

INSPECTION REPORT

Swanmore College of Technology

Southampton/Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116424

Headteacher: Annette Hillier

Lead inspector: Michael Miller

Dates of inspection: 20th - 23rd September 2004

Inspection number: 269471

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	1288
School address:	New Road Swanmore Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO32 2RB
Telephone number:	01489 892256
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Linda Byrne
Date of previous inspection:	8 November 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Swanmore College of Technology is situated in the village of Swanmore in mid-Hampshire. It is a community comprehensive secondary school, with specialist technology status, for pupils aged 11 to 16 (Years 7 to 11). It is larger in size than most other secondary schools. There are 1,288 pupils on roll, 601 girls and 687 boys. The college is slightly larger than at the time of the previous inspection and is currently over-subscribed. Most pupils live within the catchment area and travel to college by bus or private car. The attainment of pupils on entry to the college is above average. Most pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from other ethnic groups is low. There are currently no pupils whose mother tongue is not, or believed not to be, English. Consequently, there are currently no pupils at an early stage of English language development. Employment rates in the area are above the national average, but the school is situated in a semi-rural area with families from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. At 3.4 per cent, the proportion of pupils registered for free school meals is low. Some 9 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is below average. At only 1 per cent, the proportion of pupils having full Statements of Special Educational Need is well below average.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

SWANMORE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

OVERALL EVALUATION

Swanmore College of Technology is a **very good and very effective** school which gives **very good** value for money. This is because of the very good leadership of the headteacher and very effective support from senior staff and middle managers. There is a strong focus on raising standards and pupils' achievement, which is founded securely on very good teaching and learning. This is as a result of very good self-evaluation, planning and sense of purpose, which underpin the quality of learning and achievement. Consequently, it is a school that knows itself well and is focused very well on improvement. The school has the ability and drive to be innovative and to embrace change.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The well above average standards attained by Year 11 in national tests and examinations and the pupils' very good achievement.
- The very good leadership, at all levels of management, which creates effective teams.
- The very good teaching, including the improving use of ICT by teachers.
- The college's very good initiatives and use of assessment in support of pupils' learning.
- The very good provision overall in mathematics, history, geography, religious education, design and technology and in music, and the good provision in all other subjects.
- The very good whole college provision for its gifted or talented pupils, who achieve very well.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects.
- The as yet limited implementation of the National 14 to 19 Strategy, particularly vocational courses.
- A small minority of pupils does not behave well enough, or have good enough attitudes to learning.
- A few Years 10 and 11 pupils are not fully involved in initiatives for their personal development.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good overall. Very good improvement has been made in enhancing pupils' learning, particularly in stimulating pupils' intellectual curiosity and challenging them to think for themselves. There has been good improvement in the attainment and progress of pupils in English throughout Years 7 to 9, as teachers' planning is now good and their expectations of pupils are high. There has been good improvement in the way the governing body discharges its role as a 'critical friend' and in its understanding of what the college needs to do to improve further. Statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education in Years 10 and 11 are now met fully. However, the college does not meet the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is **good** and **very good** in Years 10 and 11. Standards by Years 9 and 11 are **above average**. Standards in literacy are above average by Year 9 and well above by Year 11. Pupils' competency in mathematics is well above average throughout all year groups. The achievement of pupils with a special educational need is good overall, whilst that of gifted or talented pupils is very good. During the inspection there were no pupils for whom English was a second language. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their attendance are **good**.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	A	A	C

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

By Year 9, pupils' standards of attainment are well above average in science, design and technology and in geography. They are average in music, but above average in all other subjects.

Achievement is very good in mathematics, science, design and technology, art, geography and in religious education. It is good in all other subjects. By Year 11, pupils' standards of attainment are well above average in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, history, music and in religious education. Standards are average in science, but above average in all other subjects. Achievement is very good in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and in religious education. It is satisfactory in science and good in all other subjects.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the college is **very good**. Teaching, learning and the use of assessment are **very good**. The curriculum is good and opportunities for enrichment very good. The college's accommodation and resources for learning are good overall. The care and welfare of pupils are good and their support and guidance very good. The school's partnership with parents is very good. There are very good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the college are **very good**. Leadership is very good and has a relentless focus on raising standards, which underpins the college's work. Management at all levels is very good and is effective in converting the vision into reality. The work of the governors is good. The governing body performs its functions well through an effective committee system.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents find the college welcoming and like the work ethic and values promoted. They are pleased with the education their children receive. Parents consider their children like the college because pupils are treated fairly and helped to become mature. They consider teaching to be good and consequently their children make good progress. The pupils themselves feel it is a good school to be at, where they are expected to work hard and do well, and they feel trusted by staff. However, at the parents' meeting, and through the questionnaires, several parents, and pupils in the questionnaires, expressed some concern about bullying and the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. Inspectors find that the staff, pupils and governors are actively involved in positive action to resolve this problem behaviour. The inspection fully supports the parents' and pupils' positive views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- further develop opportunities for the use of ICT by the pupils themselves, to support further their learning across all subjects of the curriculum;
- further develop the college's planning for the full implementation of the National 14 to 19 (Years 9 to 13) Strategy, particularly the introduction of vocational courses;
- further develop the college's work with staff in the behaviour management of a small minority of pupils with behavioural problems, in order to help improve these pupils' attitudes to learning;
- strengthen the pupils' own involvement in their personal development, and the college's good behaviour management initiatives, particularly in Years 10 and 11;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

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

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement¹ in Years 7 to 9 is **good** and **very good** in Years 10 and 11. Standards of attainment² by Years 9 and 11 are **above average**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils make very good progress as they move through the school.
- Higher attaining pupils, in particular, achieve very well.
- The very good use of assessment to set whole school and subject targets is raising standards.
- Attainment in national tests and examinations is well above average by the end of Year 11.
- Standards of attainment in science by Year 11 are not as high as in other subjects.

Commentary

1. Swanmore College of Technology is a very good and very effective school. This is because of its strong focus on raising standards and pupils' achievement, which is securely founded on very good teaching and learning. This is as a result of very good self-evaluation, planning and sense of purpose, all of which underpin very well the quality of learning and achievement. Consequently, it is a school which knows itself well and is very well focused on improving standards. The school sets itself suitably challenging targets for success in national tests and public examinations. Targets are well founded because of the school's very good use of assessment in support of pupils' learning.
2. Standards in literacy are above average by Year 9 and well above by Year 11. Pupils' competency in mathematics is well above average in all year groups. Their skills and competency in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are above average by Years 9 and 11. The achievement of pupils with a special educational need is good and that of gifted or talented pupils is very good. During the inspection there were no pupils at the college whose mother tongue was not English or who were at an early stage of English language development.
3. At the time of the inspection, no national data was available to compare the school's performance with other schools for the teacher assessments, tests and public examinations held in 2004. National comparisons are therefore made with 2003, the latest year for which such information is available.

Key Stage 3 (Pupils in Years 7 to 9)

4. By Year 9, there is no significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys. The school shows a good awareness in its monitoring of any potential differences in performance. Consequently, over the three years from 2001 to 2003 the standards attained in the core³ subjects were well above average for both girls and boys. Overall, since the previous inspection, the school's rate of improvement has been above the national trend.
5. Standards of attainment in the 2003 national tests were well above average overall in Year 9 when compared with all schools nationally. Attainment was above average in English, with a higher than average percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 5⁴ or higher Level 6 and above. Standards were well above average at these levels in mathematics and science.

¹ Achievement refers to the progress pupils make in terms of where they started when they entered the school. Thus, good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that pupils do well and make better than expected progress.

² Attainment refers to the standards pupils achieve compared with national averages.

³ The National Curriculum core subjects are English, mathematics and science. The foundation subjects are: art; design and technology; geography; history; ICT; modern foreign languages; music and physical education. In addition, religious education is taught to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

⁴ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Year 9, are expected to reach Level 5. If a pupil is attaining Level 6 or 7 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a pupil of his or her age.

Compared with all schools nationally, pupils' progress between Years 7 and 9 is very good overall. Compared with the standards the pupils achieved at the end of Year 6, progress was satisfactory in English and very good in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.2 (36.0)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	39.3 (38.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	37.3 (37.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 237 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. In pupils' work and lessons seen during the inspection, standards were well above average by Year 9 in science, design and technology and in geography. Attainment was above average in English, mathematics, ICT, art, history, modern foreign languages, physical education, citizenship and in personal, social and health education. Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards are average in music. Achievement is good in English, ICT, history, modern languages, music, physical education, citizenship, in personal, social and health education and in careers education. Achievement is very good in mathematics, science, design and technology, art, geography and in religious education.
7. Overall, such above average standards and good or better achievement by Years 9 and 11 are as a direct result of the very good teaching and learning which, together with very good leadership and management, result in the college's very good quality of education.

