previous learning, and information and communication technology is used regularly to extend students' learning and to enable them to work at their own pace. Very skilful questioning allows students to respond successfully and extends knowledge effectively. Teachers have a very good understanding of the requirements of the examinations and use methods which prepare students very well. Prep (homework) consolidates and extends class work and is marked very rigorously to ensure that students know precisely what to do to improve. Students participate enthusiastically in discussions and debate, remain in French throughout and display high levels of concentration when working on their own, for example, with computer programs. They have excellent relationships with their teachers and appreciate the help and guidance they are given, both by their teachers and by language assistants.
190. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The department provides an excellent curriculum, enriched by close and regular contact with native speakers and very well established links and exchanges with partner institutions in France. Close analysis of results has identified ways to raise standards even further and prompt and appropriate action has been taken. Teachers work very well as a team and have consistently high expectations.

## German

Overall the quality of provision in German is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high standards in language, literature and in students' skills of analysis and evaluation.
- Excellent achievement enhanced by students' very positive attitudes to learning.
- Very good teaching characterised by the teachers' outstanding knowledge of the subject and their skilful, challenging questioning.
- Very good assessment of written work based on a close understanding of the requirements of the examinations.
- There could be more extensive use of information and communication technology.

### Commentary

191. All students take the International Baccalaureate examination. The majority of students have German as their native language and follow a German literature course (A1). A few who do not have German as their mother tongue study German language, literature and contemporary affairs (Course B). All the students complete their courses.
192. Results in German literature are consistently very high and well above the world average. Students gain only the highest grades and there is no difference between the results of male and female students. Results in Course B are in line with world averages and most students do far better than would have been expected from their GCSE results.
193. Standards by the end of Year 13 are very high and students' achievement is excellent. The exclusive use of German in the classroom leads to very high levels in speaking and listening skills among the non-native speakers of German. Their range of vocabulary and command of spoken German are excellent, with some very good standards of pronunciation. In the literature course (A1), students' knowledge and understanding of German literature are outstanding. They have an excellent mastery of the techniques of literary criticism and very high levels of reasoning and evaluative skills.
194. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teachers, two of whom are themselves German, plan their lessons very well to include very challenging material. A particular strength is the sessions of question and answer, both in the literature and the culture lessons, when teachers probe and develop students' knowledge and understanding. The teachers' own high intellectual capacity and rigour enable them to develop students' powers of analysis and expression. Teachers are very aware of the requirements of the examinations and use methods that prepare students very well; for example, students regularly criticise each other's literary analyses, developing their skills in literary criticism. Prep (homework) consolidates and extends class work and is marked with immense care to ensure that students achieve as well as they can and know what to do to improve. Students are thoroughly engaged in the lessons and join in the discussions, group or whole class, with remarkable enthusiasm.
195. The subject is very well led and managed. There is some use of information and communication technology for independent research, although this could be extended. The large number of language assistants are used very well to support the individual learning needs of students. The department offers a very rich curriculum with outstanding breadth and depth, enriched by the many contacts with German-speaking countries.

## Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
  - Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
  - Leadership and management are excellent.
  - Opportunities for students to work independently of the teacher could be increased.
  - Mechanisms to set targets and ensure all students achieve as well as they might are not fully developed.
196. Standards attained in the International Baccalaureate examinations in 2002 are very high when compared to international averages, with most students achieving the highest levels. Standards of work seen are very high compared to national averages. Students achieve a high degree of fluency, have a very good working understanding of grammar and are able to manipulate the language with ease to express their ideas, give accounts, and participate in discussion and debate. The standard of written work is also very high by the end of Year 13; students write fluently and accurately on a variety of topics, present their arguments clearly and justify their views with apposite examples from Spanish society and culture. Listening and reading skills are very well developed; students skim and scan texts effectively, make inferences and respond promptly and appropriately to speech at normal speed. By the end of Year 13, students achieve a high degree of independence in the language.
197. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. Lessons are conducted very effectively and exclusively in Spanish; students therefore have the benefit of excellent role models, and their speaking and listening skills are very well developed as a result. Lessons are very well planned with appropriate resources and a series of well-sequenced and challenging tasks, which enable students to build effectively on previous learning and extend their range of vocabulary and structures, as well as their knowledge of Spanish culture and society. Students participate enthusiastically in discussions and debate, remain in Spanish throughout and clearly enjoy opportunities to do this. This was exemplified in a lesson about the advantages and disadvantages of college uniform, where the debate was very lively and students found no difficulty in responding spontaneously to views opposing their own. Opportunities for students to work in this way, to take the initiative in lessons and operate independently of the teacher, however, are not fully developed at present. Teachers work very well together in lessons to support and extend students' learning.
198. Students' views are very positive. They clearly enjoy their lessons and take their work seriously. They work very well in small groups and in pairs, remaining in Spanish throughout. They display high levels of concentration and have excellent relationships with their teachers. This is a major factor in ensuring their success.
199. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. Standards are improving and teachers new to the department are very well supported. Successful teaching and learning strategies are regularly shared and good practice is developed very effectively. Assessment is thorough and detailed, giving students excellent guidance about how to improve their work. Excellent links exist with Spain and students have frequent and regular access to native speakers. Although students' achievement is very good, mechanisms are not yet rigorous enough to ensure all achieve their full potential.

