

INSPECTION REPORT

GLOSSOPDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Glossop

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112957

Headteacher: Mr J D Hart

Lead inspector: Mr D Roberts

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 3rd March 2005

Inspection number: 272735

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Other secondary school

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 – 18

Gender of students: Mixed

Number on roll: 1857

School address: Talbot Road

Glossop

Derbyshire

Postcode: SK13 7DR

Telephone number: (01457) 862 336

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of
governors: Dr J Holly

Date of previous
inspection: April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Glossopdale Community College serves the market town of Glossop, surrounding villages and a large rural catchment. It operates on two main sites, some two miles apart and is now establishing a sixth form centre adjacent to one of the sites. With approaching 1900 students, it is much larger than the average for secondary schools. It receives enhanced resource funding from the local education authority to cater for the needs of students from a wider catchment area who have special educational needs.

The prior attainment of students as they enter the college is in line with the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above the national average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. The student population embraces a wide social mix; the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The very large majority of students are of white British heritage but the college benefits too from having on roll a small number of students from a range of other ethnic heritages. Only a very few of these students are at an early stage of familiarity with the English language.

The college has achieved both a Sportsmark award and an Artsmark (gold) award in 2004 and the Investor in People award in 2002. It is involved with the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince's Trust award schemes. It has submitted a bid to become a specialist performing arts college.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7582	D Roberts	Lead inspector	
9588	A West	Lay inspector	
20709	D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English Drama
10160	R Bagguley	Team inspector	Science
19867	M Pettitt	Team inspector	Art and design
31779	V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology
33115	M Horne	Team inspector	Geography
6642	P Hill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
13155	J Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
8360	F Peacock	Team inspector	Music
17987	B Coates	Team inspector	Physical education
1517	D Griffith	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
28002	S Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language
31879	D Rhodes	Team inspector	Mathematics
31772	A Kelly	Team inspector	History
4684	D Cullimore	Team inspector	Business education
18032	R Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (sixth form)
19152	R Merryfield	Team inspector	Sociology (sixth form) History (sixth form)
22685	N Moss	Team inspector	English (sixth form) Drama (sixth form)
19454	J Whitburn	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)
22985	J Sparkes	Team inspector	Chemistry (sixth form)
3755	T Hulbert	Team inspector	Geography (sixth form) Psychology (sixth form)
19295	P Wall	Team inspector	Health and social care (sixth form) Leisure and tourism (sixth form)

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 8
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	9 - 15
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	15 - 24
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	25 - 28
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	- 68
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	69

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the college is satisfactory and it provides a good sixth form. The pace of necessary improvement is now becoming sustained. The college provides satisfactory value for money and the cost effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal, with good support from the vice-principal and the newly-established senior team, provides very effective leadership which is now securing the required improvement; similarly, the sixth form benefits from very good leadership.
- By Year 11 standards seen are average or above, representing good achievement; standards are below average in several subjects by Year 9 but only in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education do they remain below average by Year 11.
- In the sixth form, standards seen are average or above, again reflecting good achievement, but in ICT standards remain below average.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall: in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form, it is good overall and in most subjects, while teaching in Years 7-9 is satisfactory overall, but too variable in quality.
- Teachers assess students' work well and student performance data is very well used.
- Enhanced provision for the many students with special educational needs is well tailored to their individual needs and they achieve well.
- Students' competence with ICT across the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is underdeveloped because of limited opportunities.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and parents of many poor attenders do not support the school's improvement efforts well enough.
- Relationships at the college are good and behaviour is good from Year 10; however, a significant minority of younger students display behaviour which is too unsettled.
- Accommodation is of variable quality and there are health and safety issues to address; the split-site nature of the college makes improvement more difficult.
- Students benefit from a very strong, varied programme of enrichment activities and from very good links with partner primary schools and with the community.
- Governance is generally good, although some statutory requirements are not met.

Overall, there has been **satisfactory improvement** since the last inspection. The rate of improvement has not been consistent over that six-year period but is now happening at an appropriately rapid pace. Improvement since the last inspection has not been adequate in ICT competence and resources, or in the provision for religious education. Most of the strengths identified in 1999 have been maintained, although attendance and behaviour are not as good as they were. The sixth form provision has improved well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is generally good. By Year 9, standards of work seen by inspectors are average. Achievement for students in Years 7-9 is satisfactory. By Year 11, standards are just above average; students in Years 10/11 are achieving well – better in several subjects than in Years 7-9 because of better teaching. Standards seen in English and science were average by Year 9 and by Year 11, while in mathematics they are above average by Year 11, as they are in geography, history and business education. In music they are well above average. The difference in performance by boys and girls is in line with that found nationally. Students with special educational needs achieve well in all years. In the sixth

form, standards are average and students achieve well from a starting point just below average. The table below shows the comparison of the college exam results with those of other schools. **Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are generally good.** Behaviour is generally good although, as a consequence of the unattractive environment and less good teaching, it is too unsettled at times among a significant minority of students in Years 7-9. Similarly, attitudes are better in Years 10/11 than in Years 7-9. In the sixth form, attitudes and behaviour are very good in response to the adult ethos there. Attendance is unsatisfactory in Years 7-11 and the college's good efforts to improve this are not adequately supported by some parents.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	C	B
Year 13	A/AS-level and VCE examinations	C	E	D	

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory taken overall. It is good in Years 10/11, and very good in music and business education. In Years 7-9 it is too variable and teachers' expectations, including of behaviour, are too often not high enough. Teaching is consistently good through Years 7-11 in English and science. In ICT, it is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9 but satisfactory in Years 10/11. Students learn best and achieve most where teaching is good or better. Teachers' assessment of students work is well done, leading to improved teaching and learning. Very good arrangements for settling them into the school, high quality curriculum enrichment and productive links with the community all boost students' achievement. The quality of some accommodation is below expected standards and has a detrimental effect on learning and behaviour of some younger students. The split site renders management difficult and hinders the ability to secure effectively the appropriate facilities for sixth-formers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good and enhanced by recent restructuring. The principal provides very good leadership and is well supported by others in key positions. Management is effective and that of the sixth form is very good. Governors play their part well, although some statutory requirements are not met.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are positive about the college and feel comfortable approaching staff there. They are happy with arrangements for settling their children into Year 7. A significant proportion of those completing the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concern at the standards of behaviour. Students too are mainly positive, although they share parents' concerns about behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in ICT (both in discrete lessons and across the curriculum), in religious education and, by Year 9, in design and technology, art and physical education.

- Improve teaching quality in Years 7-9 in those subjects where it does not match the generally better quality seen in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form.
- Improve students' attendance and work with agencies to secure better co-operation from parents of poor attenders.
- Improve behaviour, including through higher expectations, of students in Years 7-9.
- Improve the quality of accommodation where it has a negative impact on learning at the lower site, and address outstanding health and safety issues.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that religious education provision for students in Years 7-11 and in the sixth form meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and that citizenship education meets National Curriculum requirements.
- Improve provision to satisfy the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is much larger than average. It offers a very wide range of academic courses and a satisfactory range of vocational courses.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good, including its cost effectiveness. Teaching is good overall with very good teaching in sociology, drama, music, business education, leisure and tourism, and health and social care. Results in A-level examinations are below the national average but students' achievement is good, as they enter the sixth form with below average attainment at GCSE, and standards are rising. The achievement of female students in 2004 was higher than that of males. Students have very good attitudes to the college and relationships are very good. There is a very good choice of academic and a good choice of vocational subjects, in the context of an area in which courses for students with special educational needs are readily available. The multi-site location of sixth form teaching makes it difficult to achieve unity within the sixth form, but the individual guidance provided because of this has resulted in the development of students as mature and independent adults. The leadership of the sixth form is very good, with good plans in place for its development. There are good arrangements for monitoring punctuality and attendance to lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching in almost all subjects and very good teaching in sociology, drama, music, business education, leisure and tourism, and health and social care.
- The very good curriculum provides a wide and flexible range of opportunities for students.
- The tutorial system gives very good individual support and guidance to students.
- The very good leadership of the head of sixth form and 14 - 19 co-ordinator has resulted in very good progress towards the improvement of the arrangements and facilities for the sixth form.
- The operation of the sixth form over three sites reduces the contact time with subject teachers for a minority of students.
- The reduction of contact time for most subjects has not yet been compensated for by improvements in the arrangements and resources for independent learning.
- There is no course in religious education for all students.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good: Students achieve well as a result of good teaching across an unusually wide choice of subjects at A-level.
Mathematics	Good: Results at AS- and A-level have improved and achievement is good because of the effective teaching of the well-qualified staff.
Science: Chemistry	Good: Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement. Students are well motivated and results are improving.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Results are below average at AS- and A-level but achievement is good over the low level of attainment on entry to the course, because of good assessment leading to improving coursework.
History	Satisfactory: Achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory with good subject knowledge, but too few opportunities to think independently.
Sociology	Very good: students achieve very well because of the very good teaching that provides a very good working atmosphere.
Geography	Satisfactory: Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Results are in line with national averages. Fieldwork is well organised but some resources are out of date.
Psychology	Good: Very good teacher-student relationships mean that highly motivated students make good use of the teacher's very good knowledge. Very good marking guides students into good achievement.
Drama	Very good: Students achieve very well because of the high level of challenge and excellent rapport between teachers and students.
Art and design	Good: Students achieve well and reach above average standards because of the good teaching and their own very positive attitudes.
Music	Very good: Because of very good teaching, music and music technology courses are very popular and results are high.
Business education	Good: Achievement is good because of good teaching, although independent learning suffers from a shortage of relevant resources.
Physical education	Very good: students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching based on thorough assessment of strengths and weaknesses.
Leisure and tourism	Good: Very good teaching enables students to achieve well in spite of limited opportunities for work placements in the local area.
Health and social care	Good: Good achievement is the result of very good teaching although there are too few opportunities for practical experience in the local area.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The college provides well for the care, welfare, health and safety of the sixth form. There is good personal development. Arrangements for supporting students' progress and attainment are very good. Students know what they need to do to improve. Tutors and subject teachers will give help and guidance when problems arise. Students' regular meetings with personal tutors give them very good individual guidance. Advice and support for students' next steps, including university application, moves into further education or the world of work are also very good. Students do not

feel that they have sufficient opportunities to contribute to or influence the management of the college.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership of the sixth form is very good. There is a clear view of the potential for improvement and the means by which this can be achieved. Links with other institutions are well managed and supportive. Management is very effective in maintaining and developing procedures for caring for students during a period of extensive change. Attendance and punctuality to lessons are well monitored, although the school has no means of knowing whether students are on the sites at other times.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
The teaching is challenging and demanding. They are encouraged to study independently. Teachers are accessible and helpful if they have problems in their work. Students are treated fairly and with respect.	The college does not seek the views of its students. There are insufficient enrichment activities. They did not have helpful enough advice on what to study in the sixth form.

Inspectors assessed the judgements of the students and found that the positive views are supported by the inspection findings. They find that advice on what to study in the sixth form is good, with the school making very good efforts to meet the needs of students. Although they agree that the school has not sought the views of its students in the past, there is some recent improvement through questionnaires about the impact of changes. Inspectors agree with the students' view that the opportunities for enrichment are insufficient, but found that students are supported in their independent arrangements for social and other events.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 7-9 is satisfactory. In Years 10/11 and in the sixth form it is good. Differences in the achievement of boys and girls are in line with the national picture. Students with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well at all ages. Those identified as gifted and talented achieve satisfactorily in Years 7-9 and well in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form. The only students who are at an early stage of acquisition of the English language have been at the school for too short a time for a judgement on their achievement to be made.

Standards overall are average by Year 9 and just above average by Year 11. Standards in the core subjects English, mathematics and science are average by Year 9. By Year 11 those in mathematics rise to above average. However, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average by Years 9 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of students in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form is good, and better than that of younger students for whom teaching is not as good.
- Achievement is best in music and business education in Years 10/11, where it is very good, but is unsatisfactory in ICT in Years 7-9.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well in Years 7-11 because of the high quality support they receive.
- Students' competence in ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory below the sixth form.
- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 continued the pattern of steady improvement in English and mathematics; however, science results have been inconsistent over recent years and fell in 2004.
- Results in GCSE examinations in 2004 declined in comparison with previous years and fell below college targets, but compared well with similar schools.

Commentary

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, based on the average score per student, were in line with national averages in all three tested subjects – English, mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, results were in line with the average in English and mathematics but below in science. The proportion reaching the expected Level 5 was also in line with the national average in all three subjects, although only in mathematics was this proportion in line with that of similar schools. The proportion reaching levels higher than Level 5 was above the national average in English and in line with the national average in the other two subjects. Compared to similar schools, only in English was the proportion in line with the average, being below in the others. Overall, the trend of improvement over the last few years has been broadly in line with the national trend.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.9 (32.1)	33.5 (33.4)
mathematics	35.9 (35.4)	35.6 (35.4)
science	32.8 (33.5)	33.2 (33.6)

There were 308 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In the GCSE examinations in 2004, results in English were in line with the national average, in mathematics they were slightly above and in science significantly below. Overall, the 2004 results were disappointingly low with the proportion obtaining five or more higher grades A* to C falling further behind the national average and significantly missing the college target. Results were particularly weak in science, ICT, art, German, geography, history and sociology. Only in business studies were results above the national average. Boys achieved less good results than girls in a number of subjects, but the gap was usually in line with that found nationally. The overall decline in results from 2003 to 2004 was due in part to girls' performance not being as strong as in previous years, thus narrowing the gap.
- However, standards of work in the current Year 11 seen by inspectors were at least average in all subjects other than ICT and were above average in mathematics, geography, history and business education and well above average in music. The college targets for GCSE performance in 2005, at the higher grades, are very significantly higher than the results obtained in 2004. These average and above standards seen in Year 11, and the generally good achievement, suggest an improvement in the results, although not necessarily in line with the target set.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	40 (46)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (89)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	38.5 (39.0)	41.4 (40.6)

There were 342 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards seen in Year 9 were generally in line with national averages but were below in ICT, religious education, design and technology, art and physical education. Achievement by students in Years 7-9 is generally satisfactory, and is good in science, music and citizenship. In ICT it remains unsatisfactory. That standards by Year 9 are not higher, and achievement through Years 7-9 not better, is due largely to unsettled behaviour in lessons in a number of subjects, related to teaching where expectations are not sufficiently high and/or the depressing learning environment in parts of the college.
- Students' language and literacy skills are well enough developed that they are never a barrier to their learning, except for the few with low initial linguistic ability. The college strategy for promoting literacy across the curriculum is particularly successful in science and English, but is underdeveloped in art and religious education. Similarly, students' mathematical competency is adequate to their learning needs across the curriculum. However, while ICT competency has improved since the last inspection, it

remains unsatisfactory in most subjects, except in design and technology and music where specific applications are well developed.

6. Students with special educational needs are achieving well in their lessons, because their needs are well known and planned for. Teachers adapt tasks to their needs, which are well described in individual education plans, and collaborate well with support staff to ensure students achieve well. Students who have been excluded for behavioural difficulties are frequently successfully reintegrated into college and attend all of their lessons, because of good quality support. Those students with low reading ages in Years 7 to 9 often make very good gains because of well-structured, specific programmes such as paired reading.
7. The college has identified those students who are gifted or talented. Several opportunities have been provided or planned to extend their learning, for example by attending conferences on higher education at an earlier age than usual, or joining special interest groups such as bridge or debating. In mathematics, science and music they are given extension tasks and extra-curricular opportunities to develop their abilities. In mathematics, a number are given the opportunity to take their GCSE examination early and to follow a statistics course in extra time. Overall, however, the progress made by these students is similar to that of the other members of their year groups.

Sixth form

Standards in GCE A/AS-level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	89.5 (90.0)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	28.9 (18.0)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	225.2 (191.2)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 134 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

8. Results in A-level courses were below the national average in 2004, although the performance of female students was similar to that found nationally. This is an improvement over the results in 2003. The highest attaining subjects in 2004 at A-level were biology, English literature and sociology, while music scored well above national results. History and geography were below average and English language was well below. The improvement of grades between 2003 and 2004 is greatest in biology, business studies, English literature and sociology.
9. Results in vocational subjects were well above average in 2004. In health and social care, leisure and recreation, and in travel and tourism, students attained well above national results. Business results were above the national average, while information technology results, with the highest entry of any vocational subject, were similar to those nationally. This is an improvement over 2003, with a much larger entry of students.
10. Female students perform better than males, both in examination results and in work seen during the inspection. The analysis by the college demonstrates that there is no difference between the achievement of males and females because of the higher starting point of the females.

11. Standards in the sixth form are average overall in work seen during the inspection. They are average in mathematics, psychology, art, drama and music technology, and well above average in music. Standards are above average in leisure and tourism and health and social care, and average in information technology and geography. Students enter their courses with a lower than average level of qualification and so their achievement is good overall.