Key Stage 4 (Pupils in Years 10 and 11)

8. In 2003 there was a difference between the performance of boys and girls in GCSE examinations. This was because, although boys' results were well above average, those for girls were very high and they achieved very well. Overall, the school's trend of improvement in standards since the previous inspection has been above that seen nationally. In the three years from 2001 to 2003, both boys' and girls' results by Year 11 were well above average overall.
9. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average overall when compared with all schools nationally. Taking into account the pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 9, which in 2001 was well above average, these examination results were in line with expectations. Consequently, pupils continued to make satisfactory progress overall between Years 9 and 11. In 2003 the proportion of pupils gaining higher A* and A passes at GCSE was above average overall. Higher attaining pupils are enabled to achieve very well and make very good progress.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	71 (64)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (93)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	41.1 (38.7)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 249 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

10. In pupils' work and lessons seen during the inspection, standards were well above average by Year 11 in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, history and in music.

They were well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Attainment was above average in ICT, art, modern foreign languages, physical education, citizenship, in personal, social and health education and in work-related learning. Standards were average and achievement satisfactory in science. Achievement is good in ICT, modern languages, physical education, citizenship, in personal, social and health education and in work-related learning. It is very good in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and in religious education.

Pupils with special educational needs

11. Pupils with special educational needs follow the full curriculum and make good achievement in all subjects because the teachers make specific provision for their needs. Approximately 9 per cent of pupils have identified special educational needs, mainly for emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific or moderate learning difficulties. This is below the national average. Only 1 per cent of pupils have Statements, a figure well below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well by Years 9 and 11. Overall, there is good provision for pupils with a special educational need.
12. Pupils who are gifted or talented make very good progress, with the support of the college and teachers. For example, the percentage of pupils who gained Level 7+ in national tests in Year 9 has risen dramatically in the past five years. It is only in a small minority of subjects where there have been staffing problems that pupils are not fully extended or challenged.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes to college and their attendance is **good**. Behaviour at the college is **good** overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff expectations of pupils' behaviour, uniform and attendance are very high.
- The poor behaviour of a minority of pupils causes their peers some concern.
- Procedures to promote their personal development are effective.

Commentary

13. Pupils' attendance is good and above the national average. The majority arrive punctually and registration procedures are thorough. However, not all pupils hurry to their lessons and there is some time slippage as a result. Where a pupil's attendance is causing concern the education welfare officer becomes involved. Over the past year, two pupils were permanently excluded and 46 others were involved in the 86 exclusions for fixed terms, nine of these for a period over two weeks.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002-2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.8	School data:	0.5
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1200	86	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	14	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	0	0

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

14. Pupils are enthusiastic about college and interested in their activities and the vast majority apply themselves well to their work. Pupils with special educational or other needs are supported well and, as a result, have very positive attitudes. They are integrated very well with their peers. Because of the college's very good behaviour management systems, consistently applied, pupils' behaviour is good overall and very good in many lessons. The college also scrutinises the behaviour and attendance of individual pupils very carefully and acts on the results. Although some immature behaviour occurs with younger pupils, this is managed well. However, in both Ofsted's and the school's questionnaires a significant number of pupils reported they were worried about the behaviour of others' and bullying. Inspectors found that this involved a minority of older pupils and that any such problem behaviour was usually outside of lessons, or related to incidents originating from outside the school. The headteacher is taking immediate action to combat this. The Swanmore Anti-Bullying Association (named by the pupils themselves as 'SABA') is run by trained pupils who are drawn mainly, but not exclusively, from Year 11. Whilst SABA is highly regarded by younger pupils, further training has been arranged to give these prefects the confidence to deal with all incidents which arise.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in the college and play a full part in lessons and the college's other work. They are very enthusiastic about the work of the special needs department and have great respect for the staff and the help they are given. They work well with other pupils and teachers ensure that they are fully included in their lessons. Consequently, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils who are gifted or talented have a very positive attitude to school and all that it offers. This includes activities which take place in college and those which take place at other times as part of programmes of curriculum enrichment.
16. Although the college does not have a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, most departments include it in their planning. These elements of pupils' personal development are also well promoted through the personal, social, health education and citizenship lessons. Here, pupils debate their responsibilities as citizens, not just of this country but of the world, and learn of the difficulties and dangers outside their college community. Their spiritual development is satisfactory because although there are often good opportunities to promote this, these are not always specifically planned. Nevertheless, as a result of a strong sense of justice and the college's very high expectations, pupils' moral development is good.
17. Their personal and social development is good. All in Year 8 spend one day supporting the school community through help in reception and many assist with parents' evenings. Year 9 prefects host a day for Year 5 pupils to help with master classes. Charity initiatives come from pupils and their response to recent appeals has been keen. In addition, pupils have raised money for and lobbied members of parliament to support the local skate board park. Older pupils enjoy mentoring younger ones in reading and mathematics. Prefects have clear job

descriptions and they are conscientious in trying to meet these. Year and college councillors are involved in making decisions about the governance of the college.

18. Pupils' good understanding of their own and other cultures is achieved through very good lessons, for example, in art, religious education and music, as well as through the many visits they make and visitors to the school. A European Awareness day is planned. Their cultural development is good and they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives in Britain's multicultural society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching, learning and the use of assessment are very good. The curriculum is good and opportunities for enrichment very good. The college's accommodation and resources are good overall. The support, advice and guidance for students are very good. The school's partnership with parents is very good. There are very good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. They are **good** in Years 7 to 9 and **very good** in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good specialist knowledge and understanding of their subjects.
- The pupils respond well to the good levels of challenge and their teachers' high expectations.
- The supportive work of the 'Leading Learning Group' in developing and sharing good practice.
- The work of, and excellent example provided by, the school's advanced skills teachers.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects.
- There is a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and learning during form tutor time.
- Assessment is clearly focused on learning in almost all departments.

Commentary

19. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics, ICT, art, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, citizenship and in personal, social and health education. Learning is good in careers education. Teaching and learning are very good in science, design and technology, geography and in religious education.
20. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are good in science, ICT, modern foreign languages, physical education, citizenship and in personal, social and health education. Learning is good in work-related education. Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and in religious education.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 132 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (4.0)	47 (35.5)	47 (35.5)	30 (23.0)	3 (2.0)	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.

21. Teaching and learning were good or better in three-quarters of the lessons seen and very good or excellent in half. Where learning was unsatisfactory, this was mainly the first lesson of the afternoon, where teachers and pupils had not yet adapted to the school's new initiatives during this session. This period each day is now dedicated to form tutor time and the additional support for elements such as citizenship and personal, social and health education. A few teachers and some pupils have yet to grasp fully the importance the school now places

on the work undertaken in these lessons, so the demands on some pupils were insufficiently challenging.

22. Furthermore, although the use of homework is generally good across the school, practice in the setting of homework can be inconsistent. Nevertheless, when homework is set regularly it is used well to help pupils in working independently. Overall, pupils' skills in independent learning have developed very well by Year 11, and in this there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. However, opportunities for the use of ICT by the pupils themselves as a tool to support learning are either too limited or inconsistent in subjects other than specialist ICT lessons. Nevertheless, teachers are developing well their personal use of ICT, and use their laptop computers well for a variety of teaching and administrative purposes.
23. The drive to underpin and improve the quality of learning throughout the school is very well exemplified through the work of the school's 'Leading Learning Group', which is led ably by the school's two advanced skills teachers⁵. The work of this group is very well linked to the monitoring of teaching and learning initiatives throughout the school and the professional development of teachers. Over the past year, the work of this group has proved most productive in the stimulation of ideas to improve further learning and achievement for pupils at the school.
24. In the best lessons there are some key strengths across the range of subjects, which reflect the overall very good practice within the school. Principally, teachers show a very good understanding of their subjects and the pupils are appreciative of this. In the great majority of lessons, pupils are challenged and encouraged effectively and become involved well in their learning. As a result, the pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good by Year 9 and very good by Year 11. This is because teachers share very clearly with the pupils what it is they are expected to learn and how they can improve. Teachers' use of questioning is very effective in stimulating pupils' thinking and, consequently, their learning. Overall, teachers' planning and the pace of lessons are very good and teachers clearly have high expectations of the pupils.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. This is because teachers know their pupils well and make specific provision in their planning through making good use of the pupils' individual education plans. However, the monitoring of the use of these plans to ensure consistency of application across all subjects is under-developed. In-class support is good. The support staff are satisfactorily deployed across subjects and the introduction of qualified teachers in supporting some lessons is a positive innovation. Support staff keep good records of pupils' progress in lessons. However, at the time of the inspection, the special educational needs co-ordinators were finalising the support programme as the college had only gone through one two-week timetable cycle and new needs were being identified. The teaching of pupils who are gifted or talented is within classes which are organised according to ability. This is often supplemented very well by activities outside the taught day, which follow the interests of the pupils.
26. A striking feature of much teaching is the teachers' skilful use of assessment. It is economical, efficient and clearly directed to helping pupils see how well they are doing and how to improve. This shows itself in the way teachers help the pupils to judge their own work. Furthermore, it is evident in the skilful way teachers use questioning to find out how well pupils understand key ideas. The results of assessment are used to set realistic targets and to encourage pupils to aim for high standards. Checks on the pupils' progress are regular and help pupils to engage more fruitfully in lessons. However, assessment is not used well enough in ICT. Though teachers in this department gather assessment information, they do not use it well enough. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very thoroughly