## **BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Business and management**

Provision in business and management is **very good**.

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

- Enthusiastic, active, caring teaching, encouraging the students to learn fast.
- Growing use of visits, visitors and community links as effective resources for learning.
- Accommodation, particularly for the size of groups concerned, is inadequate.
- Access to computers is insufficient to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

200. The standards of the sixth formers' work in business and management are well above average. The most recent IB points scores show their grasp of the subject to be good when compared with the college average, and well above average relative to worldwide results. While boys did distinctly better than girls, this does not seem to be a permanent feature of work in the subject. Thus, in lessons and in the current students' actual work, there is no evidence of any significant boy/girl difference in standards of attainment or in effectiveness of learning (which are both high).
201. Not all the students enter the sixth form having worked in business studies previously, but almost all learn fast, and most achieve well in comparison with their abilities. They grow very rapidly in a fundamental knowledge of subject language and principles (though the process diagram does not appear to be familiar to many) and come to understand business concepts well enough to be able to apply them to new situations and problems. For instance, in a Year 13 lesson on balance sheets, most very quickly came to an understanding of why accountants develop balance sheets in the way they do, and why managers and shareholders depend so much on this source of information.
202. However, too few of the students appear really stretched by their work; in particular, those who find learning easy face too little opportunity really to extend what they find out about in lessons. One of the outstanding features of the subject's teaching is that every lesson starts with a short presentation on their own choice of topic from a small group. Though there is some very good work and research here, because that choice is entirely free, here, too, the most able cannot extend themselves as well as they might.
203. Business and management teaching shows a number of other good and very good features. The teacher has outstanding subject knowledge, experience and enthusiasm (but, as a result, a tendency to overwhelm students when running whole class discussions); there is good use of time as lessons are so highly paced, and often good use of a range of resources (other than computers and new communications); and there is a great deal of effective encouragement of the students to think and work. However, the assessment of how well they are doing from day to day is as yet less well developed, so that lessons do not always concentrate on common difficulties and not all students meet tasks which match their abilities and experience.
204. The teacher in charge of the subject (who has also taken over careers education) arrived in the college only a few weeks before the inspection, but is already working on the weaknesses mentioned. Already, too, there are plenty of signs of inspiration of the students to contribute to the subject's work, and thereby to learn more deeply, and the subject leader has a clear innovative vision and knows well how to work towards that.
205. Management is very good too, in particular of time and resources, and good work is being done with many Year 12 students through an active Young Enterprise initiative. A challenge is that



interest in the subject has almost exploded, with numbers at both levels 50 per cent greater than in the previous year. This means that many classes are too large, both for effective individualised teaching and compared to the size of the business and management room. Another challenge concerns the use of computers and communications as tools for improved teaching and learning. The subject leader is very aware of the importance of information and communication technology in this context – but within lessons has no effective access to appropriate facilities (such as networked laptop and data projector), while most students cannot be relied on to use computers elsewhere outside of lesson time to extend their understanding of their work to the full.

### **The Theory of Knowledge**

206. This course is a key element in the International Baccalaureate programme of studies and fully achieves its aims of stimulating critical reflection and encouraging all students to analyse theories, concepts and arguments in a variety of contexts. Standards are very high in both years. Student folders contain a wealth of assiduous note taking on a very wide range of philosophical topics, such as knowledge and truth, perception, and logic and mathematics. Essays are presented very well and are argued cogently, especially by higher-attaining students. There are also clear and perceptive evaluations of student presentations, for example, on ethical justifications for moral decisions. Achievement levels are very high in both years.
207. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have an excellent grasp of subject knowledge and use this with skill to facilitate students' learning and to encourage lively debate. This was clearly demonstrated in a very wide-ranging and mature debate on the logical reasoning behind the concept of immortality. The course benefits considerably from excellent leadership and management. The monitoring of students' work is very thorough with clear directions given for future reading and research. Students also derive benefit from a wealth of appropriate handouts and a very comprehensive course handbook. This is a very highly regarded area of sixth form provision that underpins learning in all other areas of the International Baccalaureate.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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