

INSPECTION REPORT

CROWN HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120227

Headteacher: Mr G. A. Coleby

Reporting inspector: W. K. Baxendale
2928

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th December 2000

Inspection number: 223912

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Gewndolen Road Leicester
Postcode:	LE5 5FT
Telephone number:	0116 273 6893
Fax number:	0116 273 0413
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G. Rawnsley
Date of previous inspection:	4 th December 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
W. K. Baxendale 2928	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the college
			The college's results and students' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
J. Goodchild 12775	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development
			Students' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
A. Allfree 8503	Team inspector	Art and design	
N. Carr 12825	Team inspector	Provision for students with English as an additional language	
J. Clark 27803	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
		Equality of opportunity	
M. J. Clarke 3460	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
P. Hooton 19915	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
D. Innes 3943	Team inspector	Provision for students with special educational needs	
		The work of the special educational needs unit	
S. Innes 22524	Team inspector	Design and technology	
W. S. Johnson 12475	Team inspector	Music	
J. M. Jones 12460	Team inspector	Mathematics	
D. E. Kay 24042	Team inspector	Religious education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
A. Marfleet 12003	Team inspector	English	
V. Maunder 23188	Team inspector	Science	
J. Nagra 20189	Team inspector	Community languages	
P. Smith 27381	Team inspector	Physical education	
W. Stoneham 27407	Team inspector	Provision for students in Key	

		Stage 4	
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The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Crown Hills is a much bigger than average community college educating 1204 boys and girls in the 11-16 age-range. There are more boys than there are girls on the college roll. Nearly all the students are from an Asian heritage; about 60 are from an African-Caribbean heritage and a similar number are from a White heritage. Over 90 per cent of the students have the advantage of speaking at least 2 languages, with English as an additional language, and over 30 per cent (a very high proportion) are at a very early stage of learning English. Attainment on entry is rising. However, the attainment on entry of those students whose performance is now reported was well below average, often because of their under-developed command of English. About average proportions (18.4 per cent) are on the college's register of special educational needs and an above average proportion, (3.4 per cent), has a statement of special educational needs, mainly for learning or behavioural difficulties. The students come from below average socio-economic backgrounds and an above-average proportion is entitled to a free college meal. The college houses a Local Authority managed unit for students with hearing impairment who work, for the most part, alongside other students in the college.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

This is a good college with outstanding features. Very strong leadership and a sense of common purpose are behind a year-on-year rise in standards at above average rates since before the previous inspection. The good quality of teaching and learning reflects the very positive climate for improvement in which the students make increasingly rapid, above average progress. Frequent informative assessments help them, showing them how they have done and what needs to be done to improve. Considering the good quality of education and the about average cost of educating each student, the college provides very good value for money.

What the college does well

- The college enjoys excellent leadership, with a shared commitment to high attainment.
- It is a strong community college with its excellent aims and values clear in all it does: equal opportunities are paramount.
- The students make good progress and achieve higher standards than would be predicted from their previous national test results.
- Attendance is above average and relationships with the parents are very good.
- The students' personal development is very good. Attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The very effective use of detailed assessment on individuals raises standards.
- Excellent financial planning supports educational priorities.

What could be improved

- The evaluation of teaching is not rigorous enough in all areas.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of science.
- The way senior management monitors students' written work is weak.
- The targets on students' individual education plans are too general.
- The college does not comply with legislation in aspects of the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) in design and technology. The time allocation for music is too short.
- Some assemblies are unsatisfactory and there is no daily collective worship.