⁵ The Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) programme is designed to strengthen teaching through better leadership, rewards, training and support. AST posts are created by schools who believe that a teacher with excellent classroom teaching skills can not only raise the level of achievement of their own pupils but also those of their colleagues and the school itself. Candidates for the post then have to pass a national AST assessment procedure.

carried out, in line with college practice. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need have their Statements reviewed thoroughly and regularly through annual review meetings.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is **good** overall. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weakness

- The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils in all years.
- The college's implementation of the National 14 to 19 Education Strategy is at an early stage and not fully developed.
- Use of form time is inconsistent because a few staff are not using the new format well enough.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular and enrichment activities are very good.
- Accommodation and resources are good, but there are some limitations in art and music.

Commentary

27. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities to meet the needs and aspirations of most pupils. Statutory requirements are met in all regards except for a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum is particularly strong in design and technology, where there is access to all the elements at GCSE. The overall structure of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is coherent, but in geography, history and physical education the newly introduced two-week timetable necessitates there being a few classes which have two teachers. The school is monitoring the impact of this on pupils' learning.
28. Overall, the curriculum is flexible in Years 10 and 11 and is developing well. However, the college is still in the early phases of its development to meet the needs of pupils under the National 14 to 19 Strategy (for alternative and vocational courses for pupils in Years 9 to 13). Nevertheless, the college is making acceptable progress on this as part of its current development planning. At present, pupils do not have sufficient time to study core physical education in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, pupils do benefit from the provision of the sports leaders' and GCSE examination courses. There are regular meetings to review and develop the curriculum in response to pupils' views and their changing needs but, at present, the rural location of the school limits the provision of some vocational subjects which need strong links with businesses.
29. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the full curriculum. The school has organised a modified timetable in Year 7, taught by experienced teachers, for a small group of these pupils to meet better their needs. There is a planned programme of monitoring to assess regularly its effectiveness. In Years 10 and 11 some pupils with special educational needs are enabled to pursue a part-time college link and work experience programme. The curriculum for pupils who are gifted or talented is very good as it meets their specific needs. This is achieved through extension activities and accelerated learning, when pupils take examinations early.
30. Pupils are made well aware of choice and career aspirations from Year 7 in their personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils in Year 9 are given good advice to help them choose examination courses of study, which are well matched to their interests. There is good provision for careers and work-related learning, which is reported separately at the end of Part B of this report. A new format for the 25-minute tutor time at the start of the afternoon session has been introduced this year in order to promote further pupils' personal development. However, a few teachers are not using this time effectively.
31. The college offers a very good range of well-attended after-school activities, particularly in music, sport and drama. In addition, specialist areas including art, design and technology and ICT are available to pupils outside teaching time. The whole school day and residential visits arranged by the geography, modern foreign language and physical education departments ensure pupils extend well their learning outside the classroom. There are good opportunities

for pupils to be involved beyond the school in local, regional and national events, notably in design and technology competitions and jazz band performances. Communication of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities to parents is good. They are informed of all these activities in the school newsletter and department fliers and details are available on the college's Extranet website.

32. Considerable improvements to the school's accommodation have taken place since the previous inspection. The technology rooms are now of a good standard and include a dedicated computer-aided designing and making room. Accommodation for textiles and English is no longer unsatisfactory. The laboratories have been refurbished and physical education facilities are now good. ICT provision is much improved, although access is not as effective as it could be. The library has been considerably improved and supports pupils' learning well. The pupils make very good use of the library. There is a good range of books, CDs, magazines and ICT access to support learning in most subjects. However, the art rooms have yet to be improved and the limited number of spaces for small group work in music restricts pupils' learning. Extensive work on the outdoor environment was being undertaken at the time of the inspection. When landscaping is complete, it will meet pupils' requests for more outdoor eating areas.
33. Resources are generally good and support well pupils' learning. ICT resources are very good and they are constantly being upgraded. The presence of interactive whiteboards in many rooms is improving teaching and learning. However, there is insufficient technology in music to meet the National Curriculum requirements for the pupils in Years 7 to 9 and there are too few tuned percussion instruments. The school benefits from a good number of suitably qualified teaching staff and a satisfactory number of teaching assistants.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the health, welfare and safety of pupils is **good**. Support, guidance and advice for pupils are **very good**. The school's systems for consulting pupils are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is very good, and supports well the personal development of the pupils.
- Pupils are set very clear targets and know how to improve their work.

Commentary

34. Health and safety are high priorities for the college and great care is taken to ensure that the college environment meets the high standards it has set. Because of this care, the current building programme has not impinged on pupils' use of facilities. Regular risk assessments are undertaken for all activities. First aid practice is very good and administered by trained personnel. Mobile phones are forbidden and confiscated if found and for safety reasons only minimum jewellery is permitted. The college is now aware of recent changes in child protection legislation and has taken immediate action to comply with these.
35. Pastoral care for pupils includes the pastoral support officer, who is always ready to help them and their parents. Tutors know pupils well and most stay with the same groups as they progress through the college. However, the recently introduced daily tutorial session is not consistently used well enough and planned themes are not always taught. Heads of year give good additional support to pupils where necessary, and the headteacher as well as assistant and deputy headteachers are always available. Working relationships are good. Pupils are given good careers advice, which is reported separately at the end of this report. They value their work experience and are encouraged to use their talents. They are given good information and advice about further education and the work available as a result of the courses they choose.
36. Targets are set in most subjects and discussed and reviewed regularly with pupils. As a result of very good assessment procedures, they understand how to improve and, although the marking of their work is not always consistent, pupils generally find it very helpful. They mark

their own work and sometimes that done by others, raising awareness of their achievements and shortcomings. Pupils assess their levels and identify where they can improve. Tutors, teachers when necessary, and parents sign pupils' planners every week and forgotten homework can be found on the college Extranet website.

37. Pupils who have special education or other needs are well supported by specialist staff. This is because the special educational needs department's documentation is thorough, with well-structured and helpful individual educational plans with clear targets and realistic timelines. These are distributed to teachers, who use them well in their lesson planning. There is a special educational needs link group with representatives from all departments, which passes special needs information to teachers across the school. The support for pupils with special educational needs across the departments is usually good. However, it is not yet consistent in every subject because departments are still submitting their requests for additional support.
38. Pupils are consulted about all aspects of college life, give their views and are involved in decisions about changes in the college's life and work. The head boy and head girl meet very regularly with the headteacher. Year and college council members, elected democratically, report the ideas and concerns of their peers. The college council was involved in new staff interviews last year and this year in Year 10 they will be trained to assess lessons. Although personal development is not formally planned, all pupils are encouraged to reach their potential and most mature into confident and thinking young people.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The college's links with parents are **very good**. There are **very good** links with the community and very good liaison with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information for parents is very good.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Links with local primary schools have much improved and are very good.
- The college makes clear to parents how well their children are performing.