Students’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students’ attitudes and behaviour are good throughout the main college and very good in the sixth form. The students’ interest in college activities, their personal development and relationships are good in the main college and very good in the sixth form. Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality satisfactory in the main college, while attendance and punctuality are good for post-16 students. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good throughout the college.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is unsatisfactory in the main college.
- Arrangements for improving attendance and punctuality have been unsatisfactory because of system difficulties but are becoming more effective.
- Parent’s efforts to ensure the attendance of their children are unsatisfactory.
- There have been a large number of exclusions for students in the main college, though numbers of exclusions are diminishing as a result of college initiatives.

Commentary

12. Attendance in the college is unsatisfactory and has deteriorated since the last inspection when it was above average. Attendance in the year 2003/4 has slightly improved since 2002/3 from 89.9 per cent to 90.3 per cent, but this is still well below the national median for secondary schools for the same period and is in the lowest five per cent for similar schools. The incidence of unauthorised absence has doubled since 2002/3 and is now over three times the national median of 1.1 per cent at 3.6 per cent.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	3.3
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

13. The college has worked hard to improve attendance by using a variety of strategies including the use of first-day calling and incentives for individuals and groups of students. The first-day call system is now being implemented across all years in the main college. However, college efforts to improve attendance have been thwarted by difficulties because of failures associated with the computer recording and analysis system. The college is also implementing changes to improve the process for recording afternoon attendances. Generally the college has used systems well, to

establish why students are absent or late and to encourage parents to substantiate absences, however, the system difficulties have not helped this endeavour. Attendance records are kept and maintained correctly by the college. Prior to and during the inspection, significant numbers of students were absent or late owing to inclement weather and public transport difficulties.

14. Students' punctuality is generally good, despite the complications of the multiple sites, their geography and public transport problems. The college is putting much effort into improving punctuality and managers are keen that students arrive on time to lessons throughout the day.
15. The efforts of parents to ensure that their children attend college are unsatisfactory. Despite the college's best efforts, there have been no recent prosecutions of those parents who do not ensure their children attend, nor have there been any fixed-term penalties applied. The Education Welfare Service has regular meetings with college to discuss measures to improve the attendance of students as well as the implementation of measures to improve the care and support of students who may be the cause of concern for the college and relevant authorities.
16. Behaviour and attitudes are good. The great majority of students behaved well in class. However, a minority of students do present unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons, particularly those in Years 7 to 9, when lessons were not challenging in content. Behaviour was generally good in the dining and social areas. However, in corridors and playground areas, when unsupervised, the quality of behaviour was not always as good. Students do not always adhere to instructions for moving around sites, especially on the lower site where some areas present a poor social environment to students and unsatisfactory behaviour results in response to this environment. Students co-operate well together in different groups, sharing resources, collaborating and working with adults. There was no evidence of racial harassment or bullying during the inspection and all students spoken to confirmed that bullying, on the occasions when it occurs, is not a significant problem as the issues are dealt with well by staff.
17. Student and parent questionnaires did, however, indicate that a significant proportion of them have concerns about behaviour and bullying. Parents were particularly concerned about behaviour on the buses. The college is aware of the issues and some improvement has been achieved. The college is introducing new behaviour management systems and initiatives that are having a positive impact. Although a significant number of students have been excluded in the past, the college is confident that new inclusive practices and behaviour management changes will reduce the numbers excluded. Student behaviour and attitudes are monitored very well and this information is passed on to parents at progress review days.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of students on roll	Number of fixed-period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1,877	126	5

White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	13	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	28	0	0

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

18. Students with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work when they are taught in small groups by specialist staff. They behave very well because of the high quality of the teaching, which is based on very good planning, relationships and knowledge of each individual's specific needs.
19. The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Students have a clear sense of right and wrong and a developing capacity for making reasoned moral judgements. In response to the previous inspection report, in which 'spirituality' was identified as a weakness, the college has appointed a co-ordinator with responsibility for developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and the spiritual dimension in particular. Most effective has been the 'Thought for the Week' programme. The chosen theme – for example, fair trade – provides a focus for teaching and learning in tutor periods, assemblies and in personal, social and health education lessons typically linked to charity events.
20. As a further result of the work of the co-ordinator, spiritual and moral awareness is taught more consciously in some subject areas – for example, in English, drama, religious education, music, science and history. Here, learning activities might typically expose examples of intolerance or promote empathy and respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. It also forms a major part of the PSHE curriculum, which includes well-taught lessons, for example on bullying, life changes and the nature of evil.
21. A number of opportunities are given for students to become involved in school and community activities. This is fostered through citizenship and PSHE lessons and assemblies. Students can become involved in the college council and the 'really good' council which develops students' awareness of working as a group or a team and taking responsibility for decisions. Students recognise and respect social differences and similarities through the PSHE programme, assemblies, tutor time and through subjects of the curriculum such as geography, history, drama and English. Also prominent among regular college activities are the weekly debating club and the charity action team. The school council provides opportunities for engaging in democratic processes and community life. Drama groups visit local primary schools and there are good links with a volunteer bureau in Glossop. Most subjects involve students in pair or group work and the majority of students relate well to each other

and to adults. However, students in Years 7 to 9 are not always as tolerant of each other and there are some poor attitudes to learning.

22. Provision for students to develop knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures is good overall. Students can learn about different religions in their religious education lessons, Islamic art patterns in art, and texts from different cultures in English lessons. The school also has visiting speakers representing ethnic minorities from the community. There are also German and Chinese exchange opportunities for students and school assemblies often celebrate different cultural events. There are good opportunities for students to participate in literacy, drama, music and art events such as book day and school productions. Students visit museums, local churches, galleries and concerts to support their understanding of the wider society. There are good displays supporting cultural values in school corridors and in the library.

Sixth form

23. Sixth-form students respond well to the high levels of trust placed in them by the college. Behaviour and attitudes to work in the sixth form are very good. Students feel that they are treated as adults, and most are willing to take responsibility for their work and actions, and to engage positively with others.
24. They relate very well to one another and to the staff of the school. In lessons there is a friendly yet workmanlike and committed atmosphere. Students are confident and attitudes are positive throughout the student body.
25. The college has procedures in place for checking and recording student attendance and punctuality and for ensuring that individual students keep up with their work; as a result, attendance and punctuality are good. Although the system for students to register at the beginning of the day is not robust, the system for recording attendance at every lesson and tutorial is rigidly adhered to and provides accurate individual student records. In its present form the information does prove cumbersome when used to assess the overall post-16 rate of attendance.
26. Students in the sixth form show good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They have a mature outlook arising out of the independent nature of their college experience, with a strong sense of personal responsibility. They co-operate well in groups both in their studies and in the arrangements that they make for social events. Their cultural awareness is good, and they are open to new experiences. The sixth form and the food technology department collaborate in organising 'afternoons for the elderly', whilst several sixth formers have been trained to take part in the college's peer mentoring scheme

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the college is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form, and satisfactory in Years 7-9. The curriculum meets most students' needs.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Variability in quality and weaknesses in a number of subjects in Years 7-9 are not replicated in Years 10/11 or in the sixth form. As a result of

the variability in the lower years, students do not achieve as well there, as their learning is not consistently good enough. The quality of teachers' assessment of students' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' learning and achievement benefit from good or very good subject knowledge in most subjects, with the best teaching in English, science, business education and music.
- Teaching in Years 10/11 is good overall and in most subjects; it is very good in music and business education; in no subject is it unsatisfactory.
- Teaching in Years 7-9 is too variable, with good teaching seen in only half of lessons; there are strengths particularly in English, science and music.
- In Years 7-9, teaching in ICT is unsatisfactory and there is unsatisfactory teaching in other subjects too, particularly in religious education.
- There are significant differences in the quality of lesson planning and delivery between Years 7-9 and Years 10/11, particularly in relation to pace and expectations.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of behaviour, nor do they manage behaviour well enough in a number of lessons in Years 7-9.
- Teaching and learning are good overall in sixth form subjects inspected.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 222 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (2%)	61 (28%)	89 (40%)	54 (24%)	14 (6%)	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.

27. The table indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall, with some two thirds of lessons being of good or better quality. However, this overall picture disguises sharp differences between the quality provided for different age groups. While in Years 7-9 only about a half of teaching is good or better, this improves to 85 per cent in Years 10/11 and four out of every five lessons in the sixth form. Nearly all of the twelve unsatisfactory lessons seen took place in Years 7-9, with particular weaknesses in ICT and religious education. Teaching of geography, history and religious education suffers from the arrangements whereby teachers from one specialism also teach the other two subjects, in which they have limited expertise, to their classes.
28. There are particular strengths in subjects where lessons are well planned and well managed and where teachers' secure subject knowledge is backed up by infectious enthusiasm. These qualities characterise many lessons in English and mathematics, and in Years 10/11 also in geography, history, music and business education.
29. In some lessons in Years 7-9, teachers' expectations of what students should achieve and about appropriate standards of behaviour are too low. The unsettled attitude of a significant minority of students (particularly boys), which goes unchallenged too often, hampers learning in some lessons in art, music, physical education, ICT and mathematics. However, the good sustained and challenging pace of other lessons, particularly in English and science, secures students' attention and consequently they

learn better and make more progress. Teaching in modern foreign languages is not adapted well enough to the mixed-ability classes.

30. Where teachers are breaking lessons down into parts, with a useful focus on starter and plenary activities as encouraged by the national Key Stage 3 strategy, this is having a beneficial effect on students' learning as seen in some geography lessons. However, in science and English lessons, for instance, too few lessons are effectively organised in this way.
31. Teachers and students across the curriculum are making too little use of ICT in support of teaching and learning, hampered to a degree by the still below average provision of computers and other new technologies and by teachers' lack of familiarity with some new equipment. However, computers are used well in support of learning in music and elements of design and technology. The unsatisfactory teaching in discrete ICT lessons in Years 7-9 is characterised by insufficiently detailed lesson planning leading to lessons which are insufficiently challenging to hold students' interest.
32. The teaching of students in small groups by specialist staff is very good. This is because the students' needs are very well known and used to plan specific learning activities for them. The needs of students with special educational needs are well known to their subject teachers because of the quality of the information provided by the special educational needs staff. Individual educational plans are of very high quality and offer practical suggestions, so that subject staff are able to modify their approaches and strategies for these students. Subject teachers have banks of adapted worksheets which they use in lessons for students across the range of needs. Education care officers provide good support in lessons because they are very experienced and know the students very well. Subject teachers frequently plan to use them effectively in their lessons.
33. Teachers' assessments of the progress being made by each student are generally good. The college has recently introduced good arrangements for assessing students' performance and tracking their progress, ensuring very well that the college has a clear idea where each student is at. Every teacher has a full performance analysis of each student they teach.
34. Procedures for review of progress are very good. There are regular review days where both students and their parents meet with tutors and consider together the progress made. An action plan and targets for improvement are agreed and recorded in the students' planners so that all students know where they are at and what they have to do in order to improve. Parents support the review days strongly, after some initial misgivings by a few, and the college has made every effort to ensure that the assessment and tracking system is fully understood by all.
35. The college has been careful to ensure that all teachers have been trained in the use and application of data, and in nearly all subject departments, the agreed procedures are well applied. Most faculties appreciate the range of information about students. These use it well to plan their work and to set attainment targets based on the data available about each student. In a small minority of cases there is a lack of consistency in approach, and the use of data to inform planning has not yet been fully developed. In most subject areas, students' work is well marked, with constructive advice on how to improve and what needs to be done in order to reach the next level or grade. However, there is a minority of subjects where marking is inconsistent and not always as helpful to students as it might be.

36. The progress of students with special educational needs related to learning is monitored closely through whole-college systems as well as through their individual education plans and other forms of ongoing assessment. The short-term achievements of students with behavioural difficulties are monitored well through targets and report cards. However, their achievements are not so clearly monitored over the longer term and this is recognised as an area for development.
37. There are very few students with English as an additional language in Years 7 to 9. They are taught in their class or withdrawn for specialist teaching. The assessment which has been carried out is not properly understood, and so is not used well to plan for these students.

Sixth form

38. Teaching is very good in sociology and drama, where the teachers' very good subject knowledge helps them to set challenging learning objectives. Their very well planned lessons incorporate a variety of methods to ensure that students learn very well. Very good relationships in both leisure and tourism and health and social care coupled with the use of pertinent examples provide a very good atmosphere for learning. Where teaching is satisfactory in history, information technology and geography, there are fewer opportunities for students to learn independently and so their learning is less securely based on understanding and use of basic principles. Nevertheless in these subjects teachers have good command of their subjects and plan well for coverage of the examination courses.
39. Sixth form students are set clear targets for their performance based on their prior attainment in GCSE and subsequent examinations. They are clear about how well they are doing, and regular reviews of their work ensure that they remain on track. Tutors play an important role in supervising students' progress.
40. There are very few students with identified special educational needs in the sixth form. Satisfactory provision is made because the student is able to seek help from special educational needs staff, or from the Year 11 co-ordinator. There are no students with English as an additional language in the sixth form. The sixth form does not have a high proportion of gifted or talented students, but those who are noted by the college do achieve well. Teachers know their students well and provide appropriate work, often in the form of extra research, to extend their knowledge and understanding.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, but has statutory breaches. There are no alternative pathways to suit different students' aptitudes in Years 10/11. The good sixth form curriculum includes a good range of vocational courses. Curriculum enrichment is very good. Staffing is good, accommodation is unsatisfactory and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From Year 10, there is a wide range of subjects available to students, very effectively extended through out-of-hours provision; the sixth form curriculum offers students a very broad and appropriate choice.
- The staffing of the curriculum is good, although there remain too many split-taught classes.
- Curriculum arrangements ensure good achievement by students with special educational needs.

- Statutory requirements are not met in the provision for citizenship, religious education and the daily act of collective worship; there is too little time in Years 8-9 allocated to design and technology.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Standards of performance in musical activities are very high.
- Provision of ICT equipment is unsatisfactory, although improved since the last inspection.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory in a number of respects, which hampers learning in some subjects, including in the sixth form.

Commentary

41. The college provides an inclusive curriculum which allows all students to achieve well. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad and balanced and provides equally for boys and girls and students of all abilities, with arrangements to ensure good achievement by students with special educational needs. Strong pastoral and curriculum links have been forged with partner primary schools to ensure a smooth transfer to the college. Statutory requirements are not being met, however, in citizenship. The allocated curriculum time for design and technology in Years 8 and 9 is insufficient for students to make the adequate progress in each of the required areas of the National Curriculum programme of study. The organisation of the three humanities subjects in Year 7 limits continuity and progression.
42. There is a wide range of subject choice in Years 10 and 11, including out-of-hours provision of additional courses, but there is a need to move to a more flexible curriculum structure that allows students to follow curriculum pathways best suited to their individual capabilities, interests and aspirations for subsequent stages of education or employment. An initiative is in place to develop a 14 to 19 pathway but progress on this has not begun.
43. The provision for students with special educational needs, both learning- and behaviour-related, throughout the college is good. Students with special educational needs have full access to the whole curriculum. Where there is withdrawal from lessons for teaching in small groups by specialist staff, these lessons are carefully focused on the work the students would have been covering in their class lessons. The college has been adapted for wheelchair users, and most of it is now accessible.
44. Students' statements are generally regularly reviewed and provision is effective. However, there are some students in Year 10 whose statements are not reviewed within a year, as is statutorily required. There are two behavioural units, in which staff work to ensure that students are in lessons with their peers and that withdrawal is kept to a minimum. However, the inconsistencies in behaviour management in lessons throughout the college make integration into lessons harder for students who have marked social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The provision for those with behavioural difficulties does not yet include, for example, social skills training for those who find it difficult to get on with their peers. The accommodation for students with special learning needs in Years 7 to 9 is very good. However, that for students in Years 10 and 11 and for those with behavioural difficulties is shabby and inadequate and does not provide students with an environment which will make them feel valued. Provision for the very small number of students at an early stage of acquiring familiarity with the English language is satisfactory. The college relies on LEA agencies to provide guidance and support.
45. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The programme is well planned as a component in the weekly tutorial period programme. In Years 7 and 9

teaching and learning are at least satisfactory with very good teaching in Year 7, where students considered the impact of changes, physical and emotional, in their lives. Year 9 students explored assertiveness skills when dealing with bullying. In Year 10, students were prepared well for work experience. The overall tutorial programme includes learning skills, life changes, friendship, bullying, drugs education, the world of work and life skills. In Years 10 and 11, this also includes health and safety, prejudice, global ethics and sex education. Tutors are briefed each half-term, and lessons are monitored and matched to need. The programme is enriched by visitors for sex and drugs education, including theatre groups, and by exhibitions. English, drama and science lessons also deliver aspects of sex and relationships education, but this is not formally identified and monitored as part of students' development. Where students are given opportunities to write comments on what they learn, they show positive attitudes to the effectiveness of their drugs education curriculum, which is based on LEA guidance. The college's written policies on drugs education and sex education need reviewing to bring them fully in line with requirements.