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

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the previous inspection in December 1995 are very good. The key issues have all been met except in the provision of a daily act of collective worship. Target-setting through precise data is now very effective and the partnership with the parents is very good. Although it has some weaknesses, the curriculum has improved and standards have risen annually. The college's capacity for further improvement is very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The college sets very demanding targets for improvement and is successful in meeting these annually. A good characteristic of the students' achievement is that they generally obtain better results in each national test or examination than performance in previous ones suggested they would. Results obtained by 14 year-olds in national tests are, overall, below average, but have improved since the previous inspection. GCSE results have improved substantially and are now about the national average for 16 year-old leavers; they are above average for similar schools and colleges. The rates of improvement are about the same as the national trends for 14 year-olds and those for 16 year-olds are more rapid. English and mathematics GCSE results have risen dramatically to about average. Science has not come on as well; results have fluctuated below average. The inspection of work shows attainment in science to be slightly higher than the test results show. Attainment in lessons by 14 year-olds is below expectation in English, history, geography, religious education and music. It is in line with expectation in all other subjects except design and technology, where it is above. By 16, attainment in lessons is close to the national expectation overall. In ICT it is well above average; the students use computers effectively. The students also attain above expectation in English literature, design and technology and art and design. Attainment in most other subjects is in line with expectations. Attainment in modern foreign languages has improved, but is overall still below expectation. A main weakness is in music, which does not have the kudos of other subjects. Achievement overall is good. The pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as do those for whom English is not the first language, often reaching unexpectedly high levels of attainment. The inspection of work across all subjects shows the students work hard and achieve well, most overcoming weaknesses in English very well, but errors of spelling and grammar persist for many. The students have a good basis for going forward to next stages of education or training.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Good. The students are well motivated and keen to learn; this helps raise standards. They do, however, prefer to be directed rather than to take initiatives in learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Sometimes a little boisterous, but generally conducive to good learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Opportunities to take responsibility are limited, but life in the college is harmonious and independent study improves by Year 11.
Attendance	Good. It has continued to improve through effective monitoring and follow up and is a clear contributor to the rise in standards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and of learning is good. Of the 205 lessons inspected, teaching was very good or excellent in 24 per cent; it was good in a further 50 per cent and satisfactory in 21 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 5 per cent of the lessons. Half of the unsatisfactory teaching was in science, where quality is not monitored closely enough. Teaching and learning quality have improved substantially since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics, but unsatisfactory in science. In English, teaching provides a good variety of activities that help the students to learn well, using their imaginations through carefully chosen fiction and discussions to help them to think. In mathematics, teaching makes good use of everyday applications to bring the subject to life. The best science teaching makes the students think deeply, but some other teaching wastes time, or is weakly planned. Generally, there are no significant variations in the quality of teaching and of learning in the other subjects or between students in the 11-14 and the 14-16 age groups. The teaching of literacy and of numeracy is satisfactory throughout all subjects, though inconsistencies mean that persistent spelling and grammatical inaccuracies amongst many students remain. A weakness is the lack of demand upon the higher-attaining students. Teaching meets the needs of all other students well: the extra help given to those with special educational needs, including English as an additional language, is good and effective in raising standards. Students' learning is good: they work hard and are keen to learn, but their ability to work independently is weaker. They rely too heavily on being told what to do by their teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The college provides a balanced curriculum with good opportunities to progress further into continuing education or training. Weaknesses lie in the provision for 14-16 year-olds of ICT, especially in design and technology and in the time for music for 11-14 year-olds.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. These students are effectively supported in their learning and they make good progress as a result. A weakness lies in the imprecise targets in individual education plans for those with a statement.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Many students make good progress, reaching about average standards by the time they leave. This is because of the effective extra support they receive and their keenness to improve. Weaknesses remain in standards of spelling and grammatical inaccuracy.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for the students' spiritual development is satisfactory, good for social and cultural development and very good for moral development. The college celebrates cultural diversity; individual respect and harmony are other reasons for rising standards.
How well the college cares for its students	Very good. The assessment of students' academic and personal development is very effective: students know how they are doing and how to improve. Procedures for monitoring attendance are excellent. Good behaviour also raises standards, as procedures to ensure good conduct are very effective.
How well the college works in partnership with parents	Very good. The partnership with the parents complements provision very well.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The principal's excellent leadership is the source of the esteem in which the college is held locally and the consistent rises in standards. Delegation is very good: the college's generally effective management teams are the basis for the improving rigour. There are some weaknesses in the management of science; the college is taking steps to overcome these.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors hold the college enthusiastically to account and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They do not, however, check the outcomes of some decisions keenly enough.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Good. Clear structures are in place and mainly effective, but there are weaknesses in the evaluation of practice in science.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning and the use of specific grants for funding initiatives are effectively channelled to raising standards. The application of principles of best value is very good. The availability of learning resources and the qualifications of teachers and support staff are satisfactory. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, but an imminent building programme should overcome this weakness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the college expects and gets their child to work hard and to achieve his or her best. • Their child likes attending the college. • The good progress their child makes. • The good quality of the teaching. • The college is helping their child to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of out-of-college activities seems to lack breadth and interest. • The information the college provides on the child's progress.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views on the college. It does get the students to work hard, in collaboration with the parents. The students do make good progress and become more responsible, though there are elements of immaturity and uncooperative behaviour that are normally dealt with well in class, though outside class this is not always so. The inspectors agree with the parents who think the college has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. Inspectors do not agree with the parents' views on the weaknesses in out-of-college activity provision: they find this to be good. When the community activities are added to the ones the college organises, provision is good. Information to parents is clearer and more frequent than normal, with two consultation evenings and termly snapshot reports that help to raise standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and achievements