Commentary

39. Parents find the college welcoming and like the work ethic and values promoted. They are pleased with the education their children receive. They provide strong support for the college and raised considerable monies to support the technology bid. Although some were anxious about changes to options as a result of the new status, all agree that technology status has improved the facilities their children enjoy. Whilst timing of consultation evenings was queried, the college has carefully planned to maximise the benefit for all. In addition, families and the local community enjoy the successful, well-attended and well-organised events which are run by the Friends' Association.
40. Information for parents has improved since the previous report. The college now communicates very well with them and they are pleased with their children's reports and very well informed about their children's progress. This is because reports to parents on pupils' attainment and progress are clear and helpful. In addition to the prospectus and the governors' annual report, both containing useful data, the college posts interesting information on its website as well as the regular lively newsletters. Parents are welcome to use the computer suite should they not have access to the Internet at home and some communicate with the college via e-mail. Tutors are the first port of call if parents have concerns and parents strongly support the mentoring days, whilst a few parents expressed regret that specific work is not always set for those left at home.
41. The special educational needs department is highly regarded by parents for its ability to meet the wide variety of their children's needs. The department meets its legal responsibilities with annual reviews in which parents have the opportunity to be involved fully. Parents of pupils who are gifted or talented are fully informed and involved in the activities which are offered to

their children. All information which the school receives about activities in which these pupils could participate is passed on to them.

42. The very good links with the community are threaded through the curriculum and, partially as a result of work-related learning, are improving fast. For example, primary schools share technical support and science resources, musical groups play at community events and bird boxes are provided for a local conservation group. The college's technical support provides an outreach function with special schools. Pupils in Year 8 make story sacks for a local literacy support initiative. Older pupils, undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh awards, design and teach ICT induction work. Courses are run for the community through another local college, making good use of Swanmore's accommodation and resources.
43. As a result of the college's specialist status, very good links are developing with local primary schools. These schools benefit from the ICT input, for which a structured plan is in place. Partly as a result of this, induction procedures for new pupils are very good. Good units of work for continuity between primary schools and Swanmore have been developed. Very good links with local colleges of further education are used well to enable pupils to extend their courses and education. Other local secondary schools have different status, such as arts and sport, and the headteachers meet regularly to maximise their combined strengths.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Leadership is very good and has a relentless focus on raising standards, which underpins the school's work. Management at all levels is very good and is very effective at converting the vision into reality. The work of the governors is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and a strong senior and middle management team supports her very well.
- There is a very strong focus on raising standards and ensuring that all pupils achieve well.
- Self-evaluation and the monitoring of teaching and learning are well developed.
- Systems for tracking both the social and academic progress of pupils are not yet fully integrated.
- The overall excellence of the school's provision for its gifted or talented pupils.
- Governors perform their functions well, working efficiently through an effective committee system.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

44. The leadership of the headteacher is very good because it is dynamic, energetic, direct and clearly focused on raising standards so that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve well. Very clear strategic thinking and very good planning make the best use of available resources and utilise the strengths of key staff well. A very effective team of senior staff work together well to promote the aims of the college and communicate these clearly to staff. In most departments, leadership is very good. It is never less than good. Leaders create very effective teams and provide very good role models for staff and pupils.
45. The management of the college is very good and it runs smoothly and well. Managers are confident, well informed and perceptive. Management is very effective in establishing a very productive climate for learning and promoting inclusion across the college. The college is very willing to embrace new initiatives and is refining and developing further its very good systems for assessment and self-evaluation. Teaching and learning are monitored very well and good practice is shared.
46. Individual subject departments rigorously check the academic progress of all pupils as they move from Years 7 to 11. However, integrated systems for monitoring pupils' progress both socially and academically in all areas of the curriculum are presently under-developed. The school meets its challenging GCSE examination targets.

47. The special educational needs department is very well led and managed by the joint co-ordinators, who have put in place very good management structures. They have a very detailed knowledge of their pupils and of their needs. They attend annual review meetings at primary schools and the department has good information on pupils joining the school. They lead a highly committed and capable team who are well qualified and skilled. Furthermore, the department is supported well by a very enthusiastic governor.
48. The leadership and management of the area of English as an additional language are good. Although at the time of the inspection there were no pupils whose mother tongue was not English, there are clearly documented procedures for dealing with pupils new to the country. They are designed to assist pupils to settle in quickly and effectively to the new system of education and enable them to make progress.
49. The leadership and management of the area of provision for gifted or talented pupils are excellent. The school uses effectively its assessment procedures to identify these pupils and to monitor their progress. The school uses a questionnaire by which it establishes the activities in which pupils participate in and out of school. It builds on this knowledge to establish other links which may further extend these pupils. The policy is excellent as it clearly identifies the three areas of support which can be provided, by enrichment, acceleration and extension. The governor for this area of provision is kept fully informed of all developments.
50. Governance of the school is good. Governors are committed, know the college well and understand its strengths and weaknesses. They work efficiently through a well-organised committee system, which capitalises well on their individual expertise. However, currently the college does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
51. The financial affairs of the college are managed and controlled very well by the college's finance officer and the headteacher. Governors are kept fully informed of the financial situation of the college on a regular basis. The college has taken any necessary action relating to recommendations from its auditors' reports. Balances carried forward are prudently earmarked to improve the college's resources. The principles of best value are very well applied and resources are used well to support the pupils' learning.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,129,653	Balance from previous year	226,084
Total expenditure	4,129,942	Balance carried forward to the next	225,795
Expenditure per pupil	3,312		

52. Overall, the current effectiveness of the college is very good. This is because achievement is very good and pupils make highly satisfactory progress. Standards in national examinations are well above average by Year 11. The college offers its pupils a good range of courses to study. Furthermore, teaching, learning, assessment and its leadership and management are all very good. Consequently, the college provides very good value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

Provision for work-related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is very good in the promotion of this new curriculum area.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to attend vocational courses at other local colleges.
- At present, only one vocational GCSE is provided at the college.
- All Year 10 pupils experience a very well organised two-week programme of work placements.
- Good careers support and guidance is provided through the personal, social and health education programme and the Connexions careers service.

Commentary

53. The opportunities provided for work-related learning in Years 10 and 11 are good and meet the new statutory requirements introduced in September 2004. The co-ordinator has conducted a thorough audit and the school is keen to build on the findings. Although there is only one vocational course, which is ICT, there are GCSE courses in resistant materials, food technology, textiles and physical education, which have strong vocational links. The school also provides a Junior Sports Leaders course.
54. In partnership with local colleges, 32 pupils are provided with vocational (NVQ) courses combined with extended work placements, and four others are on individual work-related programmes. The pupils who attended these courses in 2003 achieved very well. They have progressed to apprenticeships, employment and further areas of study. Present students express their interest in the college courses because they are linked well to their career aspirations. Pupils benefit from the vocational link because it builds their confidence and self-esteem.
55. No teaching on the partnership courses could be observed during the inspection. However, pupils are learning well about future opportunities. The very good organisation of work experience for all Year 10 pupils provides them with good, practical first-hand opportunities to sample the world of work. The pupils benefit from a nine-day placement with very good evaluative feedback on the tenth day. This year, 55 pupils are involved in a pilot of an accreditation based on their work experiences. Careers advice is in-built from Year 7 throughout the college in personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 have access to good careers guidance provided by both the careers service and a well-stocked careers library. The Connexions advisor is in college two days each week, and interviews pupils, giving them very well informed vocational advice. Pupils' learning is also extended very well through several enrichment activities. These include a further education fair, a marine day, visits to industry and a careers-related drama performance. Assessment is used very well to identify the needs of pupils and to provide them with relevant opportunities.
56. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management of a developing area. The extension of vocational courses is limited by the rural location of the school because there are few appropriate businesses in the area with whom to build vocational partnerships. Nevertheless, the department is forward thinking and has every intention of building on the good aspects of work-related learning already established.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4 (Years 7 - 9 and Years 10 - 11)

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management of the department are focused well on raising standards.
- The good teaching is characterised by detailed planning of well-structured lessons.
- Assessment of speaking, reading and writing is very good.
- There are limited opportunities for teachers to share and develop their understanding of marking and standards.
- The use of ICT by pupils in English lessons is underdeveloped.
- Learning is supported well by the positive attitudes of pupils.