46. Provision for work-related learning is unsatisfactory. The college is only now beginning to address the wider aspects of the statutory framework for work-related learning which should have been in place from the start of the current academic year. A recent appointment has been made to implement work-related learning within the context of students' personal development. A recent audit has been completed which identifies contributions from a range of subjects. There is currently no formal development plan for work-related learning. Teachers have not been formally trained for the introduction of work-related learning and no systems are in place to track individual student progress in work-related learning. However, good practice exists in the college with regard to work experience in Year 10. Students are well prepared for their five-day work experience, although the range of placements available is relatively restricted within the locality. Students are well prepared for the world of work through a range of initiatives. In Year 9, students engage in the Real Game project during tutorial periods. In Year 11, students gain experience of formal job interviews and feedback from a range of local employers. Special themed days are provided including that featuring thinking skills and an Enterprise Day. These make very good use of local employers. Effective careers advice operates via Connexions. An annual careers fair is provided by the University of Derby. A programme of specialist speakers from a variety of professions is included within the programme for personal, social and health education. A small number of lower attaining students benefit from day-release courses at a local college which lead to vocational qualifications in such areas as motor vehicle maintenance and catering.
47. The extended curriculum is very well managed, with a clear plan for improvement. There is a large number of before school, lunchtime and after-school activities taking place on all three of the college sites. Many of the clubs attract students from across a wide age range, including post-16 students. There are numerous links to outside agencies where additional funding and support are provided. Visiting speakers from the local community are frequently involved and make a valuable contribution. The range of activities is very extensive and the views of students are considered when new courses are being planned. Many of the courses attract good levels of attendance, particularly in music. In music, in particular, there is a high standard of performance, with a wide repertoire of music styles, providing excellent experiences for the students. There are many individual successes in a wide variety of sporting activities. There are a number of local history and geography field trips, as well as a

range of educational visits to Europe and an annual exchange to China providing a wide range of experiences for the students.

48. In general, there is now a good match of well-qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum after a period when teaching in some subjects suffered from staff vacancies covered by temporary staff. There remains the drawback of too many classes for which the teaching is split between two teachers. However, religious education is taught by a number of teachers not trained in the subject. Whilst there are enough associate and support staff to allow the college to function effectively, the shortage of technician hours limits the quality of support in science, technology and in art. To cope with unforeseen absences, the college is able to call upon a number of recently retired teachers who live in the area to help out at short notice.
49. Although there have been some improvements in the accommodation, the quality is too variable and parts of the college (particularly on the lower site) are unattractive and poorly maintained. The outside appearance of the buildings is time-worn and unwelcoming. This has a negative impact on students' learning and behaviour and does not encourage a sense of pride and respect for the premises. At the upper site, many classrooms are too small and cramped for large classes. The library is inadequate and the study areas too restricted. Physical education facilities are poor and accommodation for food technology is too small. Office and storage space is at a premium throughout the college and science laboratories are in need of modernisation. As the main buildings of the college are about two miles apart, this puts a strain on those teachers who must travel during the day between sites and a premium on effective management and communications. The teaching and associate staff work well together to minimise the effect that these deficiencies have on the working life of the college.
50. There are just about enough learning resources in most areas to support the curriculum. However, there is a distinct shortage of ICT equipment throughout the college and particularly to support teaching and learning in mathematics, science, art, geography and modern foreign languages. To relieve this situation there are a small number of bookable rooms with computers and the libraries have a small number of computers available to support students' learning, but this is inconvenient for departments needing to use the facility on a regular basis.

Sixth form

51. Curriculum provision is very good. The range of A-level subjects is exceptionally wide and varied, with an unusually large number of options within subject areas to meet the specific needs of the students. For example, students may choose to study English language, English literature or the combined language and literature course. In music, students may study music or music technology. The entry qualification for A-level courses is more flexible than in most schools, but in general this does not prevent students from achieving well. There is a good range of vocational subjects at intermediate and advanced levels. Students who wish to improve on their GCSE grades in core subjects are given opportunities to do so.
52. Although there are no courses providing for the needs of those students with special educational needs who are unable to follow the courses on offer, there are appropriate courses in a partner school and in local colleges, with good arrangements for transport. The college's curriculum therefore fits well into the opportunities for further

education provided in the area as a whole, and so recruitment from local 11-16 schools is good.

53. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in that there is no teaching of religious education, nor is there any act of collective worship.
54. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Students are able to attend many valuable vocational and academic courses that enhance, complement and challenge their learning. They are able to apply their own knowledge and often contribute towards the delivery of the activity. Their valuable contributions were seen in particular in the dance and the Christian Union groups, although there are missed opportunities for students to participate in information technology activities. There are very good experiences provided through a wide variety of courses such as law and archaeology, as well as revision and general interest clubs, including overseas tours and visits to universities.
55. Staffing is good in the sixth form. The teachers are well qualified and experienced and there is an effective team of associate staff who enable the sixth form to function effectively.
56. The accommodation is in the process of development, but is still a barrier to learning. Although the development of a separate sixth form centre near the lower site has been a great improvement in the ambience and atmosphere of sixth form life, many students are still accommodated on the over-crowded upper site. All science is taught there and the laboratories are in urgent need of modernisation to support advanced learning. The large student population lacks a common room and there are also very few quiet study areas available to them. Because teaching is done on both sites many students must travel by taxi between sites every day. As it is not always possible to fit the travel time for either teachers or students into breaks between lessons, punctuality suffers, with a detrimental impact on contact time between teachers and students.
57. Whilst the resources are sufficient to support the curriculum, not all subjects have easy access to computers. However, a suite with twenty workstations has been established on the lower site to facilitate use by students operating in the new sixth form centre adjacent. Whilst not ideal, this arrangement is an improvement.

Care, guidance and support

The college provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of the students is satisfactory taken overall. The support, advice and guidance based on monitoring provided for all students is good in the college and very good in the sixth form. Students' involvement in the work and development of college and sixth form is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction and transition processes from primary schools are very good, including those for students with special educational needs.
- Child protection arrangements are unsatisfactory as the policy is being updated and staff training is required.
- There are health and safety issues in the college.

Commentary

58. Members of staff are well aware of students' specific needs, and strategies are devised and implemented to support and advise them well. Pastoral support can be provided from within the college or from outside agencies. The great majority of students confirm there is an adult they can speak to if they are in need of advice or help. On the lower site students have access to the student progress and services co-ordinators, and at the upper site year co-ordinators and assistants. Throughout college students have access to the assistant principals, tutors, mentors, counsellors and other support staff where they can receive skilled and impartial support and guidance.
59. The provision of guidance and support for students who are having difficulties with mainstream academic arrangements is good. This includes: the inclusion unit; arrangements for courses for students at other colleges; part-time college placements and extended work experiences that have been arranged with local employers.
60. The college's good assessment system in Years 7-11 includes details of students' personal and work attributes. This information, together with data on their subject performances, enables the staff to provide students with good quality information on their progress and how students can improve, which is agreed by teacher and student at least twice per year. This information is then used for the subsequent student progress review days, giving parents and students information on student progress in each subject. Students and parents discuss the information with the student's form tutor and can, if they wish, talk to subject teachers on a later occasion. This new procedure has been well accepted by most parents and students but some complain that it has removed or diminished their contact with subject teachers.
61. There are very good links with a range of agencies outside the college. Their advice is frequently sought and used to plan for students' needs. There is a very experienced group of education care officers who provide students with learning difficulties with very good individual interest and care.
62. The identification of special educational needs is very good on entry to the college, because of very strong links with primary schools. There are systems in place to ensure that those with special educational needs are identified after they have entered the college. Students are closely involved with reviewing their own individual education plans and with their statement reviews. They are encouraged to set their own targets.
63. Careers education and guidance is good. Students confirm that they have good guidance and that the links with the college contracted careers provider work well. The college careers co-ordinator is working hard to improve careers guidance yet further in tutorial sessions and to give students even better support and information. The provision is complicated by the split sites and sometimes impeded by a lack of space and non-contact time. There are good quality careers resources and support materials available in the college libraries.
64. Membership of the college or student councils does give students meaningful opportunities to have their views sought, valued or acted upon. They have allocated funds for projects of their own to initiate. The councils do not appear to be widely publicised within the college.
65. The induction and transition processes into the college from primary schools are very good. Students and parents confirm that students in Year 7 benefit from a very good start to their college careers. There are very strong links with feeder primary schools whose heads and teachers confirm that the college works very effectively at establishing smooth transitions for students.

66. Arrangements for the care and medical and welfare support for students are satisfactory overall. The arrangements for child protection are unsatisfactory; the college policy is being redrafted and there are training needs for the college responsible person, as well as teaching and support staff. Also there is evidence of variations in staff members' understanding of child protection procedures.
67. Arrangements to secure health and safety are unsatisfactory. The management systems for college health and safety are robust and there is a high level of expertise in the college. However, there are hazards on the college sites that are of concern, some of which are outside college control. These have been listed and passed to the principal. The college has a health and safety committee that meets regularly. All the faculties carry out risk assessments that follow the local area authority guidelines. The physical education department was singled out for praise for its assessments by the subject inspector. Members of the governing body and the staff regularly review and update policies and apply considerable time and skills to this aspect of the college. Statutory requirements are met and risk assessment procedures are in place, including those for visits and trips. Trained members of the staff deal skilfully with those students requiring first aid attention and the welfare arrangements for students are managed very well. The college has very good support from health professionals and authorities.

Sixth form

68. The college provides well for its older students' personal development and advice and support for students' next steps, including university application, moves into further education or the world of work. The college is better at giving advice on higher education than the other two avenues.
69. Arrangements for supporting students' progress and attainment are very good. All students are given targets as soon as they move into Year 12, and these are kept under close review throughout their stay in the sixth form. In all subjects there are regular reviews of progress towards targets, and the students are asked to evaluate their own performance and set themselves targets for improvement. The system is very effective in involving students in understanding where they are.
70. Students interviewed all felt that they know what they need to do to improve and they confirm that tutors and subject teachers give help and guidance when problems arise. Students confirm that they receive very good support and advice from their tutors and subject staff. They meet regularly with their tutors to discuss their progress. These meetings are helpful and promote good learning. The post-16 team meets regularly to discuss students' progress and to identify any adverse trends in students' work that may be developing.
71. Sixth form students do not feel that they have sufficient opportunities to contribute to or influence the management of the college during their time. They also feel that their opinions or voices are not taken into account when or preferably before any changes take place.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The college's links with parents are **satisfactory** and those with the community are **very good** for students under 16. For post-16 students, community links are **good**. The links with other schools and colleges are **good** for the college overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good links with the community.
- There are good links with other schools and colleges.
- Links with primary schools are a particular strength of the college and are very good.
- The parents' links with the college are satisfactory.

Commentary

72. Parents and carers have mixed opinions of the college. Many parents who returned questionnaires were positive about the college; they feel comfortable approaching the college and say that arrangements for settling their children in the college are good. Some commented adversely about the progress review days and also their dislike of the new reports. They also expressed concern at the standards of student behaviour and the issues of staffing. As indicated in this report, there is a need to improve the behaviour in the lower school. Staffing is now much improved on recent years and more recent evidence indicates that most parents are happy with the new reporting arrangements. The college works hard at involving parents in support of extra-curricular activities particularly. Parents are involved significantly in the management and support of the musical and sporting activities undertaken by the college. Parents help with musical tuition, the orchestra, bands and choirs, sports coaching and reading support for students. Parents are involved in the parent teacher association, raising funds and organising curriculum and social events for the college. Parents support a transport management scheme aimed at improving the safety and environmental impact of travel to and from college. This has proved to be very effective and has co-operated with the local authorities in the design and implementation of traffic calming measures.
73. The students' homework/contact books are often not completed by parents and too often parents do not respond to college invitations to attend meetings or events to discuss their children's progress. A learning and achievement evening for students in Year 7 was not well supported by parents, but was well supported by staff from the feeder primaries.
74. Parents are positive about the efforts made to smooth the settling-in process when their children join the college. A comprehensive and detailed range of information is provided regarding the curriculum and how they can help their children at home. Parents receive regular newsletters and information on college activities and events.
75. There are opportunities for parents to attend the college to discuss their children's progress and they are encouraged to contact the college if there are concerns. Although members of staff are very willing to discuss with parents their concerns, there are few opportunities for parents to voice their opinions or influence the college's plans for the future. Curriculum evenings have been organised by the staff and parent teacher association, but these have not always been well supported by parents.
76. Written annual student reports are satisfactory documents, although a few parents do not appreciate their new format. The college provides for comments from parents and

students to be noted and the students are provided with notes from their subject tutors explaining how they can improve in all subject areas.

77. The college makes strenuous efforts to ensure that the parents of all those with statements of special educational needs are involved in their child's annual review. The college staff who manage the provision for students with behavioural difficulties are in close contact with parents at all times to ensure continuity of approach.
78. Links with other schools and colleges are good. Very good induction arrangements with partner primary schools ensure that the college is very well informed of the achievement and support needs of students about to enter Year 7. All new students are allocated to tutor groups in co-operation with their Year 6 teachers. The college has very significant links with primary schools that involve subject and curriculum enrichment, teacher exchanges, moderation exercises, exchange of resources, use of the college grounds and buildings as well as teachers teaching in primary school classes.
79. The college enriches extra-curricular activities as well as class teaching through links with businesses, with many musical performances outside the college campus and through sporting links with other colleges and schools. An exchange visit has been made to China and the college students have visited a variety of locations in Europe to enrich and extend the students' curriculum. Students have visited France for work experience placements and Germany as part of linked town arrangements.
80. The college enjoys links within the Peak 11 federation partnership schools and is now developing links with other secondary schools, so that students are now able to take advantage of attending courses in other colleges. A small number of students are attending courses on part time bases as well as a small number of extended work experience places. The college links with the community are extensive and are very beneficial to the students. The college has developed links with the Prince of Wales Trust, has students on Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes and gains many places for work experience placements from local businesses. The college enjoys strong relationships with a number of local organisations including the local churches and religious groups who enrich assemblies and students' spiritual and cultural enrichment. Students benefit from the links with local providers of specialist learning, pastoral and social support, mentoring services and local youth organisations, including the youth centre adjacent to the college upper site.
81. The links with the careers advice provider are being strengthened. All students confirmed that this provision is good and they feel well supported. Links with business and the world of work and the college's work-experience programme ensure that students have opportunities to experience and talk about the world of work. Students have had work experience in local residential homes and primary schools. The college has been able to offer a small number of specially tailored curricula for students that have included work placements and more practical college study.

Sixth form

82. Parents and students are positive in their praise of the sixth form and support the institution well. Parents receive regularly good quality information on the college's activities and the students' progress. Students have visited higher education establishments and other educational establishments. The college involves local business people to give students experience of interviews. The Connexions service meets students regularly to provide advice for students on career and course choices.

83. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. There is not a straightforward collaboration with other colleges, owing to boundary issues and geographical location, but the college collaborates over curriculum provision with other institutions. Links between the college and universities are strong and there are effective systems for dealing with the UCAS process. There are links with local businesses that provide selected students with additional work experience placements associated with their choice of vocation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership provided by the principal is very good, successfully focusing the attention of his staff on the key areas for improvement. Good leadership is provided by other key staff. Management of this complex institution is generally effective. Governors play their part well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal has been very successful in establishing an agenda for change and has made substantial advances in securing a unifying ethos for this large, complex, split-site institution.
- A well considered agenda for change is embodied in the improvement plan for the college, but this is not yet fully accessible or coherent.
- The vice-principal and the recently established leadership team are highly committed to a wide range of improvement strategies; they provide good role models for other staff.
- Roles and responsibilities of these senior staff are, in some cases, not clearly enough delineated in relation to the college improvement strategy.
- There is mainly good leadership and management of subject areas; leadership of special needs provision and of the sixth form is very good.
- The induction, development and performance management of staff are well secured.
- Facilities management has weaknesses leading to inefficiencies and an unsatisfactory learning environment in parts of the college.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and in their role in securing improvement in standards; they have not secured all statutory requirements.

Commentary

84. The principal has been very successful in establishing an agenda for change in the college. This embraces the need to focus on raising the aspirations of the students and the expectations that staff have of students' performance. What makes this task more complex than usual is the difficulty of securing and then maintaining a one-college ethos in the context of the operation on two sites over two miles apart. With the strong support of the vice-principal and, more recently, the newly-founded senior leadership team, communication of these priorities to the staff has been successful and generally well received. The principal is respected for having a strong presence around the college and he successfully communicates his principles and priorities to staff on a weekly basis through briefing meetings on both sites and via the 'principal's bulletin'.