1. Examination results have improved year-on-year since the previous inspection and, although those of 14 year-olds are still below national averages overall, those of 16 year-old leavers are now close to the GCSE national average. Achievement is good throughout. When the 14 and 16 year-olds started the college as 11 year-olds their attainment was well below average. The attainment of students in the current Year 7 is higher, yet still below average.

2. The English, mathematics and science 2000 National Curriculum test results for 14 year-olds show the average point scores improving at broadly the same rate as the national trend of improvement over the past four years. Combined results in English, mathematics and science were below the national average annually over the same period. However, the difference between the national average and that of the college has continued to close. Mathematics is now in line with the national average. There are large improvements in English where half the students (less than 10 per cent at the time of the previous inspection) reach Level 5, the national expectation: this is still below the national average. Science is below the national average and has not improved since the previous inspection. Compared with similar schools and colleges, standards in these three subjects are above average overall. However, whilst in this respect attainment in mathematics is well above average, it is average in English and that in science is below average. There is little difference between the performance of the boys and the girls overall in these subjects at this stage.

3. Inspection evidence, from lessons and a scrutiny of work, shows the students achieve well overall, making good progress from 11-14 years of age to reach closer to average standards by the end of Year 9. In lessons, the 11-14 year-old students' under-developed English skills inhibit the standards they attain in English, but for many, their keenness to learn goes a long way to compensating for this. The standards of the students in Year 9 reflect the national test results and are below average, though the students' achievement, as in all other subjects, is above average. The use of vocabulary in English is, for example, above expectation, and this leads, by the time they reach 14, to some good writing at length. The college's work to raise literacy standards has improved considerably since the previous inspection. There are still weaknesses, as many students continue to make spelling errors and their grammar suffers through direct translations from another language that means, for instance, they regularly omit articles before nouns. In mathematics, the students show they can think for themselves and benefit from using mathematics that have a direct relationship to their everyday life. Their progress is well above average, so most 14 year-olds reach at least average standards. Presentation and spellings are weaker, again owing to their weaknesses in English. The students' numeracy skills are well developed by practice in other subjects where, for example, they measure, predict and use graphs effectively. Similarly in science, the students' practical skills are used effectively, but their predicting, planning and evaluating are weaker. The students achieve at slightly higher rates than the national test results show, though 14 year-olds' standards are below average.

4. Inspection evidence through observations and work scrutinies confirm the teachers' assessments in the other subjects. The 11-14s' very good graphical skills are put to good use in design and technology; these and practical skills are used well to compensate for the deficiencies many have in writing. Presentation is good in this subject. The main weakness is in electronics where the work is often not guided closely enough by the teaching. However, 14 year-olds' standards in the subject overall are above average and have risen substantially since the previous inspection. In geography, the students present their work well and this

helps them to overcome some of the difficulties they have with written texts. Many do not use their imaginations freely enough, however. The students delve effectively into source materials to improve their standards in history lessons, but they do not have enough opportunities to research through the collection of data from fieldwork. In both subjects, the students' standards are below expectations for 14 year-olds. Attainment is in line with expectations nationally in ICT lessons. The students use computers well: from Year 7 they conduct research using the Internet effectively. They type with increasing speed and accuracy and so learn well on their own. They show similar weakness as in other subjects in the manipulation of English and in spelling, even with the electronic aids available, because they do not have a wide, every-day experience of using the language. Good listening skills and positive responses to prompting raise standards in modern European foreign language lessons to around average but the students do not think readily for themselves and this slows learning. In Panjabi and Gujarati, they listen and speak well in short discussions, but reading and writing are weaknesses. Attainment is about average.

5. Students in the 11-14 age-ranges combine different art and design forms well and exploit the cultural strengths they bring effectively in art and design lessons: standards are average overall. Using good practical skills, the students work well independently on keyboards in music, but their notation in Western music is weaker and standards are below those expected nationally. In physical education, the students analyse and comment well on performance, but they are reluctant to work independently, so this inhibits standards that are, nonetheless, at those expected. Reflection goes to substantial depths in religious education where the students show clear respect and empathy for and with others. Prompted well by teachers, they are competent when speaking, but the same weaknesses in extended writing are apparent, so standards remain below those expected.