Commentary

57. In 2003, GCSE results were significantly well above average for both English language and English literature examinations. The number of A* and A grades was well above average. Pupils' work currently reflects these standards and shows very good achievement by Year 11. Standards of attainment are above average when pupils enter the school. Results in Year 9 tests in 2003 were above average. Early indicators for 2004 show results have improved at Levels 5 to 7. Work seen during the inspection showed standards in Year 9 to be above average. Achievement by Year 9 is good.
58. Improvement in the attainment and progress of pupils in English in Years 7 to 9 was a key issue for the college at the previous inspection. Good improvement has been made in this. Attainment in speaking and listening is above average overall. The speaking skills of lower attaining Year 10 pupils are developing well, particularly when they compare poems in groups. Pupils listen to each other carefully. Pupils of all abilities read confidently in class. Pupils' writing skills are being developed well in Years 7 to 9 and their writing skills are very good by the end of Year 11.
59. Teaching and learning in the department are good overall. They are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The best lessons are planned in detail, are well structured and taught with pace. Learning objectives are always shared with pupils and linked to assessment. Teachers share information with pupils about National Curriculum levels and examination grades and what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers use a good variety of strategies to successfully support the development of lower attaining pupils. Strategies designed to support boys in their writing are evidently effective and are used by all English teachers. Some teachers use ICT very effectively to support and develop the teaching of lessons and pupils respond well to this. However, the use of ICT by pupils, for example in planning and redrafting their work, is an area for further development. Discussion is promoted well at all levels to engage pupils and help develop thinking. Teachers are keen to develop their teaching with new ideas, including the use of techniques to develop thinking, literacy and speaking and listening. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' work and of how they should behave. Attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are good overall. Pupils respond well to the good pace of lessons, which are productive. They enjoy working in pairs or groups, often with very positive outcomes. Staff and pupils have positive working relationships.
60. Assessment in the department is very good. The use of common assessment tasks is thorough and provides very good feedback to pupils on their progress. Assessment for learning practice is being integrated into the classroom and is having a positive effect. Pupils

learn from assessing their own and other pupils' work. The department plans further work on this to ensure the principles are embedded. Most marking is thorough and gives good feedback to pupils. However, there is currently no regular reviewing of marking to ensure standards are shared and there is inconsistency in how teachers respond to pupils' written work.

61. Leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has a clear vision of what needs to happen to improve standards even further in Years 7 to 9. Planning is in place which supports the raising of standards. Members of the team are fully involved in leading whole-school initiatives. Teachers readily share their expertise with colleagues. The work of the advanced skills teacher has had a significant impact on improvement. Management of the department is very good. Teaching in the department is well monitored and findings lead to change. There is a very good sense of teamwork and commitment to raising standards. All pupils have access to the same curriculum, including the lowest attaining pupils, and the teaching is designed so all pupils have accessibility. Very good schemes of work have been developed, contributing to the raising of standards in Years 7 to 9. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. The use of literacy by all subjects in the school is very good. Standards of literacy in Years 7 to 9 are above average. They are well above average in Years 10 and 11. The college has given the raising of literacy standards a suitable emphasis and it has been made a priority for all staff in the college's training programme. All departments make a very good contribution by displaying key words and technical terminology and referring to them in lessons. Departments include writing strategies in their teaching and give pupils good opportunities for extended writing. Good use of display in many classrooms put a particular emphasis on literacy. There is a helpful literacy section in the pupil planner and there are plans to use some tutorial time to develop this section with pupils. The literacy co-ordinator and literacy group have identified suitable priorities for the college and employ a wide range of strategies to develop staff in this area.

Drama

63. A Year 7 and a Year 11 lesson were seen during the inspection. The teaching was very good. The Year 7 pupils were beginning to learn dramatic terms and develop well their performance skills. They were beginning to learn about performing in front of an audience. The pupils responded very well to confident and stimulating teaching. Year 11 pupils were preparing a piece for their examination. The pupils were knowledgeable about theatrical devices and the structure of a dramatic piece. Pupils were very good at sharing ideas and responding to presentations with constructive criticism. The standard of work seen in both these lessons was well above average. A range of extra-curricular events further enhances pupils' experiences of the subject.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning result in good achievement in French, German and Spanish.
- Learning is promoted well through very good display, good specialist accommodation and good departmental resources.
- Pupils' achievement was very good in all three languages at GCSE in 2003.
- A few teachers do not always use enough French, German or Spanish in lessons.

Commentary

64. In GCSE French, German and Spanish in 2003 results were significantly well above the national average. In 2004, GCSE results in all three languages dipped. The attainment of boys in French dipped considerably. Standards of work observed in lessons in all three languages

in Years 10 and 11 are average, but pupils' written work from last year is above average. However, this can be explained by the fact that at the beginning of a year most lessons focused on the presentation of new material, which resulted in pupils not being able to demonstrate their full range of skills. In Years 10 and 11 in French, German and Spanish the work of higher attaining pupils is of GCSE A* and A standard. Teachers prepare pupils well for GCSE and pupils write accurate coursework. Most pupils achieve well because of good planning, good use of interesting resources and the variety of activities, which are matched to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the stepped approach to presentation and practice and to the good support for individuals.

65. Results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 in modern foreign languages were above average and in 2004 the number of pupils reaching the expected level rose. The work in pupils' books is above average in French, German and Spanish. In work seen in lessons, standards were only average. The reason for this is the same as already given for Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs communicate personal details well when supported by clear visuals and written prompts. Achievement is good for all pupils.
66. Teaching and learning in all three languages are good from Years 7 to 11. Teachers have very good linguistic skills and good subject knowledge, but they do not always speak sufficiently in the foreign language. Pupils in French, German and Spanish enjoy lessons which have a good pace and which make use of interesting activities and resources. However, in a few classes some pupils were not fully involved and occasionally off-task, but teachers worked hard to involve them and to ensure that they made satisfactory progress. Pupils learn well in pairs or groups. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and make encouraging comments. Teachers make good use of a merit system and give effective advice in lessons and in pupils' books on how to improve. Pupils' learning is also promoted by good working relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers make some good use of ICT to present and practise new language, but pupils do use computers regularly to develop their independent learning.
67. The leadership of the department is good and the management is satisfactory. There is a clear department improvement plan, up-to-date scheme of work and good strategies for monitoring teaching, learning, achievement and attainment. However, there are still inconsistencies in the way the departmental policy on the use of French, German and Spanish in lessons is implemented. The good specialist accommodation and very good display promote well teaching and learning. However, whilst resources within the department are good, those in the library for French, German and Spanish are unsatisfactory. Teaching, learning and achievement in lessons are better than at the time of the previous inspection and overall improvement since the previous inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the department are highly effective in raising standards.
- Good teaching is characterised by good planning and well-structured lessons.
- Teaching is effective in raising standards.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good as a result of stimulating teaching.
- Pupils' self-assessment is well focused on improving achievement and standards.
- The successful use of self-assessment by pupils, in improving standards and achievement, has not yet been evaluated fully.

Commentary

68. In 2003 the Year 11 GCSE results at A*-C were significantly well above average and above average for A*-G grades. The number of pupils gaining A* and A grades was very high. Years 10 and 11 work seen during the inspection showed well above average standards. Pupils enter the school with standards which are above the national average. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average. National Curriculum test results in 2003 were well above average. The college's results for National Curriculum tests in 2004 show an improvement from 2003, and therefore achievement in all year groups is very good. Almost all pupils achieve highly and make good progress in relation to their ability.
69. Teaching is good overall. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Lessons are planned well and structured so that pupils make good progress and standards are improved. All lessons seen included a short, stimulating mathematical start-up activity. This created a good atmosphere for learning and promoted very good attitudes towards mathematics by pupils. All lessons included an end session, which involved pupils well in assessing the standard of their own work during the lesson. All mathematics classrooms have an interactive whiteboard, and very good use is made of them to keep the pace of lessons rapid and present resources to a high standard. Pupils respond well to this teaching approach because the presentation of mathematical examples and problems is of a high quality. Teachers are able to re-cap on work without the need to erase current board work so those pupils who need more challenge are able to move ahead more rapidly. Teachers have good working relationships with pupils and expect them to work hard. Learning by pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good. In Years 10 and 11 learning is very good. Pupils ask probing questions of their teachers and participate very effectively in lessons in order to improve their own standards. Pupils make the most of end of lesson sessions to improve their knowledge, understanding and acquisition of mathematical skills. Overall, learning is good.
70. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department is well supported by the deputy head of mathematics in a commitment to raising standards. There is a consistent approach to teaching across the subject because a high priority is placed on developing the skills of staff and deploying them in such a way that they are effective teachers. Support and professional development for teachers are highly effective. The quality of the curriculum is good, is reviewed and updated regularly by the leadership team and enables the pupils to achieve well. Assessment procedures are used effectively to enable the development of pupil programmes which focus well on standards. Whole school issues and initiatives are readily taken on board, an example being the use of assessment for learning approaches which aim to improve achievement for all pupils. The head and deputy head of mathematics demonstrate very good teaching and are very good leadership models for other staff in the department.
71. Classes are set according to ability and pupils are effectively challenged. This means teachers are able to plan and structure lessons so that all pupils in a class make very good progress. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, as is their standard of work. The use of teaching assistants in these classes is effective in supporting individual learning. The provision for gifted or talented pupils is very good, with the opportunity to take GCSE examinations in Year 10. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. The teaching and use of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory in that there is acceptable reinforcement of numeracy skills for the pupils. The school has a sound whole school policy for the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum. Overall, the standard of numeracy is very good across the school. A major contribution to the use of mathematics across the curriculum is the way mathematics lessons themselves sharpen the pupils' mental thinking in mathematics. This is good practice in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. There was evidence of satisfactory reinforcement of numeracy skill development in design and technology, music and in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 7 to 9 leads to rapid progress by the pupils.
- The pupils' very good achievement by Year 9 has led to their well above average standards.
- The head of science provides good leadership.
- There is a lack of challenge in some Year 11 lessons due to inconsistent lesson planning and pace.
- The good use of ICT by staff is helping to motivate pupils.