85. Leadership ensures that the college's commitment to inclusiveness and equal opportunities is secure. In particular, the college remains fully committed to the enhanced provision it makes to secure the achievement of the many students with special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is a full member of the senior team.
86. The college improvement plan is a complex and very substantial document which describes a very large number of improvement actions to be taken during the current year. These actions are clustered together under headings which are appropriate to the college's current state of development. While oversight of each of these clusters is not clear, many of the priorities are being determinedly and successfully pursued. In some important cases, it is encouraging to see that development work is being undertaken by volunteer groups of staff operating as 'college improvement groups' managed by a member of the leadership team. However, not all priorities and actions are being addressed as systematically as others because there is insufficient clarity over roles and responsibilities, and job descriptions of several senior staff do not effectively address these as yet. The quality of the planning sheets which indicate how the priorities are to be addressed is inconsistent, as is that of subject improvement plans. Financial planning is not clearly enough related to these improvement plans.
87. Monitoring of the impact of these improvement actions is increasingly done using impact reports, some (but not all) of which are beginning to focus, appropriately, on the impact of actions on raising aspirations and performance. The impact of developments in subject areas is reviewed through regular scheduled discussions between the vice-principal, the principal and each of the large number of subject leaders. The scale and complexity of the college improvement plan inevitably restrict its accessibility to all stakeholders. Its impact and coherence are somewhat restricted by its lack of reference to any review of past successes and disappointments, or to precise targets for improved student performance both academically and in terms of attitudes, behaviour and attendance.
88. The recently established senior leadership team embraces staff who have great loyalty to the college. It benefits from being a mix of highly experienced senior staff as well as of younger staff whose contribution is highly valued. The group offers a good role model for other members of staff. It meets weekly to review progress, as does the curriculum liaison group which includes some of these staff, together with some others in key positions. The very large team of subject leaders meets every 5/6 weeks. The respective purposes of these groupings and of the volunteer improvement groups, in relation to the college improvement plan, are insufficiently clear.
89. Nonetheless, the college has embraced a wide range of improvement strategies. Particularly successful have been the emphases on liaison with primary schools, on the tracking of student performance and changes to the ways in which students are guided and supported.
90. Leadership and management of subject areas are generally good, although there are weaknesses in ICT, geography and art. Middle-leaders in the college have access to the national 'Leading from the Middle' course. The leadership of special educational needs in the college is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator leads a team of well-trained and experienced teachers and education care officers who are committed to ensuring that all students have access to the whole-college curriculum and that provision overall is of a high standard. The department is efficiently organised and all staff know their roles and responsibilities.

91. The college takes self-evaluation seriously, as indicated in particular by the focus on quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. However, it acknowledges that most of these self-evaluation processes are at a relatively early stage of development owing to factors which inhibited the principal's ability to establish the necessary structures. With the structures now in place, improvement activity and self-evaluation are well placed to move forward very effectively.
92. The procedures recently and enthusiastically introduced for monitoring student performance data, setting targets and identifying appropriate interventions have already proved their effectiveness in most areas of the college. However, relative weaknesses in the management of some subjects have had an impact on the roll-out of the new arrangements in some areas.
93. Staff performance management procedures are well secured, and in addition teachers in the core subjects are supported through the wider quality assurance procedures which entitle them to regular feedback on their teaching. Not enough has yet been done to ensure that judgements made by the senior staff who carry out the observation of teaching quality are based on sufficiently consistent criteria. Induction of new staff is well done, embracing a handbook, a programme of support activity including the observation of lessons across the college, and the allocation of a mentor. Student teachers feel well supported.
94. The continuing professional development of staff is well handled. Development opportunities for individual staff are closely related to outcomes of their performance management, and increasingly to the priorities of the institution as expressed in the college improvement plan. A programme of in-service training is well planned, including the needs of governors as well as teaching and associate staff. The early departure of students on Fridays provides a regular weekly slot for staff development activity, which is well used and has played a valuable part in securing the commitment to the college's agenda for improvement. Whether this arrangement, which occurs at the expense of the full allocation of the nationally recommended hours of teaching each week, should continue is rightly being kept under careful review.
95. Staff recruitment strategies have been successful in establishing a college now fully staffed by appropriate specialist staff. Staff development has begun to play a key role in the retention of staff after a period when turnover was becoming significant. Staff deployment, in particular the moving of a number of erstwhile teacher responsibilities to associate staff, has progressed well. However, there remain tasks of an associate nature which are still undertaken, inappropriately, by senior teaching staff.
96. Financial management has ensured that priorities are appropriately resourced, although there is scope to tie in financial planning more tightly with improvement planning. The governors are committed to achieving best value in their spending. The college's budgetary situation is very tight but has been carefully managed. An auditor's report was received by the college very shortly before this inspection which required a number of actions, but these had not yet been addressed owing to lack of time.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	6,814,865
Total expenditure	6,848,110
Expenditure per student	3,521

Balance from previous year	- 9,089
Balance carried forward to the next year	- 42,334

97. Inadequate management of the facilities of the college has left a number of areas poorly maintained, which detracts significantly from the quality of the learning environment. Similarly, inadequate attention has been paid to energy conservation in everyday practices. Efficiency of the use of teaching spaces is poor, with little monitoring to identify scope for improvement. Nevertheless, overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money, and the cost effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

Sixth form

98. The sixth form is very well led and very well managed. The head of sixth form and the 14-19 curriculum co-ordinator have a clear and united view of the direction of the sixth form curriculum. They are well aware of all of the difficulties in the way of their attainment of this vision, and have realistic plans to deal with issues. Although their appointment is recent, they have already improved the arrangements for the sixth form curriculum, for the location of subject teaching and for the promotion of a learning environment in areas dedicated to the sixth form.

99. Management of a sixth form based on three separate sites, and moving between them, is very good. The nature of the site makes it necessary for tutors to deal with small groups of the students rather than with whole classes, but communication is very well managed and guidelines are flexible, allowing tutors take opportunities to act in ways appropriate to students' individual needs. The sixth form leadership team monitors carefully the overall attendance, effort and progress of the students and acts thoughtfully on their findings. The sixth form is financially viable and, with good achievement, provides good value for money.

Governance

100. Governors are committed. They have a very good understanding of their role and are clear about the challenges facing the college. In this they are very well advised and supported by their clerk and by the principal. There is an effective committee structure and cycle of meetings that are well recorded. Governors have realistic plans in place to reduce the budget deficit, whilst at the same time they are seeking to increase the curriculum opportunities for students and for members of the local community. Governors have addressed well most of the action required by the last report.
101. Governors do not fulfil all of their statutory duties. Religious education is not being taught beyond Year 9, an issue at the time of the last inspection; the lack of teaching time allocated to design and technology in Years 7 and 8 is still an issue; citizenship is taught only in Year 7. The statutory curriculum requirements of work-related learning and sex education are not being met. Governors have considered the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship but their current policies are not being carried out. College policies relating to inclusion and students' care and welfare are fully in place, but the governors' Annual Report to Parents/Carers does not meet all of the statutory requirements.
102. Governors have a clear understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. They are well focused on raising standards via improving teaching and learning. Their priorities are clear and relevant and include a need for them to be more rigorous in monitoring and evaluating the success of their work. Governors support the planned development of the sixth form well, and take a keen interest in both the curriculum and in the building arrangements. Relationships between staff and governors are good. Governors both challenge and support senior managers well. They have set challenging yet realistic targets for the principal and are rigorous in their performance management role, as guided by their external adviser.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' high expectations and well planned and managed lessons enable students to make good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Clear leadership and effective management ensure the department's commitment to further improvement.
- Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious, making most students keen to do well.
- Although several features of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy are used well, reviews of learning are often ineffective.
- Marking does not give students sufficient guidance on how to improve.

Commentary

103. At the end of Year 9 in 2004, performance in tests was in line with national expectations but below that for similar schools. In previous years, results had been below average since 2002. In the GCSE English examination in 2004, results were in line with the national average for both boys and girls. In GCSE literature they were average for girls but below average for boys. The department has an inclusive approach to literature, entering a substantially higher proportion of Year 11 than the national one.
104. In Year 9, standards meet national expectations, indicating satisfactory achievement from Year 7. Although girls perform well in prepared oral presentations, they are generally less confident than the boys in contributing to class discussions. Both boys and girls listen well to their teachers but less well to each other. Little reading aloud was heard. In their spoken and written responses to their reading, most students show a sound grasp of plot and character and of the content of poetry and non-fiction texts. The most capable students comment perceptively on language, imagery and narrative technique. Original writing varies in length, accuracy and liveliness of expression. In Year 11, standards are average, and students have achieved well from a below average position at the end of Year 9. Most students are articulate in spoken English and they are able to learn by listening to the teacher and to each other in pair and group discussions. Boys continue to be more confident than girls. The most capable students write very well structured analyses of and comparisons between poems and

stories, making close reference to the text. Nearly all students understand and can recount the theme and content of poetry, and many are making good progress in appreciating form, imagery and diction. Their original writing uses an increasingly wide and adventurous vocabulary in a range of genres. Some students are still held back by poor spelling and punctuation. Students with special educational needs make good progress because tasks are suitably adapted for them and there is a good partnership between teachers and support staff. Students identified as gifted in English are given good opportunities to extend their thinking in some lessons and in activities such as debating.

105. Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Although most arrive promptly and ready to work, some are easily distracted and need firm management to secure their active participation. In pair and group work the majority of students co-operate with each other, but a minority do not work well together and are easily led off task. By Years 10 and 11, their attitudes have matured and they maintain good concentration and show respect for each other's ideas. Good notice is taken of information and advice from teachers and they improve their work through re-drafting and further practice.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the main college. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and in two-thirds of lessons it was good or better. Lessons are well planned, so students undertake a sequence of learning activities that builds on existing skills and knowledge. Teachers share objectives with students so they know what they are expected to do and to learn. Review of the objectives is variable in its effectiveness – plenaries are too often rushed or omitted. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious, so the students are keen to succeed. They have high expectations to which most students respond well. Cordial and purposeful relationships characterise most lessons and any problems with behaviour are usually managed calmly but firmly. Clear explanations and time limits lead to a good pace in most lessons. Group and pair activities are usually well set up and managed, enabling students to work independently and learn from each other. Mixed-gender groups are particularly productive. Overhead projectors are effectively used to provide students with a focus for textual study. Marking is regular and encouraging but students are not often given specific advice on how to improve. Good quality displays of key words and students' work provide a stimulating environment. The programme of study is broad and balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. There are few opportunities, however, for students to enhance their work with ICT unless this is done at home. By encouraging students to consider serious issues such as good and evil and social injustice, English is making a valuable contribution to their personal development as young citizens.
107. The English department is well led and well managed. The subject adviser has a clear picture of its strengths and appropriate strategies for further improvement. Policies have been revised to make them more flexible and effective. Teachers are given clear advice on assessment and behaviour management. There is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to improvement. Limited time has been available for lesson observation but the quality of students' work is regularly monitored.
108. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Standards have risen in GCSE English and achievement has improved in Years 10 and 11. The overall quality of teaching is better, and teachers now make good use of assessment data to track progress and inform planning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

109. The college has stated its commitment to developing language skills across the curriculum. This was found to be particularly successful in science and English, and satisfactory in most other subjects, although there were missed opportunities in art and religious education. In no subject was a lack of literacy skills judged to be a barrier to learning, except for some students with low initial linguistic ability.

Modern foreign languages

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is very well led and well managed, and is beginning to move forward.
- The modern languages curriculum provided by the college is good.
- There is good use of performance and other data to plan future developments.
- Best practice in teaching and learning does not reach across the whole faculty.
- Results in GCSE examinations are well below average.
- Mixed-ability teaching groups do not promote the highest levels of achievement from all students.

Commentary

110. In 2004, the performance of students in the college in GCSE examinations in both French and German was well below the national average. Boys' attainment was particularly poor in both languages. Both boys and girls did less well in languages than they did in the other subjects they took. In the teacher-assessed tasks which students take at the end of Year 9, standards have been steadily rising over the past three years. In 2004, three-quarters of the students reached standards which were average or above in their foreign language.
111. In Years 10/11, standards in German are below average, in line with the college's expectations of the students, but in lessons and in students' work the achievement of most students in German was at least satisfactory, with some well-presented work at an appropriate level. In French, more able students produce very competent written work which is of above average standard; however, the work of average or lower attaining students in Year 11 frequently does not progress adequately from previous learning. Basic language knowledge in a few cases is not secure, and expectations of students in terms of the range and complexity of their work, and of its presentation, are occasionally not high enough.
112. The standards of students in Years 7-9 in French are average. Students mainly achieve well because the teachers have high expectations of them and employ good strategies for promoting learning. In German, standards are below average in some lessons because the expectations of the teachers are not high enough. Where this is the case, higher attaining students work well and make good progress, whereas a small minority of lower attainers soon lose interest and concentration. When this occurs, behaviour in the class is not as good as it should be.
113. Despite the very clear faculty guidelines on the way languages should be taught, teaching is very variable. Where teaching is good, the teacher insists on high standards of involvement by the students in the lesson, uses the foreign language throughout and rehearses it thoroughly with the students. In these lessons, standards are above average and students' achievement is good or very good.

114. In a few lessons in both languages, teachers' expectations of the students are not high enough. They use too much English, and the use of the foreign language is not developed very far beyond single words. Students are not given enough opportunity to speak the language through careful practice with the teacher and in pairs or groups. This results in lower standards, less confidence and lower achievement, and in some cases, poor attitudes to language learning. In too many lessons in both Years 7-9 and Years 10/11 there was no requirement of the students at any time to speak more than single words in the language they were learning.
115. The leadership of the modern languages faculty is good. The recently appointed subject leader has a clear vision of where the faculty should be going and the determination to get there. There is a good team spirit which will help her to take the subject forward. Since the head of faculty took up post there has been a wholesale revision and renewal of policies and schemes of work, which set out very clearly what the faculty expects.
116. Effective use is made of analyses of the faculty's performance, and planning is clear in the quest to drive up standards. As yet there is not enough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, but overall the faculty has established a firm base from which to move forward. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership		Good
Management		Good
Improvement since the previous inspection		Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' learning benefits from a team of enthusiastic and dynamic specialist teachers.
- The challenging and imaginative scheme of work means that most students enjoy their mathematics.
- Assessment data is used very well to identify potential underachievement.
- Attitudes and behaviour of a minority students in Years 7-9 are limiting their achievement.

Commentary

117. GCSE examination results in 2004 were slightly above the national average. Observations during the inspection and modular test results of students currently in Year 11 indicate that standards are rising and students in Years 10 and 11 are now achieving well. Scores in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 are around the national average, and as standards in mathematics on entry are also around average, boys and girls of all capabilities achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9.
118. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good, leading to well-motivated students who learn well and achieve well. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall. The best teaching features exciting, well-paced lessons, with teachers giving careful attention to

students' preferred learning styles. Consequently, in these lessons, students learn well and the level of challenge ensures that boys and girls of all capabilities achieve well. However, the accommodation and the depressing environment of the lower site combine to reduce students' self-esteem, which detrimentally affects their attitudes and behaviour. In a minority of lessons, these attitudes and behaviour lead to low-level disruption which is not always adequately dealt with.

119. Provision in mathematics for students with special educational needs is good. Well-crafted individual educational plans and good deployment of teaching assistants ensure that they are able to access all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and achieve well. Students who are gifted and talented in mathematics are identified early and are given extension materials in lessons. A few students are well ahead and take GCSE early, going on to study AS-level during Years 10/11. A group of students take GCSE statistics which they study during out-of-college hours sessions. The puzzle club is a valuable source of enrichment for younger students and very well attended.
120. Teachers assess students' work thoroughly and students' books are marked regularly, but formative comments in books are rare. Students know their current levels and their targets, and mostly know what they need to do to achieve them. Their performance is carefully tracked and the available data is used to very good effect in planning and monitoring. Teachers use performance data well to identify potential underachievement and take appropriate remedial measures. Booster classes and revision sessions are effective in raising levels of performance.
121. An innovative and stimulating scheme of work has been introduced in Years 7 to 9, which provides an effective challenge for all students. The Key Stage 3 Strategy of three-part lessons and clear objectives has been adopted. The best starters gain the students' attention and interest and are used to reinforce their basic numeracy skills. Lesson objectives occasionally do not concentrate sufficiently on learning and plenary sessions are not always used to confirm learning. The strategy has been adopted for Years 10 and 11 also, and the introduction of the modular course for GCSE is already proving beneficial.
122. Good leadership has enthused the dedicated and enthusiastic team of teachers, and the new faculty structure of key stage and ICT managers ensures that the faculty is well organised and resources are deployed to best advantage. A scheme to train teaching assistants as teachers has been introduced to very good effect. One particularly good lesson with a special needs group was observed, with two teaching assistants team teaching, supervised by a learning support teacher. ICT in the mathematics curriculum is not yet fully implemented although it is planned for in the scheme of work. Students do not yet have regular planned access to appropriate hardware and software resources. Year 11 students make good use of graphical calculators for studying the transformation of quadratic graphs. Interactive whiteboards have recently been introduced and their use is at an early stage of development. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

123. Students use their satisfactory numerical, graphical and statistical skills in most subjects to enhance their learning. There are no barriers to learning as a consequence of inadequate numeracy skills. In design and technology, for example, students

achieve well in graphics. They construct loci of moving points constrained by more than one condition.

124. The college numeracy policy has been recently approved by the governing body, and the first stage – an audit of provision in all subjects – is in progress. The mathematics faculty is leading the initiative to attain commonality of approach in calculations, graphical work, and in measuring and units.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' knowledge of science and effective planning enables most students to achieve well.
- Too much teaching takes place in outdated laboratories.
- Teachers work hard and well as a team that has a desire to raise standards and a capacity to succeed.
- Teaching and learning strategies do not exploit the full potential of sharing learning objectives, key words, starter activities and plenary sessions.
- Most students are not often challenged to make predictions, to design, and to form hypotheses.