6. All the students with special educational needs, 11-14 and 14-16 year-olds, take real pleasure in success and pride in what they achieve in lessons. They support each other well and enjoy finding things out. They make some good progress in lessons, helped effectively by teachers and learning assistants. For some, however, it is difficult to assess progress easily, as their individual education plans lack precision. By the time they take GCSE examinations, many reach standards that are well above those that might reasonably be expected.

7. Rates of achievement are good in the 14-16 age-range. The students continue the achievement they made as 11-14 year-olds in each subject and those with English as an additional language also continue to make good progress; some make very good progress. In English, 14-16-year-olds have a zest for literature, which helps them to polish their writing and speaking, but the English idiom is still weaker and this undermines standards overall so they remain below average, yet much higher than when they started. The students' very good mathematical thinking skills help them to produce some good coursework, writing at length. This contrasts with science, where they write up their experiments satisfactorily, but many do not write well at length, often because the teaching does not foster the skill.

8. The achievement of 14-16 year-olds in design and technology rises in leaps and bounds and the students produce some very imaginative, high quality projects using, for example, both their own and, on occasion, computer-aided graphical effects. In geography, the students make good progress and their creativity is strong in using the Internet for information and to help them to improve the presentation of their work. The gathering of relevant information from original sources improves well in history, where students gain, for instance, through discussion a clear picture of life in the conflict periods of the last century. Achievement in ICT lessons is well above average: the students become competent in all areas and are confident in most of what they do. The progress made in modern foreign languages is good. Higher-attainers are not pushed enough, however, so their standards do not rise to the highest GCSE grades in French. In Asian languages the students continue to

achieve well, but reading and writing remain comparative weaknesses.

9. The 14-16 year-old students achieve well to reach above average attainment in some of the games techniques they study in physical education. Overall their attainment is about average, as they continue to benefit from the effective analysis of performance as a means to improvement. Some disaffection amongst those not taking GCSE physical education reduces the standards they reach. Attainment in music remains below average, but the students' use of keyboards improves, even though the same weaknesses in notation persist. Attainment in religious education continues to rise with most students' understanding of the tenets of their own faith and those of Christianity reaching expected levels. Attainment in business education lessons is about average for those studying GCSE. They understand marketing and promotional techniques satisfactorily and work well both independently and collaboratively to raise standards. They do not question sufficiently what they study, to help them reach a deeper understanding. Those following GNVQ courses reach below average standards, as most of them have too weak a grasp of English to allow them to express their understanding satisfactorily.

10. The college's concentration on improving the students' standards of literacy is effective. The college also works closely with the local education authority to follow the trends in standards of students from different ethnic groups. Its own procedures for setting targets are more refined ways of raising standards. Individual students are challenged and respond to demanding targets that contribute to the rising standards and the college's regular achievement of targets that are about 10 points above those set by the local authority from available data. The students make above-average progress; the college adds substantial value to their education. Annually, the students reach higher standards as 14 year-olds than would be predicted from their attainment as 11 year-olds. This is even more marked between 14 and 16 years of age, as the students' improving command of English bears fruit in GCSE results that are now very close to the national averages. In 2000, the white students attained standards significantly lower than the rest, but precise assessment outcomes show that only two of these just failed to reach their predicted GCSE grades. The achievement of African Caribbean and black dual-heritage students is being researched for factors influencing achievement, so under-achieving students or those at risk of exclusion may receive extra, close attention.

11. The upward trend in the college's average GCSE points score over the period 1997-2000 was above the national trend of improvement. Each year, the gap between the national average and that of the college has narrowed. The boys' standards are overall closer to the national standards attained by boys than are those of the girls, but rates of improvement are very similar. GCSE/GNVQ standards are now close to national averages for all schools and colleges and well above average compared with similar schools and colleges.

12. The students' average point scores were above the national ones in art and design, business studies, English literature (a real achievement), German, ICT and religious education and in line with them in design and technology, combined, dual award sciences and drama. A major shortfall occurred in music and there were also significant shortfalls between the college and national point scores in dance, English, French, geography, history and physical education.