Commentary

73. In the 2003 GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C and higher A* and A grades was significantly below the national average for pupils taking the separate biology, chemistry and physics examinations. However, the results are in line with national average when compared with the double award science. Results for boys were higher in physics, whilst in biology and chemistry the results for boys and girls were similar. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were well above average for both boys and girls. They are above those for schools with a similar intake. Standards have increased over the past five years.
74. The standards seen in lessons are above average overall, and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' achievement is rapidly improving and is now very good by Year 9. Pupils make very rapid progress from Years 7 to 9 because teachers build well on earlier learning. For example, a particular strength is pupils' grasp of key scientific ideas. Such factors are now feeding successfully through into Year 10, where pupils achieve well overall. Consequently, pupils in Year 10 are currently making better progress than in Year 11, where the level of challenge is sometimes too low. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Year 11, but best for pupils of average ability.
75. Overall, teaching and learning are good and have improved since the previous inspection for Years 7 to 9. All lessons in science were satisfactory or better and about a third were very good. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic, objectives are shared with pupils, learning from the previous lesson is recalled and a wide range of learning methods is used. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on constructing chemical formulae, the teacher demonstrated the thinking process clearly. Consequently, pupils were able to learn for themselves by working with models and linking together jigsaw-type pieces to construct their own models. However, lesson planning, pace and marking which advises pupils on how to improve are not always good enough. Pupils respond very positively to informative marking and the self-assessment of their work where this occurs.
76. The use of ICT by staff is good. The recent introduction of interactive whiteboards throughout the department has been very effective, particularly because teachers have written their own applications customised for the department's lessons. The whiteboards were used in the majority of lessons seen and have resulted in increased motivation for pupils.
77. Leadership of the department is good. The head of department leads by example and is dedicated to ensuring high standards. Staff, including the very competent technicians, work collaboratively and are very much a team. Examination results are thoroughly analysed and the evaluations are used to plan for improvement. Management is good because there is effective delegation of tasks, clear procedures and good support for staff. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good overall.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good in all years.
- Teaching is good because of the subject knowledge of the teachers.
- The leadership and management of ICT throughout the school are good.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information to improve standards.
- There is good use of ICT equipment by teachers to improve the teaching of many subjects.
- The more extended use of ICT by pupils in other subjects is underdeveloped.

Commentary

78. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average for grades A*-C, with girls' performance being particularly strong. The results in 2004 showed a sharp fall. The school's reasons for this are attributed to insufficient teaching time and assessment problems arising from a new course. Current provision for GCSE is satisfactory, but improving, and the standard of work seen by Year 11 indicates a return to the above average levels of attainment seen in 2003. The ICT skills of pupils on entry to the school are above the national average. Most pupils in Year 7 access and move between applications with ease and keyboard skills are well embedded. The Year 9 teacher assessments in 2003 show standards above average overall, but well above average for boys. This is supported by the current attainment of pupils seen during the inspection. Overall, achievement is good for pupils in all year groups, as significant gains in skills and understanding are evident from Years 7 to 11, due to the good teaching.
79. Teaching of ICT is good and occasionally very good. Consequently, learning for all pupils is good. All staff, including temporary teachers, have good knowledge of their subject. In the best lessons the pupils achieve well because the teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and the tasks set are challenging. The key learning objectives are clear and are frequently referred to during the lesson. Pupils in a Year 7 lesson made sophisticated presentations as the teacher combined the use of homework and prior learning. Consequently, pupils made rapid progress in developing new skills and understanding. Good emphasis is placed not only on how an application works but also on when to use it. There is a good balance of independent and collaborative learning and very good use is made of end of lesson summaries to fix new learning. In less successful lessons the pace of the work was slower and in some cases the task set did not sufficiently challenge the abilities of the highest and lowest attainers. Overall, working relationships are very positive with pupils interested and keen to learn. Homework is set as a suitable extension of the work in the classroom. Support provided by support teachers in Year 11 and learning assistants in Years 7 to 9 is very effective.
80. The leadership of ICT is good because it has a clear vision and ambition to raise standards. Management is also good. The head of ICT has planned the work in detail and developed a good range of teaching resources helped by a very good team of technicians. However, the use of assessment to identify and improve the attainment of individual pupils is underdeveloped. Improvements since the previous inspection have been good. There is now an effective team of ICT specialist teachers and the recent investment in ICT is substantial.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. The use of ICT for teaching is well developed. All teachers have a laptop computer for use in preparing and teaching lessons using projection onto whiteboards, or inter-active whiteboards. Pupils find lessons more stimulating because of this good use of the technology. Good examples of this use were seen in design and technology, mathematics, music, history and in geography. However, teachers in subjects other than ICT do not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils themselves to use computers during their lessons. Consequently, the use of ICT is not supporting their learning effectively enough. Nevertheless, the library computer suite makes a good contribution to independent learning. The recently launched school Extranet website is a valuable and well-used facility for the whole school community.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is above average at the end of Year 9 and well above in Year 11.
- Teaching is good overall and supports well the development of pupils' history skills.
- Assessment, including pupil target-setting, is improving pupils' learning.
- The very good leadership and management lead to good self-evaluation and improvement.
- The use of ICT is a strength of the teaching, despite limited access to resources.

Commentary

82. GCSE results in 2003 were average at both A*-C and higher A* and A grade levels. The subject is very popular at GCSE where it attracts the highest option numbers. Entry to the course is open to pupils of all abilities and, as a consequence, there have been inconsistencies in examination results over the years. The 2004 results show an improvement over the previous year. Standards for the current Year 11 are well above average and their achievement very good. Girls generally attain higher results than boys and the department is taking action to help raise boys' standards. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average, with boys' attainment being particularly high. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average and their achievement is good.
83. Pupils enjoy history. They see its value in terms of gaining knowledge, developing skills such as thinking and the use of sources to draw conclusions. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use very good teaching skills, including questioning and group and pair work. This fully engages and extends the pupils' learning. The use of questioning to test prior knowledge and develop pupils' understanding is particularly effective. Pupils are usually very keen to learn and show a good grasp of historical issues and a very good ability to use higher level thinking skills. They respond positively to their teachers, participate actively in lessons and enjoy them.
84. Teachers use good strategies to develop literacy levels, including essay writing techniques and the use of specialist vocabulary. Teachers use resources well to challenge and extend pupils' learning. Good examples of research skills were seen and the department makes good use of ICT. Teachers have very good ICT skills themselves, but limited access to ICT rooms slows the pupils' progress. Pupils of all abilities are well supported by their class teachers and by support staff who work hard to assist the pupils and work well with the teachers.
85. Assessment is good and marking is conscientiously carried out and comments well focused on improvement. Target-setting involving the pupils is very effective. Homework builds on the learning in lessons and is planned well to meet the pupils' learning needs. History rooms have good, imaginative displays, which support learning and reflect the quality of the pupils' work. The department makes a significant contribution to citizenship in all years and is preparing a day in January to study the Holocaust. There is a good range of annual trips and invited speakers.
86. The department is very well led and managed and there are consistently good structures in place to develop the work of the department, which have led to the current very good provision. The department's work is reviewed regularly and monitored well. Consequently, the department has a clear development plan to support future improvement. In addition, an advanced skills teacher is making a very significant impact on teaching and learning in the department, school and beyond. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good overall.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 were high and improved further in 2004.
- Lessons are challenging and very well structured, so pupils achieve very well.
- The department is very well organised and teachers work well collaboratively to produce a wide range of attractive resources.
- Teachers' use of ICT is not yet monitored or refined.