Commentary

125. The Year 9 test results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests were average for both the expected Level 5 and the higher Level 6, when compared with those in all schools. These results continue a pattern of average standards, with improvement broadly in line with the national trend over recent years. Level 5 results were well below national average when compared with similar schools based upon prior attainment. The performance of girls is roughly in line with the national average for girls whilst boys are slightly below their national average. Results in the GCSE dual science award examination for students gaining A*-C grades were significantly below the national average for all schools. However, results were above average when compared with similar colleges based upon prior attainment. Students' progress in science in the college is improving relative to the other subjects they take. Girls did better than boys, though neither did as well as boys and girls nationally.
126. The standards of work seen reflect well college-based assessment data. This indicates improving results that look likely to be maintained. Most students achieve the learning objectives at an appropriate level. They listen well, write quite well and speak well when encouraged to do so, but for many, levels of literacy and accurate drawing are below average. There is little difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Higher attaining students write clearly and present their work well. Those identified as being gifted and talented achieve very well. They readily accept the challenge of extension work, make accurate predictions and form hypotheses. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs achieve well in response to the good support they receive, but there is insufficient planning of lessons with teaching assistants. Many students are uncertain when practising number. Overall, good behaviour and positive attitudes to work are contributing to improvement in most students' achievements. A few occasionally do go off-task. This happens when they are not being sufficiently challenged in active learning situations.
127. In a very good lesson on turning forces and moments in Year 9, all students were challenged well to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. As a result, all students in this mixed ability class were very well focused throughout, worked very well together and many were

achieving at above the expected level relative to their prior attainment. During an excellent lesson on ecology in Year 10, the level of challenge for students in this top set was very high. Clear learning objectives were continually reinforced during a good variety of teaching activities. Throughout, students were achieving well above average standards and were enjoying their science. In both of these lessons the department's teaching and learning policy was employed to great effect. All teachers set and mark homework regularly but marking does not set short-term targets. Some very good assessment data is shared well with students but, as yet, they are not skilled in self-evaluation.

128. There is a vision, a sense of purpose and evidence of a well motivated and effective science team. Good self-evaluation is directing policy changes within the department. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning supports a commitment to professional development but has not yet secured consistent practice across the faculty. The department is very well organised but there is insufficient attention given to the contribution science can make to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, to citizenship and to work-related learning.
129. The department has addressed well the issues raised at the last inspection and has made a big commitment to raising standards via improving teaching and learning. There is now in place a management structure that can secure future developments. However, laboratories do not support the modern curriculum and the quantity of textbooks and ICT is insufficient to support homework and students' independent learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Teaching good; learning satisfactory
Leadership		Satisfactory
Management		Satisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection		Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 10/11 and standards are beginning to improve as a result.
- Standards of work of students in Years 7-11 are below average.
- Hardware provision has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a large number of students in Years 7-9 are unsatisfactory and inhibit their learning.
- A significant number of students in Years 10/11 lack ambition and this is reflected in the lower than average standards they attain.

Commentary

130. Results in the GCSE examinations for 2004 were well below average. However, the college is currently having the results reviewed and, as a consequence, the work of a number of students has been upgraded. The college has requested a further review and the results of this are pending.

131. By the end of Year 9 students' overall attainment is below average, mainly as a result of a lack of concentration and application. Students generally have a working knowledge of the computer interface and can access software efficiently. However, they are not generally aware of the wider implications of the use of ICT, for example obtaining and using information from a variety of sources and organising and presenting this information. In a number of lessons in Years 7-9, girls out-performed boys because the girls' application is better. By the end of Year 11, standards, although below the national average, are beginning to improve. This is not in all classes, but in those classes with a higher level of motivation, students are clear about how to obtain, use and present information for a variety of purposes and audiences and about how to improve.
132. In Years 7-9, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. In a number of classes it is very difficult to ensure students are concentrating and want to be involved in lessons. There is often low-level disruption, with too many students being off-task. In some lessons, behaviour is unsatisfactory and students are not sufficiently challenged. Girls are generally better behaved than boys and as a result their learning is better. In most lessons planning is thorough, but in a number it is not sufficiently detailed to ensure a brisk and efficient start to the lesson or that students know clearly what to do.
133. Teaching is good for students in Years 10/11. An especially strong feature is the use of assessment data in the tracking of students' progress and the setting of targets. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Even so it is difficult to motivate a significant minority of students who do not concentrate or work hard in lessons. This lack of involvement and expectation is difficult to improve and is, at least in part, responsible for the lower than average attainment of students in Years 10/11. Throughout Years 7-11, students with special educational needs are well supported and provided for, both in the planning and in the good relationships that they have with teachers and support staff. The college does not have sufficient technical support to manage and maintain ICT facilities on three sites. Resources, although considerably improved, remain below the national average.
134. Both leadership and management are satisfactory and have ensured that the provision for ICT has improved well since the previous inspection when it was found to have a number of areas of weakness. The provision of hardware and software has improved significantly and management is clearly putting in place strategies for raising standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

135. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The use of ICT by most subject departments is unsatisfactory, although it has improved since the last inspection. In a few departments, for example music and computer-aided design and manufacture in design and technology, ICT is well used and students' levels of attainment are above average. In the majority of subjects across the college, standards are satisfactory in the applications used. However, too limited access and infrequent use within the subjects limit students' progress. Access to facilities generally limits departmental use of ICT. Staff are generally competent and confident in their use of ICT but there is insufficient focused training for teachers in making effective use of ICT to improve teaching and learning. A clear example of this is the lack of training in the use of the newly installed interactive whiteboards. Monitoring ICT across the curriculum is at a very early stage of development.

HUMANITIES GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge to the good benefit of students' learning.
- The majority of students have a positive attitude to learning and behave well.
- Teachers mark the work regularly and effectively, helping to secure students' good progress.
- Students do not use ICT enough to enhance their learning.
- The organisation of humanities in Year 7 limits continuity and progression.
- Current leadership arrangements are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

136. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were well below average and continued a downward trend. Girls performed better than did the boys overall.
137. Standards in Year 9 are average. Students enter the college with lower than average limited geographical knowledge and skills, and the organisation of humanities into four-week blocks hampers continuity and progression at an early stage. Year 7 students, nevertheless, developed geographical and literacy skills as they worked enthusiastically in pairs researching, preparing and presenting a news broadcast on the Camelford pollution disaster. Lower attainers make good progress because they are given clear structures to follow and their understanding of key geographical skills is constantly reinforced. Higher attainers showed their grasp of higher-order skills in an essay comparing two cities in Japan. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average, with students able to carry out geographical investigations independently, evaluate critically sources of evidence, present coherent arguments and come to well substantiated conclusions, as is well demonstrated in their fieldwork studies.
138. Achievement in Year 9 is satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons with the needs of all students in mind, ensuring satisfactory progress is made. Those students with special educational needs are helped by support teachers and teaching assistants working closely with the teachers. Underachievement of boys is an issue that is being addressed by the college. Achievement in Year 11 is good as a result of teachers' high expectations and occasionally very good teaching.
139. In Years 7-9, students benefit from knowledgeable, caring teachers. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and where it is good the lessons are well structured with a good range of activities which interest and involve the students. The use of starter and plenary activities is beginning to have an impact on students' learning. ICT is not used

enough to enhance learning and to develop independent research skills. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is characterised by impressive subject knowledge, the setting of interesting, challenging tasks which fully engage the students and class management which creates a supportive, purposeful working atmosphere. Most students settle quickly, work well and co-operate sensibly. Students' class and homework is marked regularly in a way that helps them to improve. End-of-unit tests are used to assess students' progress in Years 7 to 9; all students have target and review sheets and most know their current and target levels.

140. The temporary arrangements for the leadership of the subject are unsatisfactory as there is no vision for the subject's future development. Management is satisfactory; the department is adequately resourced and staff have the opportunity to continue their professional development.
141. Some of the strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained and improvement has been satisfactory overall. The continued well below average GCSE results is an issue that is now being addressed.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong, well-organised teaching in Years 10/11 enhances student achievement and raises standards of attainment.
- Effective strategies are used for raising levels of literacy in all Years 7-11 – in particular, to enable students to construct extended explanations.
- The scheme of assessment and associated techniques for monitoring students' progress have a direct impact on the raising of standards in all Years 7-11.
- Students' progress in history in Year 7 is hampered by the curriculum arrangement whereby each class has three humanities subjects taught by the same teacher.

Commentary

142. In the GCSE examination in 2004, the proportion of students attaining Grades A*-C was below the national average. There was a discrepancy in the performance of boys and girls, with girls performing better than the average and boys below the average. Overall, the results confirm a gradual downward trend over the last three years.
143. Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is broadly in line with national average and they remain in line by the end of Year 9, so achievement overall is satisfactory. The best work can be seen in Year 9 with the development of well-structured written explanations, for example of the methods used by the Nazis to control Germany in the 1930s, and in the use of empathy to imagine the feelings of evacuees or victims of the

Holocaust. The achievement of students in Year 7 is impeded by the fragmentary organisation of subject teaching, which prevents depth of understanding – for example of the nature and use of historical evidence. However, lower attaining students and those with special educational needs make very good progress. This is because more structured materials are provided that give these students easier access to the same learning experiences as other students.

144. Standards in Years 10/11 are above the national average. The performance of students is better than recent results suggest because of strong teaching and very good attitudes to learning in GCSE classes. Teaching focuses explicitly on a balanced development of students' knowledge and understanding. Teaching approaches are imaginative, challenging and inclusive and all students in Years 10/11 make good progress. Particularly effective use is made of scaffolding techniques to help students, for example when using sources to investigate working conditions in Styal Mill. These techniques enable lower and middle attaining students in particular to make good progress. There is little noticeable disparity between the achievement of boys and girls, despite differences in the 2004 examination. The overall picture in Years 10/11 is that the recent trend in declining results is being reversed by determined teaching and good overall student achievement.
145. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7-9, where there are some inconsistencies in teaching and where attitudes to learning are more variable. However, teaching and learning in Years 10/11 are clearly good. Strengths of teaching in Years 7-9 can be found in attempts to implement the Key Stage 3 Strategy, in imaginative use of the local environment and in common approaches to assessment. However, in a small minority of lessons, there is a lack of pace and direction in teaching, so that students are insufficiently challenged. In Years 10/11, teaching is well informed, inclusive and highly effective. Students respond very well, because learning is clearly structured and consistently challenging.
146. The history department is well led and well managed. The head of department has a clear vision of how to raise students' achievement and offers good subject leadership. Planning, both long and medium term, is sound and its application regularly reviewed, either with senior managers or with members of the department. The style of leadership is inclusive and there is a strong sense of team working, evident in common approaches to teaching and assessment. However, methods of self-evaluation are insufficiently developed, so that some inconsistencies persist in teaching and assessment in Years 7-9.
147. The department has made good overall progress since the last inspection. Standards in GCSE results are lower than those reported previously but standards of work seen are comparable. This means that the slide in student achievement has been effectively reversed. This in turn has been caused by improved teaching – in particular, strategies for improving levels of literacy, for supporting lower attainers and for assessing and reporting accurately on what students know, understand and can do. Less progress has been made in the areas of self-evaluation and the use of ICT.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Poor	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Statutory requirements are not met, restricting examination courses on offer.
- Unsatisfactory planning is not matched to required learning and standards.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Good teaching methods and activities result in students' positive attitudes.
- Teacher expectations are too low and do not provide either support or challenge.
- Students do not understand how to improve their work, limiting independent learning.

Commentary

148. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 for 12 students were close to average for similar schools, but below average for all schools. This has been a consistent trend.
149. By the end of Year 9, students' ability to interpret religious teachings and to show how beliefs link to behaviour is below average. On entry, students have a weak knowledge of religions, and all students, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in increasing their knowledge, resulting in good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Higher attaining students gain from comparing religious teachings with their own views, but cannot compare and contrast teachings and beliefs from different religions or explain how denominational groups apply them. Average students recognise some features of religions but generalise about the members of a religion. Low attaining students are not clear about what belonging to particular religions involves. By the end of Year 11, the small group of GCSE students' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Judaism are well above average. They can explain very well the range of present-day practices and beliefs by reference to sources and traditions and can argue both sides of moral issues. Non-examination classes lack time to cover the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and so their attainment is below average. In lessons seen, achievement was satisfactory, as students identified philosophical, moral and social questions raised by suffering, violence and the nature of evil.
150. The weakest teaching, by non-specialists, was seen in Years 7 and 8. Here work is not matched to need and focuses on information and response without students developing the skills to examine what they learn. Teaching is better in Year 9 but expectations in attainment are too low. Teachers use active teaching methods well to engage students but students lack enough first-hand evidence from religious communities in the UK to develop required skills of analysis. Students' attitudes are positive. Schemes of work are not clear about how to measure what students are achieving, and how the approach should differ from the areas of learning for primary school and build towards more demanding standards by Year 9. The college's very good data on students' overall needs and progress has little impact on lesson delivery,

to provide different levels of expectation including both support and challenge. When students are given activities they are not told clearly what will gain them high, average or low marks linked to the required progress in learning about religions, so they are unable to find their own ways of improving their work. Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11, with very good teaching in GCSE classes. In all years the quality of teaching is informed by well-resourced lesson plans from the subject adviser. Current arrangements mean students are taught by non-specialist form tutors, at the same time, making resourcing and monitoring difficult.

151. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The college has not recognised its responsibility for providing this subject in Years 10 and 11 as a full part of the curriculum. Non-GCSE students do not have a weekly lesson, but are allocated time from the weekly tutorial period, a day and some English lessons. This does not meet the statutory requirements in the Agreed Syllabus, indicating poor progress since the last inspection in implementing a key issue, restricting short course examination opportunities, and impacting on sixth form numbers. In the current situation the subject advisers provide good leadership, ensuring the subject is taught, resourced and delivered by a large number of willing staff. Their shared responsibility ensures consistent quality of leadership into examination groups. Management of the subject advisers is satisfactory, but the standard of teaching in Years 7-9 is variable. Constant timetable changes place the focus on resourcing non-specialists rather than providing effective monitoring of teaching, student attainment and achievement, which were good at the last inspection.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships contribute to good student response.
- Students demonstrate good standards of practical work in most areas.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Curriculum time in Years 8 and 9 restricts opportunities for developing skills.
- Students' graphical skills are not as high as their other skill areas.

Commentary

152. The 2004 GCSE results were below average. Boys' results were below average and girls' results well below average. Results have been below average over recent years. In graphics results were above average for A*-C grades in 2004, with food technology and child development below average. Resistant materials results were well below average for A*-C grades but achievement for this group of mainly low attaining students was good, based on prior attainment. In GCSE engineering results were well below average in 2004, when it was examined for the first time.
153. Current standards in Year 9 are below average. Attainment on entry is below average in terms of design and technology experience. This represents satisfactory achievement. The automata project in Year 7 shows good research and good quality drawings. Good understanding of different types of mechanical movements are also in evidence. There is very good work in the acrylic torch project in Year 9 where computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) is used well. Some projects in resistant materials are too traditional and are not conducive to developing design skills. Where the work is not as good, it is mainly due to poorer presentational skills, both written and graphical, drawings in pen, not pencil, weak evaluations and incomplete work. Current standards in Year 11 are broadly average, with graphics above average. Improvement is seen in all specialisms. The educational toy project in graphics and the party pack of multicultural foods in food technology are well researched and presented. Good use of colour, freehand sketching, use of the Internet and use of photographs is seen in the best work. The rocking horse project by a lower attaining student showed good standards of practical work. In child development, the research into how play can influence intellectual development is well presented. In engineering, the anemometer exercise is of a good standard both in folder work and practical outcomes. Weaker work is characterised by written work in pen being untidy, a lack of detailed research or work missing. Practical work is usually of a good standard in most areas.

154. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Planning for the different attainment levels is not always evident. In the better lessons, learning is increased because teachers use their good subject expertise, make good use of resources, engage students in their learning and have appropriate challenge. A Year 10 lesson increased students' learning of a difficult topic in graphics to a very good level because of the teaching styles used. A Year 11 lesson increased students' understanding about examination-type questions and how to revise thoroughly for the topic. In a Year 10 engineering, lesson practical skills were developed to a good standard and students worked safely and confidently. Where lessons are not so good, there are lengthy introductions or demonstrations, students go off-task or the work does not have sufficient challenge. Some work is over generously marked. The use of support assistants helps to maintain progress, especially for students with special educational needs. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is used in some lessons and in most lessons teachers use good questioning skills to reinforce learning. Students can use the literacy and numeracy skills adequately and ICT is used appropriately in students' work, including the use of CAD/CAM to support learning.
155. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college operates a two-department system as at the last inspection, which does affect the co-ordination and dissemination of information readily, although both areas are working more closely together. A good start has been made in using data and target setting for raising standards. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed; however, some remain, including insufficient challenge in some areas for the higher attainers, and students not always being sure of what they need to do to improve. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous at present across the department, and a system for tracking students' progress is being developed in more depth. Lack of curriculum time in Years 8 and 9 is restricting the development of skills, knowledge and understanding and therefore standards. Both heads of department manage staffing difficulties well and try to ensure that students are not adversely affected. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but there is no storage or office space on the upper site and there is only one food technology room. Resources are good and the department is adequately funded. There are good displays of work in all areas. The poor acoustics on the lower site adversely affect concentration and much of the equipment is outdated.
156. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There is now a more co-ordinated approach to the subject and design skills have improved. Leadership and management have improved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables students in Years 10/11 to achieve well but there are shortcomings in the teaching of Years 7-9.
- Teachers manage students well and provide a supportive learning environment.
- Sketch books are insufficiently used to research and develop ideas.
- Leadership and management of art lack coherence and opportunities are missed.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

157. In 2004 the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades was well below average. Standards in Year 9 are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement since students enter the college with well below average standards in art. Standards in Year 11 are average, representing good achievement. Special educational needs students achieve in line with others. Those deemed talented in art achieve well. Boys achieve less well than girls in Years 7 to 9, but the gap is narrowed in Years 10 to 11. Throughout Years 7-11, standards are uniformly better in practical work than in other aspects of the subject. The quality of drawing and painting is very good by Year 11. Textile work and three-dimensional work often show confident manipulation of a range of materials. Students demonstrate weaknesses in appraising artwork. Their understanding of the significance of the artists, styles and techniques they use is weak. Competent GCSE practical work is marred by the variable quality of students' research. Students demonstrate good attitudes in art. They behave sensibly and relate positively to teachers.
158. Teachers enable students in Years 10/11 to achieve well in art because they provide well-disciplined lessons and manage students effectively. Individual student needs are understood and respected and teachers are highly encouraging and supportive. Students are enabled to develop confident practical skills because teachers possess good subject expertise used effectively in demonstrations. In examination lessons students have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their standards because teachers have a good knowledge of assessment requirements. Students are limited in what they achieve in Years 7-9 because of the teachers' modest expectations: a leisurely pace of working is accepted and lesson aims are insufficiently shared with students. Lessons miss opportunities to develop students' understanding of art through focused questioning and class discussion. Students are not encouraged to make appropriate use of sketchbooks to complement practical work. Day-to-day marking lacks substantive comment to show students how they might improve their work further.
159. While teaching, particularly from Year 10, is often good, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory, partly as a result of long-term staff illness. The department lacks a unifying vision. Development planning does not evolve from rigorous annual course evaluation. Schemes of work lack a clear overview to ensure all students gain an appropriate experience of the whole range of media and topics expected. Opportunities are often missed for art lessons to contribute formally to students' literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship education. There is insufficient ICT equipment to enable students to generate artwork using contemporary software. Students benefit from occasional work with visiting artists, but exam classes experience no gallery visits. The unsatisfactory state of art accommodation does not

give students a positive message about the value of art lessons. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

DRAMA

160. Two lessons were seen, one in Year 8 and one in Year 10. In both lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm and subject expertise kept the students engaged in the activities. The Year 8 lesson explored the theme of drug addiction through a carefully planned presentation by the teacher, followed by an improvised investigation, with the class providing witnesses to the death of a young addict. Despite some silly behaviour by a small group of boys, very well managed by the teacher, there was a good level of involvement by the rest of the class. Boys were generally more willing and able to contribute to the exercise than the girls were. Effective but unobtrusive support enabled two students with special needs to take a full part in the lesson. In the Year 10 lesson, students were preparing a theatre-in-education presentation to Year 7 and local primary schools, again on the theme of drug abuse. During the warm-up session, focusing on freeze-framing, the students made good progress in their self-control because of the teacher's high expectations. The subsequent group work was well managed, and the students achieved a good level of co-operative preparation for the ensemble performance. Although variable in the quality of characterisation and development of the theme, this was a successful final session in which the students showed a good level of commitment to achieving convincing performances.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of very good teaching students in Year 11 achieve very well.
- Examination classes are large and include students of all abilities.
- A few students in Years 7 to 9 lack concentration when lessons are devoted to only one activity.

Commentary

161. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have for the past two years been broadly average. Although the 2003 GCSE results continued a rising trend, the results in 2004 were average and had dipped because of a small number of students who were absent for part of the examination. For this cohort girls did better than boys.
162. By the end of Year 9, students' musical skills are average. They develop knowledge of rhythm, tempo and dynamics and improve their use of musical structures through improvising and composing using a selection of classroom instruments, keyboards, computers and voice. Although this represents good achievement, students' keyboard technique is unsatisfactorily developed. By the end of Year 11, students' practical skills and musical knowledge are very well developed because of being exposed to a very wide range of experiences that motivate and challenge them. Since many

students play instruments to a high standard and take part in choirs, bands and ensembles standards are well above average and achievement is high. Foreign tours, community engagements and competitions and workshops by visiting artists, including the Hallé orchestra, all help to raise the profile of music. Because of the inclusiveness of the subject, students of all abilities have the opportunity to succeed in music.

163. Students in Years 7-9 are well taught. They are motivated and work well when lessons are well planned. Some students, however, are unable to concentrate for too long on a single activity and consequently their behaviour begins to wane. In Years 10/11, students are very well taught. Regular examination practice improves students' understanding of aural questions in listening tests. They improve their knowledge of musical styles and use music software well for sequencing, editing and composing for a wide range of instruments. Most students reach a high standard of performance because of their commitment to music in college and with a variety of music groups based in the community. This complements both their musical and personal development. The staffing is good and there is a wide range of resources on the upper site. The accommodation is adequate but looks tired and depressing, particularly on the lower site.
164. The department is very well led and there is a clear vision that is helping to drive forward the college's application for arts status. There is good management which is raising standards and numbers in examination classes. Whilst there has been good improvement made since the previous inspection, the focus for future development should be on raising standards further in Years 7 to 9.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is effectively assessed, with students aware of the level at which they are working and how they may improve.
- Examination results have improved because the course is well organised and students' work is effectively tracked and moderated.
- There is a very good match of teaching staff to the curriculum and this is supported by the very good opportunities for professional development.
- Use of observation and evaluation of self and others to inform and improve students' learning is underdeveloped.
- The disruptive behaviour of a few students in Years 7-9 prevents higher standards from being attained.

Commentary

165. The number of students following the physical education and dance examination courses has increased in recent years. The results have continued to improve and in 2004 were in line with the national average.
166. By the end of Year 9, students' performance skills in gymnastic activities that require quality and control, during flight, are below average. They do not have sufficient opportunities to observe, evaluate or provide feedback to others in order to improve their knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 11, performance skills have risen in line with national levels of expectation, which represents good progress. In the most effective lessons students are able to refine their actions to improve the timing, quality and consistency of their dance motifs. In theory lessons, students have a good understanding of the effects of performance-enhancing drugs in sport. In the core curriculum, most students demonstrate good levels of co-operation when working on their defensive skills in football. Students are able to work independently and improve their skills through peer coaching.
167. In Years 7-9 the pace and progression in lessons is often hampered by the behaviour of small groups of students. The lessons are well planned and cater for the needs of all students. In the best lessons teachers are able to use their very good subject knowledge to improve students' learning. When students' behaviour is managed effectively, as seen in a volleyball lesson, students enjoy the activities and make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. In Years 10/11 students apply themselves in dance, in particular, very well and sustain their efforts throughout, acquiring skills very effectively. They repeat, refine and practice their motifs in order to attain high levels of performance. In the best lessons teachers' interventions ensure student learning is clear and well focused with effective question and answer techniques. When different teaching strategies are employed during theory lessons, such as sorting, matching and discussion activities, students learn effectively and this helps to improve their knowledge and understanding. Students with special educational needs learn and progress as well as other students.
168. Very good leadership provides clear vision and direction. The management of the department is also very good and is effectively raising standards. There are very good opportunities for staff development through regular departmental meetings, where expertise is shared and developed. Very good strategies exist to increase student awareness of their own level of attainment, and this is matched by the identification of individual targets. The involvement of students in the observation and evaluation of performances as a process to improve learning needs to be further developed. There is currently no assessment data available at the end of Year 11 and the time allocated for Years 10/11 is below the recommended level. Risk assessment and management procedures are very effective. The indoor facilities are in a poor condition and this prevents higher standards from being achieved.
169. Since the last inspection, dance examination courses have been introduced and examination results have improved. The variety and range of resources for examination subjects have also improved. Overall, therefore, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

Provision in business education is **good**.

	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well, and reach above average standards, in business studies and business communications GCSE because of very good learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good, leading to a good atmosphere for learning.
- There are insufficient written comments by teachers on feedback to students' work.

Commentary

170. Results in GCSE business studies examination in 2004 were above average. This has been the case in each of the last three years and the results of students taking the subject have regularly been better than in the other subjects they take in the college. Boys perform better than girls overall.
171. Results in GCSE business communications in 2004 were about average, as they have been in previous years, and students' performance is better than in other subjects.
172. By the end of Year 11, students' skills in business studies and business communications are above average. Students can undertake detailed analysis of the business environment and Year 11 business studies students asked searching questions of a visiting speaker who came to talk about his work as a manager of the local leisure centre. Boys and girls of all capabilities made very good progress.
173. In Years 10 and 11, students benefit from having very good teachers. Teachers have high expectations of the students and relationships are very good. Lessons are fast paced and stimulating, with a range of activities well matched to the interests of the students. A lot of planning goes into the lessons and students enjoy them. However, students do not benefit sufficiently from teachers' underdeveloped written feedback on their work. Homework is set regularly but its impact is reduced because teachers' feedback tends to be oral and there is no record of how the students can improve or learn from their mistakes.
174. The department is managed well and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers work well together and produce high quality provision. The department is successfully introducing new systems designed to further improve quality. It produces good quality data analysis and is beginning to implement effective target setting. The focus for further improvement should be on developing written feedback to students.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	No evidence
Achievement	Good	
Teaching and learning	Good	
Leadership		Unsatisfactory
Management		Unsatisfactory
Improvement since previous inspection		Not applicable

Main strengths and weakness

- Statutory requirements to teach and assess all students for citizenship are not met.
- While leadership of the subject has been unsatisfactory, the leadership provided by the new subject adviser is good, supported by the LEA.

Commentary

175. Currently, only Year 7 students have a citizenship lesson. In lessons seen they were achieving well. They have promoted the value of a college council, and considered the rights of children and adults in society. The attainment of Year 9 students in 2004 was average and their achievement was good. They know about the multicultural nature of society, and global issues such as fair trade. Their knowledge of the European community and the United Nations is weak. They are confident to express their own views and support them with good reasons. They can balance a number of views on current issues and are aware of the role of the media in reporting and influencing public opinion.
176. The Year 9 students, now in Year 10, who no longer are taught citizenship, saw the value in learning about how government works. They have become aware of their legal rights and responsibilities, with selected students meeting their local MP. They took part in voting, explored democracy, and understand the roles of voluntary and protest groups. They appreciate sharing their views and active learning games about world trade. Teacher assessment on attainment was accurate but did not involve the students, and did not include progress or highlight examples of activities in which students had taken part. In the students' view, teaching was weakest when there was too much repetition, copying and discussion without a purpose.
177. Teaching and learning in Year 7 is good. Teaching uses a range of active learning methods for students to learn about topics. Teaching was excellent when learning aims were clear, and activities such as students taking roles at a public inquiry for a new supermarket resulted in very high levels of discussion and decision making in and between groups. Teaching and learning was not as good when the lack of focus on subject knowledge, skills and understanding restricted students to exploring their own experiences. Behaviour and concentration suffered as a result.
178. The overall leadership and management of the development of this subject are unsatisfactory. Statutory requirements are not met to teach, assess and report on all students for citizenship. Leadership of this area of learning is the responsibility of a recently appointed subject adviser who is working well with the LEA and with other subjects. Plans are in place for theme days in the summer term, and to meet the needs for a full documented curriculum entitlement each week. Management of this staged development is satisfactory. Planning and recording have not yet identified opportunities for all students to participate in citizenship activities in college, including in the college's councils and extra-curricular activities, and also in the local community.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 16 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the college.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

Level 3 GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	16	100	78.3	31	21.6	37.5	28.5
Biology	18	67	63.5	39	10.4	31.1	19.8
Business studies	9	89	75.3	44	15.4	35.5	25.7
Chemistry	19	74	70.3	42	13.2	34.2	23.0
Dance	4	75	98.9	0.00	42.6	22.5	84.3
English language	15	93	99.2	20	36.4	33.3	81.1
English literature	28	93	99.4	21	44.9	33.5	85.5
French	10	80	79.8	10	19.4	25	28.2
Design and technology	9	78	72.6	0.0	13.9	24.4	24.3
General studies	8	75.0	73.6	18.8	16.9	23.7	25.5
Geography	4	100	75.5	75	20.4	52.5	27.0
German	3	100	81.6	33	18.8	40	28.8
History	30	63	82.2	17	20.8	23.6	29.2
Mathematics	24	46	59.9	21	14.1	18.75	20.5
Music	8	100.0	79.8	38	16.9	41.2	27.5
Other social studies (Psychology)	47	70	67.8	23	15.1	25.5	23.2
Physics	10	40.0	66.4	10.0	14.8	13.0	22.4
Sociology	29	90	72.1	48	19.6	41	25.9
Sports / PE studies	13	69	72.2	7.7	11.8	20.7	22.8
RS	3	100	-	100	-	56.6	-
English language & literature	28	96	-	50	-	42.1	-

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	32	100.0	98.3	50.0	50.2	89.4	87.1
Biology	12	100.0	96.6	41.7	40.0	90.0	79.3
Business studies	25	100.0	98.9	24.0	39.4	79.2	81.8
Chemistry	11	100.0	97.7	36.4	50.0	81.8	85.7
Communication studies	19	94.7	99.2	15.8	40.4	73.7	83.5
Dance	3	100.0	98.9	0.0	42.6	66.7	84.3
English language	44	100.0	99.2	18.2	36.4	69.5	81.1
English literature	17	100.0	99.4	58.8	44.9	94.1	85.5
French	3	100.0	99.9	0.0	53.1	53.3	88.9
Design and technology	11	100.0	97.8	36.4	35.0	76.4	77.9
Geography	10	90.0	98.8	40.0	46.4	72.0	85.2
German	3	100.0	98.6	33.3	49.6	73.3	86.3
History	8	100.0	99.0	25.0	45.6	75.0	85.1
Information technology	1	100.0	96.3	0.0	25.7	40.0	71.1
Mathematics	10	100.0	96.8	50.0	56.6	82.0	89.5
Music	6	100.0	98.2	50.0	37.1	83.3	79.5
Other social studies (Psychology)	14	100.0	97.4	57.1	42.5	87.1	81.6
Physics	3	100.0	96.7	33.3	45.3	86.7	82.6
Religious studies	1	100.0	99.1	0.0	49.5	60.0	87.4
Sociology	15	100.0	98.5	53.3	45.3	94.7	84.6
Sports / PE studies	4	100.0	97.8	25.0	30.9	85.0	75.4
Business	13	100.0	91.6	38.5	24.1	76.9	67.9
Health and social care	9	100.0	93.5	55.6	24.9	93.3	70.0
Information technology VQ	52	85.4	88.3	23.3	26.9	64.9	67.8
Leisure and recreation	10	100.0	90.7	30.0	18.3	82.0	64.6
Travel and tourism	7	100.0	90.1	57.1	19.6	82.9	64.9

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Standards of work seen	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because of the good teaching.
- Students have good attitudes towards their work; they enjoy it, concentrate well and share very good relationships with their teachers.
- The curriculum for the subject is very good, giving students three choices of course and helping them to gain spiritual, moral, social and cultural perspectives.
- Students' work is well monitored and assessed.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Resources are not adequate in all areas.
- Teachers do not have the opportunity to share the best practice within the department.

Commentary

179. The GCE Advanced level English results in 2004 were close to the national average. Although they were below it in language and combined language and literature, they were above the average in English literature, the best subscribed of the three courses offered. Here, results were above the national average, with over one-third of the entry gaining A grades. Students taking English attain, overall, some of the best results in the sixth form. They achieve well in relation to their GCSE grades. Girls generally perform more highly than boys.
180. The standards of work seen during the inspection were average; they were above average at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 13, most students speak about their texts and their work in a mature, adult manner and with clear expression of their ideas. A few do not always offer contributions readily during lessons, but are, nevertheless, interested in their work. Their reading of texts from all periods is thoughtful, and this can be seen clearly in the quality of coursework they produce. They approach difficult texts, such as the poetry of Emily Dickinson, with enthusiasm and a readiness to overcome its difficulties. Their written work tends to be more reflective than their oral contributions, showing a better range of vocabulary and critical terms and a good degree of understanding. Coursework is full, carefully drafted and redrafted and full of relevant quotation, reference and example. As a result, students' level of achievement is good, as they work with increasing familiarity with texts and/or language concepts and learn to approach them with strong personal response. Occasionally, students are too content to rely on their teachers for ideas and notes.