13. The average point scores of students obtaining five or more passes in the full grade range, A*-G was close to the national average in 2000 and was above average compared with similar schools and colleges. Whilst similarly close to the national average, the average point scores of those obtaining five or more higher grade passes, A*-C, were well above average compared with similar schools and colleges. A few students took a vocational qualification in business studies, with a pass rate that was about average. Others received

creditable results in certificate of achievement examinations. Hard work all round, commitment and very good assessments of achievement are clearly effective in raising standards. The college is providing the students with a good basis for further progress in their next steps in education or training.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Both the students' attitudes and their behaviour are good. The students are well motivated to learn and their personal development is good. Relationships are very good. Parents consider that the college is successful in achieving high standards of both work and behaviour. Much improved since the previous inspection, attendance is now good.

15. Students like coming to college and many see it as an extension of their local community where they can meet their friends. They enjoy their lessons. They are open, friendly and happy adolescents who communicate freely and easily with adults. Students have good attitudes to learning, which is one of the reasons why so many make good progress and attain a higher standard in GCSE examinations than predicted by the college's and national assessments when they join in Year 7. Most students are motivated to learn, but they have a tendency not to take an active part in learning. The teachers work very hard to ensure that students take an active interest in their studies and stimulate them to learn through a consistently good standard of teaching. Most students are able to sustain good levels of concentration throughout lessons, they respond to the challenges teachers set and settle quickly to different tasks. Students work well together in pairs and small groups, where they encourage and support each other when encountering difficulties with their work. Students are confident in talking about their work, are keen to join in debates and make perceptive comments when called upon to do so. For example, in a Year 10 life skills lesson students had researched a social issue of their choice, such as violence in society, and presented an argument to the class using effective computer presentations to support their case. Students with all types of special educational needs have positive attitudes towards their work and are fully integrated into the college community.

16. The standard of behaviour within the college is good and it is generally an orderly community where students are courteous and welcoming towards visitors. Good behaviour has a positive effect on students' overall attainment and progress because it produces an environment conducive to study. The college has clear expectations of good behaviour and nearly all the students conform. The college has a small group of students who do exhibit challenging behaviour, but the teachers' good class management skills and interesting lessons ensure that they are nearly always sufficiently engaged in their work and the learning of others is only rarely affected. On the occasions when the learning of others is disrupted an 'on-call' system for removing students is used effectively and monitored by senior staff. All staff consistently follows the college's procedures for behaviour management. Bullying is a rarity and any incidents are effectively dealt with when brought to the attention of staff. Exclusion is only used when all other strategies have failed and procedures appropriately involve the governing body. The low exclusion rate is another indicator of good attitudes and behaviour that pervade learning in the college.

17. The personal development of students is good and relationships between students and with teachers are very good. Opportunities for students to accept responsibility and develop their initiative are unsatisfactory. Some students in Year 11 take part in a paired reading scheme with Year 7 students and others have been trained as peer group counsellors. However, there are no positions of responsibility within the college for students; some year groups have a year council but there is no college council, which reduces opportunities for students to play an active role in the running of the college community. Some take part in The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme that involves students in

community service. The multi-racial college community is harmonious and there is a high degree of respect shown by students towards feelings, values and beliefs that are different from their own. A high level of independent study is evident amongst Year 11 students, for example amongst students studying graphics in the completion of their course work working with their own projected timetable. In some classes lower down the college teachers have to keep a close eye on the students, as they easily became distracted and sometimes fail to complete their work.

18. The level of attendance of students is good and has risen to a better than average 93 per cent for the academic year 1999/2000. Unauthorised absence was 1.27 per cent. These figures are an improvement on the 1998/1999 figures when the college was judged to be broadly in line with the national average for colleges. The computerised attendance recording system is efficiently used to provide up-to-date data for staff and external agencies. The effective partnership the college has with the education welfare service and other external agencies, together with vigilant monitoring by college staff, has enabled this improvement to come about. The high level of attendance is a contributory factor to the good progress and rising levels of attainment of students within the college.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the previous inspection: it is now good. There are no significant differences between the overall teaching quality with 11-14 year-olds and that with 14-16 year-olds, preparing their GCSEs. Teaching is, however, generally best with Year 11 classes, where it generates and benefits from the students' singularly good attitudes and behaviour, as they prepare very seriously for their GCSE examinations. The quality of learning reflects that of the teaching closely: it too is good. As with teaching, nearly one-third of learning was very good or excellent in Year 11 and over three-quarters good or better.