Commentary

87. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly well above average and continued to improve in 2004. Overall, pupils attained better results in geography than in the other subjects they took at the same time. These results represent very good achievement for the pupils concerned compared with their attainment when they entered the school. At the end of Year 9, results in teacher assessments are well above the national average and pupils achieve very well. In work seen, standards in geography were well above average. Pupils achieve very well at the end of Years 9 and 11.
88. All pupils achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject and plan and structure their lessons very well. They make good use of ICT to create and display a wide range of attractive resources which engage pupils' interest and promote learning very well. However, this use of ICT by teachers has yet to be fully developed, monitored and lesson planning refined to allow more use by pupils. Lessons challenge pupils to think for themselves in order to solve geographical problems and find solutions. For example, Year 7 pupils responded very well to a challenging task concerning disabled access to the college, which enabled them to improve considerably their geographical enquiry skills.
89. Very good leadership and management of the department ensure pupils' progress is tracked carefully. Teachers give personal tutorials and clear feedback, so pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. The department is very well organised and teachers work well together to ensure schemes of work and lesson plans are updated, reviewed and evaluated regularly. There are clear priorities for further development. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and results have continued to rise. The department has both the capacity and the real commitment to improve further.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils build very well on their earlier attainment and achieve very well.
- Commitment to the pupils' spiritual and moral awareness permeates the work of the department.
- As a result of much inspiring teaching, pupils enjoy the subject.
- The leadership and management of the department are clearly focused on pupils' learning.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' discussion skills are occasionally missed.

Commentary

90. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly well above average for pupils gaining A*-C grades and the higher A* and A grades. Overall, standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils come to Year 7 with average levels of understanding and knowledge. They build quickly on their earlier attainment and exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average. Standards of writing are very good in all years. Pupils write very well for a very good range of purposes and readers. Pupils come to grips quickly with questions of faith, belief and

practice. This is a result of very good teaching, particularly the productive way teachers engage pupils with their work. Lessons are often a hive of focused activity.

91. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the college. The teachers skilfully combine a lightness of touch with serious intent to engage the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils. They use assessment very well to support learning. Pupils have many opportunities to assess their own work. No opportunity is missed to relate what the pupils learn about religious faith to their own inner thoughts, questions and aspirations. The teachers' skill in providing a progressively challenging range of activities in lessons ensures the inclusion of pupils at all levels of attainment. Group work is generally used very well. However, there are occasions when the pupils are not encouraged enough to give reasons for their views or helped to build more watertight arguments.
92. Very good leadership and management over the last few years lie at the heart of the success of the department. A particular strength has been the management of recent work on assessment. Very good, too, is the monitoring of lessons and the quality of support given to teachers in embracing new initiatives. The department has moved forward on many fronts since the previous inspection and has the drive and enthusiasm to improve even further. Improvement has been very good since the previous inspection. Standards have improved; teaching is more focused on learning and the statutory requirements for the teaching of the subject are now met fully.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is well above average by Years 9 and 11.
- Standards in textiles are of an exceptionally high standard.
- Very good teaching is based on high expectations of pupils.
- Leadership of the department is very good.
- Pupils are encouraged to be adventurous in their designing and making.

Commentary

93. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly well above average overall. They were particularly high in textiles, graphics and food technology, where an unusually large number of pupils achieved A* and A grades. The provisional results for 2004 are of a similarly high standard. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well and attainment is well above average. This is because pupils' coursework is completed very thoroughly and they produce high quality artefacts. They show originality and creativity. Drawing skills are very good. Careful research and evaluation underpins pupils' work. They put a lot of effort into their coursework folders and this results in high marks in their GCSE examinations. The standards achieved in textiles are outstanding. Pupils' work is typical of that normally produced by sixth-form students. It is inspirational and motivates very large numbers of pupils to study the subject.
94. Results in the Year 9 teacher assessments in 2003 were above average. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 9 is well above average and they achieve very well, regardless of ability. Their practical skills are developed well in all aspects of their work. Food is particularly well garnished and decorated. Textiles products show great care and attention to the quality of finish. In resistant materials and graphics, pupils show high levels of independence in their use of computer-aided designing and making. Pupils develop a secure understanding of electronics, which enables them to successfully create models which use sensors to make them move, make noises or light up. From the start of Year 7, pupils are encouraged to take a

pride in their work and to ensure a high quality finish. They use the design process consistently well and develop good research and evaluation skills.

95. Teaching and learning are very good throughout all year groups. Pupils benefit from well-qualified and hard-working teachers, who are always seeking ways to improve. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Interesting activities are planned, which pupils enjoy. Working relationships are very good. Effective advice is given to individuals, which helps them to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and given the confidence they need to achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to undertake challenging activities and to strive for really high standards. Pupils are given the opportunity to contribute to the local community. Bird and bat boxes have been made for a local conservation area and book bags for the pre-school. Pupils are encouraged to enter national competitions and they are very successful. Teachers provide interesting and supportive activities for pupils of all ages and abilities at lunchtime and after school.
96. Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and accurate. Older pupils are given high quality advice on what to include in their coursework folders and how to improve their practical work. Pupils are quick to follow the advice and consequently they achieve high marks. Detailed guidance is given to younger pupils at the start of each new unit of work. This tells them how to achieve different National Curriculum levels. Consequently, they achieve well.
97. The head of department provides very good leadership and management. He is enthusiastic, willing to try new ideas and has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. His recent involvement in the successful bid to achieve technology status for the college is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. It has led to the much-needed improvements in accommodation and resources. The new room for computer-aided designing and making means pupils can now begin to use it from Year 7. He closely monitors the work of the department, including planning, teaching, marking and pupils' work. Data is carefully analysed and used it to improve results. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The quality of teaching and standards has improved. The curriculum is broader and community links have been extended. Accommodation and resources have been improved significantly.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good and teamwork is strong, which gives a clear direction for the subject.
- Teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11, which results in pupils who achieve very well and are highly motivated.
- Teachers challenge pupils well through the use of a wide range of media.
- One-hour lessons are impractical for art in Year 10 and sketchbooks are not used in this year group, which results in homework of poor quality.
- Trips and visits to widen pupils' experiences are valuable in Years 10 and 11, but not planned for Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

98. GCSE results in 2003 were below the national average for grades A*-C, but average for the higher A* and A passes. Overall, results improved in 2004. Teachers' assessments of pupils in Year 9 in 2003 were well above average, but the percentage gaining the expected level declined in 2004. Standards seen were above average in Years 9 and 11. This is due to the overall good teaching following a period of staffing problems, which affected the standards gained in 2004. When pupils enter the college they have standards which are below national expectations because their experience of art is incomplete. Consequently, by Years 9 and 11, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and make very good progress to attain the above average standards.
99. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers plan effectively to challenge pupils, a process which moves them on in their learning. Clear demonstrations are well used, so pupils understand well skills and processes. The teachers ensure that pupils gain competence in the full range of art experiences. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good. Teachers encourage pupils' individuality and creativity, which contributes to the above average standards. They provide challenging tasks, to which pupils respond very well and thereby make good progress. Working relationships are very good, which results in pupils asking for help, listening carefully to teachers' comments and acting upon them.
100. After a time of staffing problems, the college now has a recently appointed acting head of department. Although there have been some difficulties for the department in the past, the quality of leadership and management is now very good. She has already produced, with the support of other members in the department, a handbook and schemes of work for Years 7 to 10. These clearly show planning for progression in the acquisition of skills throughout all years. The good range of educational visits to extend pupils' experiences in art are imaginative in Years 10 and 11 and are of positive benefit to the pupils' studies. However, no trips are planned for Years 7 to 9, so they cannot benefit from such activities. In Year 10 the one-hour lessons cannot be used fully, as time for learning is necessarily spent preparing and clearing away in a practical subject. The practice of homework completed on any paper, rather than in sketchbooks, in Year 10 leads to poor presentation and an inability to see progress. There has been good improvement in all areas specified in the previous report, particularly in standards by Year 9, in the content of the curriculum and in teaching.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved in Years 10 and 11 with some outstanding results in 2004.
- The very good teaching engenders enthusiasm for the subject and makes it a popular choice.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and the numbers involved in music are much larger than average.
- There are insufficient resources for music technology and not enough practice rooms.

Commentary

101. Recent results at GCSE have been above average even though group sizes are larger than the national average. In 2003, results were below average as the pupils had too limited access to music technology. Since the pupils started using music technology last year, results have risen dramatically, with over 90 per cent of pupils gaining A*-C passes in 2004 and nearly half the higher A*-A grades. This is an outstanding result. Standards in the current Year 11 are also well above average. Music is a popular option, pupils enjoy their lessons and group sizes in Year 10 are twice the national average. Achievement is very good. Standards in instrumental lessons are good.
102. Standards on entry to the college in Year 7 are below average and pupils' prior experience of music varies widely. A few instrumentalists are in line with average standards. Results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were average, with a similar percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in 2004. Attainment by pupils in the current Year 9 is

average overall, with about one-third above average. In Years 7 to 9 pupils develop a broad understanding of a wide variety of musical styles and perform, compose and appraise satisfactorily in these styles. However, skills in using music technology are underdeveloped, as pupils have limited access to this. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good.

103. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject skills and use them to demonstrate tasks and to support pupils well. Lessons are planned thoroughly with a variety of timed tasks to sustain pupils' interest and to broaden their understanding of the topic and to develop well their skills. Questions are used particularly well to check and consolidate knowledge and subsidiary questions help to develop thinking skills. Teachers take care to include everyone and pupils of all levels of ability make equally good progress. Teaching is lively and good-humoured and pupils enjoy their lessons, with most working with great enthusiasm and pleasure. In practical tasks, teachers support very well the paired or group work, which encourages pupils to higher achievement. They work very co-operatively in these sessions. In the best lessons there is a very good atmosphere for learning.
104. Assessment is thorough and is linked to each of the topics studied. Pupils are involved in these assessments, being fully aware of the criteria, and know how to improve. However, currently there are only a few recordings of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 which can be used to demonstrate standards to other pupils. The department has already started work on increasing this resource. However, there are insufficient resources for music technology to enable pupils in Years 7 to 9 to develop skills in composing and insufficient tuned percussion to use in world music and rhythmic work. There are insufficient practice rooms for pupils working in small groups. They cannot hear their work clearly when they are all in the main classroom and this slows their progress.
105. Leadership of the department is very good. There is a very good team spirit throughout the department with class teachers and the peripatetic teachers working closely together to support the pupils. The subject leader has a very clear sense of direction for the department and is well aware of its needs. Management is good. The very good curriculum covers a good range of musical styles and the department makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Instrumental lessons and a good range of extra-curricular clubs add depth and opportunities for curriculum enrichment, which is very good. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. With sufficient resources and the examples of recorded work in place, the department is well poised for further improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching by an effective team within the department.
- The amount of time allocated to core course physical education is low in Years 10 and 11.
- The good teaching is characterised by very good subject expertise.
- The good leadership and management of the department lead to realistic planning.
- Assessment procedures are good but not consistent.
- The facilities and extra-curricular provision are very good and help pupils' learning.

Commentary

106. GCSE results have risen over time and are now consistently above average. Results in 2003 were above average overall, with twice the national average percentage of pupils gaining higher A* and A passes. However, when results are compared with their other subjects, boys do not achieve as well as girls. The attainment of current GCSE pupils is above average and their achievement is good. Most pupils, especially boys, reach higher standards in their practical activities than in the theoretical aspects of the course. The attainment of the majority

of pupils in core physical education in Years 10 and 11 is above average. Their achievement is good, but is hindered by only having one lesson each week.

107. Pupils' standards on entry to the college in Year 7 are wide ranging, but are mostly in line with national expectations. Pupils' results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average, but the percentage gaining the expected levels in 2004 was significantly higher. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average and these pupils have made good progress. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good.
108. Pupils in all years develop well their skills in games and consolidate their knowledge of health and fitness. Pupils warm up independently and effectively. Teachers emphasise well this aspect at the start of each lesson and pupils' understanding is promoted further in health and fitness lessons. Pupils' analytical skills are not as well developed as their performance skills. As part of the very good extra-curricular programme, which is attended by large numbers of pupils, many individuals and teams achieve very high standards in district, county and national competitions. These talented pupils are recognised by the department and benefit greatly from the many opportunities their teachers provide.
109. Teaching and learning are good throughout all year groups because most pupils have positive attitudes and very good working relationships with their teachers. The best lessons have a very good pace, allowing pupils maximum time on the activity. Pupils' performance skills are improved because teachers' demonstrations provide good visual images. Pupils benefit in their learning because most year groups are divided by gender and ability. Teaching is closely matched to the needs of the pupils in each group, including those with special educational needs. Teachers manage well the behaviour of some very lively pupils. In a few lessons, pupils, especially boys, do not concentrate sufficiently and this lack of focus explains boys' lower attainment in GCSE work.
110. The newly appointed head of department provides good leadership and management for the subject. He has a realistic development plan and is building a team of teachers who are working together well to provide greater consistency in the writing of schemes of work and to improving the accuracy of assessments through more consistent, agreed approaches. Many aspects, including the Sportsmark award, improved GCSE results, newly refurbished and extended facilities, and the testing of pupils on entry, have aided the good improvement seen since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils respond positively to the subject.
- The very good leadership has resulted in good awareness of citizenship within the college.
- The cross-curricular teaching is very effective in a range of subjects.
- The teaching of citizenship in tutor groups is not focused sufficiently well by a few teachers.
- There is a very strong commitment within the college to the development of the subject.
- The emphasis on pupil involvement in college life contributes much to their active involvement.

Commentary

111. Standards of attainment from Year 7 to Year 11 are above average and achievement is good. This is because many pupils have the necessary skills to discuss and write about issues such as environmental, political and moral matters with confidence. They show good commitment to such citizenship work after detailed input sessions on theme days or in specific subjects and this contributes well to their achievement. Pupils are also enabled to express well and

confidently their personal opinions about current issues. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make a good contribution to class discussions and group work.

112. Teaching and learning are good from Years 7 to 11. Because of the timetable, no specialist citizenship lessons were seen. However, there were good examples of citizenship teaching observed in many other subject lessons. In particular, religious education, history, geography, music and vocational education effectively teach a wide range of citizenship topics. However, although other subjects teach aspects of citizenship as part of their work, they do not always make it explicit to pupils that they are covering citizenship. Nevertheless, the college makes extensive use of outside experts for certain topics and the feedback from pupils on these opportunities, and what they have learned from them, is very positive. In addition, there is good planning to ensure elements of citizenship are taught once a week in tutor groups. The resources for use in tutor groups are up-to date and of high quality. However, the teaching and learning in some tutor groups is not always sufficiently well focused as some teachers and pupils have not fully appreciated the importance of this new college initiative. Nevertheless, tutors write detailed reports relating to pupils' involvement in citizenship and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress.
113. Overall, pupils have very good opportunities to experience elements of citizenship in assemblies, on theme days and during work experience. Some pupils who participate in the year or college councils have an outstanding engagement in citizenship. One college council was very well chaired and all pupils participated well and displayed considerable knowledge and maturity. Additionally, the college has a prefect system, which provides good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility within the college community. Furthermore, there is a deep commitment to involving pupils actively in the running of the college. This is evidenced by the fact that Years 9 and 10 pupils are trained in interviewing techniques and lesson observation skills and are provided with the opportunity to interview new staff and also to observe lessons.
114. Leadership is very good and management is good. The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been very well planned and there is a very clear vision for its future development. A detailed audit of the elements of citizenship in the curriculum has enabled the college to identify which subjects could teach specific aspects of citizenship. There is a very comprehensive system to monitor the teaching of citizenship, which enables the college to assess properly pupils' commitment and levels of attainment.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills.
- The good leadership and management result in teachers being well motivated and confident.
- A few form tutors are insufficiently well focused in their support of the subject in form tutor time.
- Pupils appreciate and enjoy the course, which makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
- Very good links with external agencies extend the scope and quality of the course.

Commentary

115. The standards in many lessons and in pupils' written work are above average from Years 7 to 11 and pupils achieve well. Feedback from pupils shows that on theme days last year there were lively and stimulating sessions on personal, social and health education topics, which provided pupils with good factual information, encouraged good quality discussion and challenged pupils to think independently. Pupils evaluate well their own and others' work.
116. Teaching and learning are good in lessons with a personal, social and health education focus and on college theme days. However, as in citizenship, the teaching and learning in a few

tutor groups were not always focused sufficiently well. Personal, social and health education has high status in the college and makes a valuable contribution to its very good ethos and success. The curriculum is planned well and very well structured. It is taught as separate topics in tutor time and in whole college theme days. The policies on sex and relationship education, alcohol and drugs misuse are good and up-to-date.

117. Outside agencies are used well to support the personal, social and health education programme. There is effective input from several agencies including the police, the fire safety and prison services and a drugs rehabilitation centre. Several other agencies provide services which assist pupils well in their personal development and maturity.
118. Leadership and management are good, so that staff are motivated and confident when teaching aspects of the syllabus. The monitoring of what is taught is good and developed fully to ensure all statutory areas are effectively covered from Years 7 to 11. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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