181. Teaching is good overall. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are able to inspire students with their enthusiasm for both language and literature, although there is sometimes a degree of insecurity in the teaching of complex texts. Planning is good and teachers are adept at encouraging and involving students in their work. This was clearly to be seen in a very good language lesson on signifiers, in which the teacher's depth of understanding made the concept both accessible and absorbing to the students. Their enthusiasm and understanding were demonstrated in the success of the teaching and learning. They teach the basic skills of critical understanding and literary techniques well. Lessons are well managed through friendly relations and mutual respect. Methods are varied well between whole-class, group and individual work and research is encouraged. Time is usually, but not always, used to good purpose. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of students' work is good; students are encouraged to evaluate their own achievement, and homework is used to good effect, ensuring that work done in lessons is reinforced well. Lessons are planned well, so that teachers ensure that their students understand the moral, social and cultural context of the times of the texts they study and compare them with the values of today. The use of ICT is in its early stages in the department, but is satisfactory.
182. The department is well managed and led. The new head of department ensures that teachers work well as a close and effective team. She has a very clear vision of the way forward in raising standards further. She uses the curriculum well to enable students to choose the course and the texts which appeal to them the most and are likely to help them to reach their full potential. She is a good role model for other staff in her teaching and in her relationships with students. Her monitoring of students' work, of teaching and of data is used well to help students to achieve as highly as possible. Under her effective direction, standards are rising and the subject is deservedly assuming a higher profile within the college. There is, as yet, little opportunity for the many staff teaching at this level to share the good practice within the department through lesson observation. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

183. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are satisfactory overall. Students can meet the language demands of most subjects. They speak relevantly, if not always with confidence, and work well together in groups. Good focus on language in English language and literature and media studies helps students to improve their written work. However, this often contains inaccuracies of spelling and punctuation. The A-level English course provides students with valuable opportunities for developing their reading. The growing use of ICT for research purposes further extends the range of many students' reading. Teachers are now offering students more help in developing literacy skills.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Standards of work seen	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and often very good; as a result, students achieve well and enjoy their language learning.
- Leadership of sixth form courses is good and they are well organised.
- Insufficient use is made of media to support learning.

Commentary

184. In 2004 all students entering for French at A-level achieved a pass, but none achieved the higher grades A-B. Their performance was below the national average and was similar to the results achieved by students in the previous year.
185. Standards seen during the inspection in French are in general average, although in Year 12 some students are reaching above average standards. Students in Year 12 have made very good progress since GCSE, and their achievement is very good. Generally, the achievement of female students in Year 12 is better than that of male students because they are prepared to take a chance and to make an effort to communicate. In Year 13, standards are average and most students' achievement is good. There was no discernible difference in Year 13 between male and female students, although some students are achieving very well relative to their past performance. In both years, students are developing confidence in discussing social and other issues in French and, in writing extended pieces, presenting their opinions about those issues.
186. Teaching in French is invariably at least good, and often very good. Teachers are very capable, knowledgeable and experienced linguists and deliver their lessons well in French, challenging and encouraging the students to understand and respond. They use good techniques and a range of authentic materials to develop language understanding and production, and to help students understand matters of interest and concern in modern France. Teachers' first-hand knowledge and understanding of contemporary French social and cultural issues ensure that students gain a clear insight into the culture and daily life of their French counterparts and French-speakers in the wider world. This is insufficiently enhanced by more frequent use of live media – news bulletins from radio or television and daily items culled from newspaper websites. Relationships are mature and supportive and the procedures used for assessment and target setting are good. Students feel well supported in their learning of French.
187. The two teachers of the course complement one another well and work together well as a team. The leadership and management of the post-16 courses in French are good. Course planning is very good, and the faculty has recently done a considerable amount of work in completely revising the scheme of work for A-level. Thus, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

The main focus was A-level mathematics. The GCSE resit course was sampled. This attracts a large number of students and provides a positive opportunity for consolidation of knowledge and clarification of misconceptions. Results are good, reflecting the thorough and sensitive teaching.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' knowledge is very good and provides students with positive learning opportunities.
- Relationships with students are good, which helps students to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Results during the last three years have improved, with numbers of students taking AS and A-level courses showing an upward trend.
- Given the flexible requirements for entry to AS/A2 courses, results are good and so students achieve well.
- There is insufficient emphasis on independent learning – either through students' evaluation of their progress or the provision of challenging open-ended problems.
- ICT is not used enough to improve the effectiveness of learning.

Commentary

188. During the last three years, students have achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in A-level examinations. The proportion of students gaining A/B grades at A-level improved in 2004 and is getting closer to the national average. Results in AS examinations also improved in 2004, but a minority of students, especially those with modest achievements in GCSE mathematics, find the course difficult
189. Standards of students' current work are about average in Year 13 and above average in Year 12. In particular, students demonstrate good understanding of rules for differentiation and were able in mechanics to demonstrate understanding of potential and kinetic energy. The achievement of students is good. Students apply themselves industriously to lessons, demonstrating high levels of motivation.
190. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the syllabus requirements are good. Teachers present their lessons well, demonstrating a thorough and rigorous command of the subject and careful planning. Teaching is mainly traditional, reflecting an appreciation of the importance of a step-by-step approach in developing mathematical understanding. Teaching, however, focuses on processes, rather than stimulating discussion of the underlying principles. Good relationships with students help to create a positive atmosphere for learning, and students apply themselves well. There is a clear expectation that students work hard, but there is insufficient indication that students are expected to become independent learners. Students respond well to teachers' questioning, but are less likely to initiate questions or to welcome opportunities for debate. Homework is used well to provide further consolidation and practice; this is marked thoroughly, with individual feedback provided to encourage progress.
191. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good and the organisation of courses is clear to students, who appreciate the additional support that is frequently available to them. Analysis of examination and test results has recently been put in place and its effective use will increase over time. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, with increased numbers and improved results. The focus for further improvement should be on improving the use of ICT, especially the use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate students' discussion and promote independent thought.

192. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, with improved participation and results.

Mathematics across the curriculum

193. Mathematics is used well in other subjects. For example, in psychology, numeracy skills are adequate to permit students to apply simple but appropriate techniques to small-scale practical studies. In geography, students apply formulae to data sets but have limited understanding of the justification for the processes used. Students use numeracy well to promote learning in information technology.

SCIENCE

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Standards are above average, representing good student achievement.
- Students are well motivated and have very positive attitudes.
- There are very good working relationships during lessons.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons owing to a lack of resources.
- The number of students achieving the higher grades is below average.

Commentary

194. The A-level results for 2004 were broadly average. All students achieved a pass but the number of students achieving the higher grades was below average. These results were an improvement on those for 2003.
195. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. These are achieved because of good teaching and the very positive attitudes of the students. In relation to their standards at the start of the sixth form, the achievements of students are good and they make good progress. Their literacy skills are good, they show confidence in the use of scientific vocabulary and their numeracy skills enable them to cope with the demands of the course. Their practical skills are well above average. Year 12 students are building well on work covered at GCSE level and have a good understanding of basic organic chemistry. Students in Year 13 are able to design and carry out tests to identify unknown substances.
196. Teaching in chemistry is good and the strong motivation of the students enables them to learn well. Lessons are well planned and organised and their good command of the subject enables teachers to give clear explanations of difficult concepts to help students' understanding. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging questions, to which the students respond well. There is an emphasis on practical work, which further motivates the students and reinforces their understanding of the theory. Students work well together and the small group sizes mean that they are able to help each other and share ideas. The very good relationships between students and teachers mean that students feel at ease in asking for help if they need it. Independent learning skills are fostered through projects and presentations. Marking and assessment are thorough, with clear guidance on improvement, and all students are aware of their target grades and have individual progress sheets in Year 13. There is insufficient use of ICT by students, owing to a lack of equipment.

197. Leadership and management of the department are good and there is a commitment to improving results, especially the achievement of an increase in the higher grades. It is hoped that this may be brought about by the recent emphasis on coursework, although this is being adversely affected by the reduction in time for Year 13 students. There are good external links and Year 12 students have the opportunity to undertake work experience in related areas. Students who are interested in a medical career are able to attend an appropriate taster course at a university. Accommodation is satisfactory but there is a shortage of some resources, other than ICT equipment, which sometimes means that students have to share during practical sessions. The department benefits from good quality technical support but there is not enough of it. Improvement since the last inspection has been good as results have improved and new initiatives have been introduced. Retention rates are very good and the subject is increasing in popularity.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Standards of work seen	Below average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good, building on low attainment on entry to the course.
- Good written assessment helps students to improve their coursework.
- Teachers give too little support to students while they work, so that their errors have to be picked up in written assessments.
- The wide range of software meets the needs of the course well.
- The timetable dictated by the need to move two miles between lessons results in some loss of contact time between teachers and students.

Commentary

198. Results in the AS and A2 examinations in 2004 were below average in relation to schools nationally and also in relation to the students' results in their other subjects. These results were, however, an improvement on results in the previous year.
199. Standards seen during the inspection are below average both in Year 12 and in Year 13. Both have achieved well since GCSE, as their grades on entry to the course are low. The attainment of female students is higher than that of males, but there are far fewer female students. Students have good technical skills and quickly learn new software, especially for presenting information. In both year groups almost all students prefer to concentrate on the practical aspects of units rather than to follow all of the analysis, planning, testing, evaluation and redesign that is needed for the higher levels. Their annotations show what they did, rather than why they did so. Students' first attempts are therefore well below the required standard, but they improve greatly through redrafting. The few higher attaining students follow given instructions, thus showing much higher levels of thinking.
200. This performance pattern is the result of the style of teaching, which is satisfactory overall, with some good and some unsatisfactory practice. Teachers give good initial guidance. In

lessons seen they did not follow this by giving individual attention while students worked. They do not therefore make sure that students have thoroughly prepared for the practical implementation stage. They assess students' resulting drafts well to show students how they need to improve, but students have wasted time making initial mistakes that have to be amended before their work is completed. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not make good use of the available data to inform their planning for students' individual learning.

201. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The head of department has developed the syllabus and resources well so that they meet the learning needs of the students. Teachers work well together to prepare for shared classes and to support colleagues. Improvement since the last inspection is good in that the course has been changed to match students' needs and the level of resources is very much improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

202. Students' use of ICT is satisfactory, but provision is not planned carefully enough. It meets the needs of subjects, but it is usually used at the level of written presentation rather than to develop thinking. The exception is music technology in which the use of ICT is very well developed and students show a very good level of capability. Students usually have access to computers, but in their main areas these are not yet linked to the college network and so make only a limited contribution to independent study. The college website is underdeveloped at present in respect of providing resources for learning.

HUMANITIES GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Standards of work seen	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students commend the quality and availability of help from their teachers.
- Staffing uncertainty has restricted subject development planning.
- The lack of an adequate range of teaching and learning resources hampers learning.
- Improvement from the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, especially in the development and use of computer aided teaching and learning.
- A good range of fieldwork opportunities, allied with good tutorial support, makes coursework a strength in the department.

Commentary

203. Standards are average. A-level results obtained in 2004 represented a slight decline on the previous year but were still broadly in line with the national average. Work seen in the present, smaller, Year 13 supports the college's judgement that all students will obtain pass A-E grades.

204. The quality of fieldwork is a strength in both years. Students carefully assemble research data, which is suitably processed and well presented graphically. Underdeveloped analytic and writing skills are an impediment to obtaining the higher grades. Students describe facts well but often fail to explain sufficiently clearly the many links between processes and the effects of these on people and places. Many students enter the course with relatively low GCSE grades but respond well to the guidance given and so make good progress. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.
205. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' subject and syllabus knowledge are very good. Carefully planned lessons ensure that students at all levels of skill develop greater understanding of key issues. Materials produced by the Geographical Association supplement those textbooks which are outdated. The rapport between students and teachers is good and this promotes lively debate made even more effective by the teachers' probing questions. Students say they do not often use the Internet and their files reveal little evidence of additional independent work. In the most effective lessons, learning activities encourage students to work in a structured way. However, the range of teaching styles is limited, because teachers do not have access to computerised projection. Field trips are well organised and students undertake detailed studies of both urban and coastal environments.
206. Students recognise the dedication of their teachers and feel that they receive help whenever they ask for it. Work is regularly marked but the amount of detail provided is variable and does not often relate to mark schemes. Accordingly, some students are unable to analyse the strengths in their work or identify what needs to be improved. With such small groups, a great deal of tutorial advice is provided verbally. This is particularly effective in respect of course fieldwork.
207. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory but management is satisfactory. Recent staffing changes mean that an interim subject leader is standing in until a permanent appointment is made. She has ensured that the visits to fieldwork locations and conferences continue and the day-to-day running of the course is very efficient. However, there has been no effective recent review of post-16 geography; there is no development plan and many of the textbooks are significantly out of date. Improvements since the previous inspection have been unsatisfactory. Option numbers remain low; standards have not improved and the use of computers to support teaching and learning continues to be too limited.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Standards of work seen	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' independence and self-reliance in their learning are insufficiently developed.
- There are too few opportunities for using computers to enhance students' research skills.

Commentary

208. In the two most recent years, all candidates obtained pass grades at A-level. In both years overall results in terms of average points score were below average, but the gap was larger for boys than it was for girls. Results in the AS examinations were below average in 2004, but above average in the previous year.
209. Standards in Year 13 are in line with expectations. Many students complete a good volume of work with a strong focus on writing essays in which students reach their own judgements on historical issues. Higher-attaining students comment perceptively and infer accurately in their convincing assessments of the relative strength of the liberals and weakness of the conservatives after 1900. Average-attaining and lower-attaining students' essays are less tightly focused on the title set and contain too much narrative at the expense of judgement, which is not always fully supported by evidence. Students too often do not undertake the necessary preparatory work such as prescribed reading and consequently are not in a position to benefit discursive work in the lesson. This was particularly noticeable amongst a group of lower-attaining and less well motivated boys. Standards in Year 12 are rising; assignments are clearly written and contain convincing argument but lack some depth and supporting detail. Although students' structuring of paragraphs needs further development, their source work shows satisfactory analytical and evaluative skills.
210. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; good teaching also occurs but also some which is too teacher-led. Teachers' learning objectives do not offer enough challenge and students have too few opportunities for active learning. Teachers produce very detailed supporting notes and handouts, although this approach does inhibit the development of research skills. For some students this can undermine their independence in learning. The majority of lessons are well planned and organised, briskly paced and evoke positive responses from students.
211. The subject is well led and managed. The head of department has worked hard to raise the profile of history and numbers opting for it in the sixth form have increased considerably. She has a good understanding of areas for improvement such as more rigorous and formal procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	No evidence

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved in 2004 were above the national average.
- Teachers' subject and syllabus knowledge is very good.
- Students commend the dedication of their teacher and the high quality advice and support they receive.

- Marking is very detailed and provides considerable support for all students, enabling them to make good progress.

Commentary

212. Standards are above average. A-level results obtained in 2004 were an improvement on previous years and were above the national average. All students obtained pass grades and the proportion of top A/B grades was well above the average for girls. Many students who enter the course with lower GCSE scores respond well to the detailed guidance given and make very good progress. Overall, achievement is good and this includes the small number of boys. There were no students with statements of educational need on the course. Students use specialist subject vocabulary and this contributes to their mostly having a good grasp of complex issues. They are particularly adept at recognising the links between theories and everyday life. Understanding of ethical issues is very good and shows in the appropriate design and analysis of their practical work. The development of discourse skills is variable and lower attaining students, often boys, have difficulty in sufficiently evaluating case studies. Insufficiently broad reading around the subject compounds this. There are no differences in the standards achieved between students who have followed a GCSE course and those who are new to the subject. The department closely monitors the progress made. Overall, the standards on entry are lower than usual but most students make good progress and achieve very well.
213. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher has excellent subject and syllabus knowledge and uses this well to plan effective lessons and to select additional resources. There is a very good learning atmosphere in the classroom. Students arrive promptly and ready to work hard. Their mature approach means that they work well, both together and as individuals. They particularly commend the dedication and ready availability of their teacher. The quality of marking is very good. Detailed comments and wise advice help students to understand what they need to do to improve, so that they are all very clear about their actual and predicted grades. Lessons use a range of activities but these do not include sufficient visitors or more practical sessions. Students use computers to produce PowerPoint presentations that are shared, but do not regularly use the Internet or psychology journals to extend the range of their reading. They are very dependent on the teacher's choice of materials, although these are of high quality.
214. Leadership and management are good. The subject is growing in popularity and standards are improving. The dedicated teaching room is well appointed, although it does not have computer-aided projection. Resources, both in this room and in the library, are good. The subject leader provides students with regular information about courses and conferences. Departmental documents are detailed, especially those relating to standards and progress.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- Very high expectations and very positive classroom relationships encourage students to realise their potential.
- Very good leadership and management underpin the subject's strong performance.
- There are insufficient opportunities for using computers in lessons.