20. Of the 205 lessons reported, teaching was very good or better in 24 per cent; it was good in a further 50 per cent and satisfactory in another 21 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in 5 per cent of the lessons – a large decrease since the previous inspection. Half of these lessons were in science, where teaching is unsatisfactory because it is not monitored or evaluated closely enough. Science teaching is, as a result, unsatisfactory.

21. One of the biggest improvements is in the way teaching in all subjects is now starting to take its part in raising the students' standards of literacy, but some inconsistencies between subjects lead to many fundamental errors of English persisting. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory throughout. Generally, the provision of extra support to help the students with special educational needs is effective, but the imprecision in the detail of some individual education plans is a weakness. The quality of teaching generally is, however, helped by the clearer snapshot assessments that put these and other students clearly into the picture of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

22. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in English, geography, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, (including community languages), music, religious education, business education, dance, drama and life skills. The largest proportions (above the college average) of very good or excellent teaching were in English, art and design, business education, history, design and technology, physical education and religious education. This was also the case with the quality of learning.

23. Now good, substantial improvements in the teachers' knowledge and understanding since the previous inspection also demonstrate the good quality of teaching. Lesson planning

is satisfactory in science and good in all other subjects, except business education and physical education where it is very good. Overall expectations of the students are good, but there are weaknesses in the expectations of higher attainers that mean these students are not given enough responsibility to push themselves to greater heights in some subjects. Nonetheless, the teaching methods used are good overall and student management in class is also, with a few exceptions, good. These characteristics all help good learning to take place.

24. The use of time, resources and support staff is good, as is on-going assessment. This means that the rate of the students' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good. The students complement this by usually working hard – a factor appreciated by the parents. Efforts to learn are good: students with English as an additional language are, for example, avid to improve their skills, showing a commitment and work rate that are the basis of their good progress.

25. The students' interest is good throughout; their concentration improves, but their independence as learners is weaker. Many do not take enough initiative, being happy to be fed information: this is a weakness. The students' knowledge of their learning is good, reflecting the good quality of assessment. The students with special educational needs learn well, as do those with English as an additional language, their learning becoming very good in Years 10 and 11. This is mainly due to the effective extra support they receive to help them improve, as individual education plans lack sufficient detail. Overall, homework helps learning satisfactorily. It is very effective in English, satisfactory in mathematics and science, but it is not always followed up thoroughly enough in science. The setting and use of homework to extend learning is unsatisfactory in music.

26. A feature of the good teaching in English is the variety of methods used. Teachers get the students to work well individually, in pairs and as groups, where they design work at suitable levels for the students' attainment. As a result, the students feel at ease, dealing, for instance, with sometimes-sensitive cultural and social issues. The teaching exploits the students' interest in fiction, as a basis for the above-average standards in literature. Good progress in mathematics is due to good teaching that reflects the effective common vision of how the subject should be taught. This emphasises real-life applications that let the students see the point of what they are doing, so raising motivation and the work rate that are also good. There is too wide a discrepancy in the quality of science teaching: it is unsatisfactory overall. This leads to inconsistencies in the quality of learning and to some waning of interest amongst the older students. The best science teaching gets the students to think deeply and critically about their work, but too much of the teaching – one quarter of that seen – is unsatisfactory. There is time-wasting, weak planning and work that allow the students to remain passive or to practise dangerously in experiments, as a result, standards in science are not rising at the same rate as those in subjects such as English, mathematics and design and technology.

27. Good teaching in other subjects is characterised by, for example, imaginative use of first-hand stimulating visual resources in art and design. Clearly shared learning objectives and high expectations make the students' confidence and self-esteem rise in the best design and technology teaching. Achievement follows and leads to the rapid increases in standards. In this subject, occasional weaknesses fail to make demands on the students to think for themselves. Graduated, varied teaching methods in geography lead to steady effective learning, with good features including consistently setting the lessons' scene and checking learning towards its end. Similarly good teaching in history gets the students to think as historians, but sometimes it does not challenge some to think deeply enough about issues. On the other hand, students' thinking skills are developed well by the good religious education teaching that concentrates on what is to be learned and on good examination techniques, for

example in the writing of essays, which leads to hard work, enthusiasm and good learning.

28. Suitably high expectations, uncomplicated demonstrations and useful self-help sheets typify the good teaching in ICT. Effective assessments raise standards through clear targets for improvement in this subject. The imaginative ways in which it exploits recently learned work to reinforce and to expand knowledge is a salient feature of good modern foreign languages teaching, where fun is a consistent aspect of the good learning and progress that occur in most lessons throughout. Music teaching is satisfactory, but lessons do have some imbalances in the activities used. Over-long explanations mean that the students cannot always get through the intended amount of work. Good teaching by physical education specialists includes incisive questioning to make the students think carefully about how they are doing. Good use is made of ICT in relevant aspects of this subject, but its use as an aid to learning across all subjects is unsatisfactory. There is a good quality of teaching in business studies and drama, with very good teaching bringing some very accomplished performances from the students in dance.

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

29. The college's appropriate ambition is to provide all students with a broad and balanced curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered are good, with some notable strengths for all students in Year 10 and Year 11, especially in the way they are prepared for transition to either further education or to the world of work. The learning opportunities are also good for the students in the hearing-impaired unit: they foster successfully social and personal development throughout the college. Though the curriculum displays much strength and some innovative ideas, there are areas of comparative weakness. The college does not fully comply with statutory requirements in its provision of ICT and design and technology amongst 14-16 year-olds.

30. Younger students in the 11 to 14 age-ranges are offered a curriculum that meets nearly all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Weaknesses are in the time allocated to subjects. For example, the time available for teaching science in Years 8 and 9 is below the national suggested level. In humanities, where geography, history and religious education are taught as part of an integrated programme, insufficient time is available for students in years 7 to 9 to cover the Agreed Leicester Syllabus in the required depth and time allocated to music is low. An adequate range of subjects is offered and the personal and social development of students is catered for by a recently introduced, well-resourced life skills course. Appropriately strong emphasis is given to raising the students' standards in basic skills of literacy and numeracy when they first enter the college, especially their literacy skills and there is effective policy and practice for those students who have English as an additional language, which raise standards.

31. The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 is broad, with well over 20 subjects available at GCSE. The curriculum has been improved by the successful introduction of a GNVQ foundation level course in Year 11. This development offers the few students who struggle with the demands of the National Curriculum an alternative route to gain academic qualifications. The college has also committed itself to social inclusion and its recently introduced alternative curriculum in Year 11 offers opportunities to a small group of disaffected students who might otherwise be poor attenders. This well planned course is designed to improve the students' basic skills and, again, provides a suitable opportunity to assist progress into post-16 education or training. The life skills course, which covers sex and drugs education satisfactorily, helps to provide for the students' social and personal development. Good curriculum provision is made for students with special education needs and for those for whom English is not a first language. The college is also developing an

imaginative policy for its talented and gifted students. This is partly reflected in the range of GCSE subjects offered, including the availability of extra courses such as additional mathematics and classical civilisation. In addition, the college offers high attaining Year 11 students an opportunity to visit a Cambridge college. Annually, a few students obtain places in Oxford or Cambridge. The college's great interest in its students can be seen in the ways it tracks carefully the further progress of those who leave.

32. Though the curriculum offered has been carefully planned and designed, there are still some areas of comparative weakness. The previous inspection report found weaknesses in the provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11. Religious education is both a popular and successful subject at GCSE, yet comparatively few students in Years 10 and 11 study religious education in college, as their parents withdraw them from the subject. There is a shortage, compared to national recommendations, in the time allocated to the teaching of science in both Years 10 and 11. Though the provision for graphics is good, not all students in Years 10 and 11 follow courses in design and technology; this is a breach of statutory requirements. The GCSE curriculum features a range of languages, including community languages such as Gujarati and Panjabi. However, though many students are fluent in two or more languages, they are limited to a choice of just one language at GCSE. This policy limits the recognition due to students who possess clear linguistic skills.

33. Careers education and guidance are particular strengths of the curriculum. The quality of the careers programme has received national recognition through the award of a Careers Mark. Many external organisations such as the education and business partnership, the local careers service and the city cluster organisation acknowledge the contribution the programme makes to informing students of the opportunities that exist beyond college, so demonstrating the college's commitment to promoting equal opportunities. Provision includes a well-planned and well-organised work experience programme. In addition, all students during their time in Years 10 and 11 undertake a work-related programme of study at a college of further education to help them to make informed decisions about which pathway to follow after GCSE. The college, in association with the local careers service, does sensitive advisory work to ensure that the decisions students take about their futures are viable and realistic.