Commentary

215. All candidates in the last two years gained pass grades in the A-level examinations. In terms of average points score overall results were below average, but in 2004 they were well above and an above average proportion of candidates obtained higher grades A-B. One candidate's work was in the top five in the country.
216. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above expectations. Students show a convincing knowledge and understanding of the most significant sociological perspectives and studies which they are able to apply to the study of contemporary society. They contribute to discussion readily and use subject-specific terminology very well. Higher-attaining students offer well argued and supported extended oral contributions. For instance, they accurately identify sociological, psychological and physiological explanations of the causes of crime. Average-attaining students demonstrate a good understanding in explanations such as the difference between Marxist and functionalist perspectives on religion. However, they are less secure on the feminist viewpoint and make insufficient use of statistical data, such as quoting figures for church attendance in the debate over the secularisation of society. Lower-attaining students are more likely to make 'common sense' assumptions about the nature of crime which aren't always sociologically accurate.
217. Sociology is consistently very well taught. Highly detailed subject knowledge, challenging learning objectives and very well planned lessons, incorporating a variety of methods, ensure that students learn very well. Teachers monitor, support and challenge the progress of individual students very well and engage with them to explore and extend their understanding. Students respond very positively to the teachers' high expectations, and to each other. They contribute readily to class discussion and debate, which enables them to clarify any areas about which they are uncertain. Students have relatively few opportunities to use computers to enhance their learning and consequently their research skills are underdeveloped. Work is marked regularly and very fully and detailed diagnostic comment is provided which affords students valuable guidance on the scope for improvement.
218. The subject is very well managed and led. The head of department has put much effort into developing assessment structures and procedures, so data is now very effectively used to set targets and track progress. Stimulating resources attract and retain students' interest well so the subject is a popular option. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching promotes above average standards.
- Students produce high quality textiles and paintings.
- Students show very good levels of commitment to their work.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment are too limited.
- Accommodation is too cramped for the size of the teaching groups.

Commentary

219. In 2004, students' results were average. Standards of work seen during inspection are above average and represent good achievement at both AS and A2 levels. There are no significant differences in standards and achievement according to gender. In the fine art course students produce high quality finished pieces which derive imaginatively from their initial ideas. They research effectively and discuss their developing ideas perceptively. In the textiles course, students develop highly imaginative and effectively manipulated work, deriving from substantial visual and theoretical research. Their knowledge of contemporary designers is impressive. Students show very good attitudes. They work with high levels of commitment and enthusiasm and relate well to teachers. Students regularly proceed to art courses in higher education.
220. Teaching and learning are good. Students achieve well because teachers are very able art practitioners who possess a secure understanding of the examination requirements. Frequent individual attention and advice are available to enable students to extend their practical and research skills. Students make brisk progress because lessons are well planned, as in the rigorous schedule provided for examination preparation. Expectations are high and students are challenged in their regular target-setting tutorials. Assessment is coherent and ensures that students possess a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve further. Teachers ensure that students develop effectively as independent learners.
221. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Examination results are carefully evaluated and outcomes decisively acted upon. The curriculum has been enriched by the recent addition of the textiles course. Accommodation is too cramped for the size of groups and the scale of work students might produce at this level. Students' work is well displayed and celebrated about the college. There is insufficient curriculum enrichment. Structured gallery visits and opportunities to work with visiting artists are not a feature of the curriculum. Improvement since the last report has been good. The focus for further improvement should be on developing appropriate enrichment opportunities appropriate to advanced work.

Drama and theatre studies

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average at A-level and students' achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good overall and often excellent, providing a high degree of challenge for students of all abilities.
- Students enjoy the work, respond well to it and gain self-esteem through the acquisition of personal and presentational skills.
- The work contributes well to the students' spiritual and cultural development.
- Students learn the importance of working as part of a team.
- The subject is excellently led and managed, ensuring a high quality experience for students.

Commentary

222. In 2003, students' attainment in A-level drama was above the national average. Results at AS-level in that year were average. However, attainment varies from year to year, depending on the level of attainment of students on entry to the course. 2004 results reinforce this picture. The college is now changing the A- and AS-level course to that of a different examination board, which has less of a literary base and is more practical in nature. Numbers in Year 12 have risen well and there are almost equal numbers of male and female students following the course.
223. Attainment in the current Year 13 is above that of average expectation and students are making very good progress. This rate of progress is even more clearly to be seen in Year 12. Students in both years approach their work with enthusiasm, enjoyment and effort and are keen to learn. They have a clear understanding of the teamwork and trust involved, and so learn to work with a high level of concentration and co-operation. They are able to improvise with imagination, understanding and sensitivity, enjoying the challenge of innovation. This was evident in an excellent Year 12 lesson in preparation for a devised performance of 'Oedipus Rex', which was striking in both concept and performance. Year 13 work when producing a play for moderation showed impressive and concentrated effort. When working on text in performance, students demonstrate good powers of interpretation and an understanding of the technical skills of stagecraft. They understand and recognise some of the methods of practitioners such as Artaud and Stanislavski and are able to use theatre genres, such as the mask work seen in Year 12, with growing ease. In their written work, students are able to show the process of building from ideas in their journals and the development of these ideas. Very good attention is paid to exploration of the social, historical and cultural backgrounds of plays and playwrights, as well as an appreciation of the spiritual in their grasp of emotional dimension in character. Levels of literacy vary greatly, but are satisfactory overall.
224. Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Both teachers who share the sixth form teaching have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are

able to communicate them well to students, thus guiding them very well in developing their skills and understanding. Lessons are planned with clarity and purpose. Teachers encourage and advise with good humour and expertise, while ensuring that pace of work is seldom allowed to slacken and that time is used to the utmost advantage. As a result, students remain involved and engaged. A real strength of the lessons is the use made of the final sessions in the lesson, which allows students and teachers the opportunity to evaluate what has been achieved. Management of the students appears effortless as students are immersed in their work. One of the most important features of the teaching is the high degree of challenge offered to students of all abilities and the way in which students rise to meet the challenge. The subject adds greatly to both social inclusion and good citizenship. Teachers' assessment of students' work plays a large part in helping them achieve well and ensures that they know exactly what they have achieved and how they can improve upon it. Students clearly feel inspired by their teachers and are prompted to produce work which is full of effort and response. As well as enjoying their work, students, through the enhancement of their personal skills and their improved ability to present themselves to others, gain in self-esteem, and confidence and develop a knowledge of their own capabilities. Teachers have an excellent rapport with the students.

225. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The inspirational and outstanding subject manager is an experienced specialist with vision, energy and unlimited enthusiasm. Schemes of work, together with priorities for development and innovation, are ensuring that the worth of the subject to both college and students is fully recognised. Accommodation and resources are very good. The course is well supplemented by visits to theatres and presentations by students both to other students and to the public. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Media studies

226. Media studies was sampled during the inspection. Two lessons were observed, one in Year 12 and one in Year 13. In both these lessons teaching was good and it was clear that the above average results achieved in 2004 are likely to be maintained. Students are familiar and comfortable with a range of concepts, from the most recent technologies in media to the selection of news to form an interesting news programme. They patently enjoy their work and take great pride in achieving as well as possible in each task they undertake. Lessons are well planned and aimed at stimulating students' thinking skills. Resources, however, are insufficient to do justice to the good teaching and learning in the subject. Social and cultural understanding is very well encouraged through learning in the subject.

Music and music technology

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

Standards of work seen	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high because teachers and students are determined to do well.
- Relationships are first rate and an important factor in supporting learning.

- Both music courses are very popular, attracting high numbers of students.
- Record-keeping for music technology students is not full enough to track their development.

Commentary

227. Results in the 2003 and 2004 examinations were above average for AS and A2 music students, with little difference between the results of male and female students. 2004 was the first year that students were entered for the music technology and results for both AS and A2 examinations were well above average, with male students out-performing female students.
228. By the end of Year 13, standards seen are well above average in both subjects and this shows very good achievement over students' GCSE results. Music students understand conventions well, analyse music and talk confidently about their compositions. Music technology students are very confident in using sequencing packages and make creative use of technology to compose and arrange music. Because all students are involved in a wide range of practical music-making activities in college and in the community, this contributes towards their learning and personal development. Students work independently and demonstrate good research skills. Not all students are clear about their future careers but a few are interested in higher education connected with music.
229. In Years 12 and 13, students' musical and technological skills are very well developed because teaching is of a very high standard. Lessons are very well structured to engage students productively in a variety of interesting and challenging activities. These help to broaden students' horizons and raise their academic and practical achievements. Homework and extension work is used well to encourage independent learning and research. Excellent attitudes prevail and there is a relaxed but businesslike atmosphere in lessons. There is very good verbal assessment in both courses but the use of student logbooks or written files to give an instant record of students' progress over time in music technology is underdeveloped.
230. The leadership is very good and the decision to add the music technology course has been very popular with students. There is good management and the policies and subject specifications are all in place. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Leisure and tourism

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

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students achieved well in GNVQ and in AVCE courses in 2004.
- Teaching and learning are very good.

- Most students have a very positive approach to their work.
- Arrangements for assessment are good.
- There are currently insufficient opportunities for all students to benefit from work placement.

Commentary

231. In 2004, results in the GNVQ intermediate level examination were average with most students achieving pass or merit grades. Work seen during the inspection is very much in line with this standard. All students have a good grasp of the nature and quality of leisure provision in the local area, for example. In the AVCE, examination results were well above average and amongst the highest in the college. Currently, where work seen has already been assessed, many students are ahead of their final target grades. The trend in recent years has been clearly upwards. GNVQ students begin their sixth form studies from an average or below average level; by the end of the course most have reached pass or merit grades and this indicates clear value added. AVCE students begin their courses with average or above average levels in GCSE points and achieve well above average overall grades. This too indicates good achievement and clear value added. In recent years many students achieved above predicted grades in the subject.
232. These results are achieved as a direct consequence of two key factors; teaching and learning are consistently very good and the attitude of most students is very positive. The teachers know their subject very well and they also know the needs of individual students. Relationships between teachers and students are very good, as indeed they are amongst students. They listen well and work eagerly, individually, in pairs and in groups. Work is regularly and accurately assessed and the students are well informed about progress and subsequently how to improve further. The engaging and encouraging style of the teachers is valued by all students. Their response is keen and committed. A further key strength is the use of relevant examples to demonstrate important areas of learning. This ensures that learning is about the real world of leisure. It builds a broader understanding for the students in, for example, the demands made on officials in matches and tournaments at national and international level, compared with their own personal experiences in inter-school competition. Learning can be further developed through relevant work placements, though currently there are insufficient opportunities for all students to benefit from such arrangements.
233. The subject is well managed by both the teachers and the adviser for vocational education. She provides good overall leadership and ensures that there is a strong organisational base. Data analysis and detailed development planning are underdeveloped. Managing the involvement of the vocational strand in whole-college initiatives is a clear area for development.
234. This area of the curriculum is much improved since the last inspection. AVCE results are well above average overall and students achieve well in all courses. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. With good standards in leading and managing, there is a very sound basis on which to build further improvement.

Physical education

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

Standards of work seen	Above average
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Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of the examination subjects is very good, contributing to the above average standards.
- The subject knowledge of the teachers and opportunities for further professional development are very good.
- The assessment, tracking, target setting and mentoring of students are all very good.
- There are no opportunities for participation in recreational sporting activities during curriculum time.

Commentary

235. The number of students following the physical education and dance examination courses is frequently small and the results have been variable, although there have been gradual improvements over the last three years.
236. The standards seen during the inspection are above national levels of expectation. In practical lessons students are able to demonstrate very good standards of performance in dance, where they are able to show very good quality in their extended sequences. They strive to improve the technical elements of their performances, such as timing, dynamics and the fluency of their actions. They analyse, evaluate and provide very good constructive feedback to others in order to improve the continuity and flow in the sequences. The dance facilities are currently inadequate and prevent higher standards from being achieved.
237. The pace and progression in lessons is very good, with teachers using a good variety of teaching strategies. Lessons are well planned and teachers are able to use their very good subject knowledge to improve student learning. Teaching is always good or very good. Students make very good gains in knowledge and understanding as the result of well focused activities and questioning. Students apply themselves very well and are able to discuss issues very effectively. Their attitudes and behaviour are excellent.
238. The management of the examination subjects is very good. Subject knowledge and opportunities for further professional development are also very good. Assessment, tracking, target setting and mentoring of students are all very good. An opportunity for participation in a recreational activity programme during curriculum time does not exist and this prevents students from maintaining high levels of physical fitness and the development of their social skills. Some students participate in an extra-curricular Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) course and this provides those students with very valuable and worthwhile leadership experiences. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

Business education

Provision in business education is **good**.

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good

Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in business studies A-level and GNVQ Intermediate because of good learning.
- Students achieve high standards in business studies A-level and GNVQ Intermediate because of good teaching.
- There is insufficient curriculum time for developing learning for A-level and AVCE students.

Commentary

239. In 2004, business studies A-level and AVCE results measured by pass rates were above the averages in both subjects. This has been the case in each of the last three years. In 2004 the A-level business studies students (male and female) had slightly lower average scores than nationally, with fewer gaining the highest grades. In the case of AVCE there was a better average point score than would be expected nationally, although boys did considerably less well than the girls. Students taking the GNVQ Intermediate also achieved good results with a 100 per cent pass rate, as was the case in the previous year, and just over half the students gained a merit.

240. By the end of their course students taking A-level business studies and those taking intermediate GNVQ are above expectation. In the case of AVCE the students work at expected levels. In a very good A-level lesson about management styles, all students were able to contribute to a discussion identifying styles and the most capable (boys and girls) were able to identify the different styles in a range of contexts. Where teaching is very good, all students tended to make above average progress but in some lessons lower achievers are left behind. This is particularly the case with the AVCE course. In one lesson lower attaining students had difficulty identifying the characteristics of 'total quality management' whereas the higher achievers could not only identify it but could explain how it relates to quality assurance and quality control.

241. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often very good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and relationships between teachers and students and between the students themselves are good. There are often high expectations by teachers and a very good pace. All of these characteristics support good learning. Students are enthusiastic learners and participate in lively discussion and group work. Teaching and learning in business studies A-level and GNVQ Intermediate are at least good whereas that in AVCE is satisfactory because there is insufficient curriculum time. Since September 2004 time has been cut by one hour per week for A-level and AVCE in order to encourage independent learning but no provision has been made to facilitate this. This has affected the learning opportunities for all students taking these courses but it has had a particularly detrimental effect on the AVCE students.

242. Leadership and management are both good, with the academic and vocational business studies teams led by two different staff working effectively together. Managers' detailed analysis of students' progress is having a positive impact on their achievement. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Students no longer lack the opportunity for individual spoken contributions such as formal presentations. The active approach to teaching has facilitated considerable individual spoken contributions and therefore raised achievement.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Provision in health and social care is **good**.

Standards of work seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and all students have a very positive attitude to learning. As a result achievement is good or better in all courses.
- Arrangements for assessment are good.
- The subject has established good links with the local community which provide some opportunities for work placement.
- Work placement arrangements are not sufficiently developed to ensure that all students benefit from experiences in the world of work.

Commentary

243. In 2004 almost all students were successful in gaining pass or merit grades in the GNVQ intermediate level examination. These results were average when measured against other similar schools. The work seen during the inspection in GNVQ courses is above average at this stage. These students began their sixth form courses with below average GCSE points scores, the majority below 40. Already many have completed work that has been assessed and is above their predicted grade in the subject. This, then, represents good achievement and clear value added over one year. It has become quite usual for the more successful students to then progress to the AVCE shorter course in Year 13.

244. In the current AVCE courses work seen is in the main above average and well in line with the 2004 results, when students reached well above average standards. Given that most began their sixth form courses with average results, achievement is very good. Some students have already achieved above predicted double award grades and this represents very good progress and clear value added over two years. Over recent years, the trend in subject results has been upwards. Currently most students are making good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of health care topics, for example, of the risks and benefits of food additives. At the same time their increasing maturity enables them to have well developed values and attitudes to issues in the health and caring world. An increase in the number and nature of opportunities to experience the working world would further strengthen this area of their development.

245. The achievements by students in health and social care come as a direct result of consistently very good standards of teaching and similarly of learning. Teachers know the subject very well and present learning in an engaging and encouraging style. Special attention is given to careful and complete explanations of learning objectives and how to ensure that assignment assessment criteria can be reached and/or further improved upon. The teachers know the needs of individuals well and provide support and guidance in assessing their work. The students in turn value their teachers. They work eagerly and in a committed, positive and mature manner. Year 13 students in

particular work very independently when required, using ICT facilities ably to enhance, then sustain, good standards of presentation of their work.

246. The teachers of health and social care are very experienced and they make a significant contribution to the well-planned and well-organised delivery of the various courses. Overall, the subject area is well led and managed by the adviser for vocational subjects. This area of the sixth form curriculum is well developed now and it makes a significant contribution to the range of vocational opportunities of all students. It is currently amongst the most successful across the college.
247. Since the time of the last inspection the area of study has improved well. Standards are higher and teaching is consistently very good. With these strengths already established the subject is well placed to make further improvement in the future.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