34. Good provision is also made for out-of-college activities and much of this work is done in association with the college's community department. This combined provision exceeds the parents' perceptions of what is offered. Students have a good range of activities to choose from. Clubs catering for sport, art and design, dance, drama and ICT are well attended. Out-of-college music is strong and the college boasts a high-class steel band that has appeared at the Royal Albert Hall and other venues. A breakfast club operates and, via the community college, students can participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the Youth Achievement programme. Community links are further fostered by partnerships with various sectors of the community. The college hosts a number of Madrassah schools at the request of the Muslim community, although the opening of a local mosque has reduced this demand. The college's commitment to providing English as an additional language forms an important part of its community involvement. Community involvement also includes recently-established links with the local premier division football club and plans are being made to provide specialist football coaching for the college's students.

35. The college works effectively with other agencies. Its community links are strong, especially with the business organisations and many sections of the local community, though links with the African/Caribbean community are weaker. Strong working partnerships have been established with a number of further education colleges. Satisfactory links also exist with partner primary schools.

36. The college provides good opportunities for students' personal development. Opportunities for their spiritual development are satisfactory, there is very good moral provision and social and cultural opportunities are good. Strong promotion of the college's moral code leads to each student being valued within a very caring community. Sensitivity to students' religious and cultural backgrounds is reflected in many aspects of college life, including college meals where beef and pork are not served. Overall, however, there are gaps in the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and there is no effective overview of provision.

37. During the inspection, there was a good Year 9 assembly when students reflected on issues relating to AIDS. Two of the four assemblies seen, however, were unsatisfactory. Registrations do not provide opportunities for collective worship. Consequently students often have an unsatisfactory and sometimes poor quality start to the day. Also, the college still has not met the statutory requirements for daily collective worship since the previous inspection. For all 11-14 year-old students and those who take GCSE religious education, opportunities to reflect on their own views and to empathise with others are very good in religious education lessons. There is also sensitive management in history of sorrow songs in Year 8 studies of black people in America and in the feelings of horror at the manner of Thomas Becket's death. But planning for students' spiritual provision across the curriculum is patchy.

38. Staff, students and parents clearly share college values such as courtesy and respect for others. These are strongly promoted in the college's excellent statement on racism and in the excellent information to staff on the beliefs and practices of the college's main religious communities. Teaching and support staffs are impressive role models as they demonstrate their commitment to these values. Moral issues are consistently given prominence across the curriculum through English texts and in life skills, mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology, teachers provide some good opportunities for students to think about and make judgements on a range of moral issues. There is a good focus on exploring authority in drama; on population distribution in Brazil as it affects the rich and poor in geography and in religious education in Year 8 studies of animal rights and studies of the beliefs of religious groups about life and death with 14-16 year-olds.

39. There is very good promotion of good relationships and students' social development in the college through a strong community partnership and through the many valuable opportunities for paired and group work in lessons and clubs. In Year 9 dance there was an excellent opportunity for students to work together on still images. Collaborative displays in Year 11 geography, group presentations in history and the religious studies club were also impressive. Teamwork is promoted well through geography fieldwork. Also, in paired work in life skills, where presentations were creative and stimulating on topics such as violence and abortion. A very good careers programme and work-related curriculum prepares students well for their place in the wider community. Students also raise funds for charities and the steel band performs in a local church at Christmas. These activities give some opportunities for leadership and decision making, which are also provided through the Year 10 council and Year 11 support for younger students. But there are not enough planned opportunities for students to become decision-makers, for example in physical education, through a college council or in becoming monitors.

40. There are many opportunities to celebrate the cultural background of the students, staff and parents as well as fostering an appreciation of other cultures. These are particularly good in art and design and in religious education where non-religious education staff participate in sharing their religious and cultural experiences. Much good work in English addresses issues such as race and in music students learn to appreciate a range of music. History develops students' understanding of changes over time for women and working people and parents share their recipes for an innovative samosa-making business in business studies. Visits to London art galleries, theatre visits and workshops in drama provide some students with good cultural experiences. There is also very good community involvement, as parents and religious leaders share their cultures with the students.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

41. The procedures for ensuring students' welfare and child protection are very good and are a strength of the college. The college provides a caring, supportive environment where there are very good relationships between students and adults and between students themselves. Students starting in Year 7 settle quickly into college. Year 11 students act as mentors to these young students. This helps to create self-confidence and a sense of belonging in the larger college community. A strength of the pastoral system is the detailed knowledge that staff have about their students. Form tutors stay with their tutor group for the five years that students are at the college. They are responsible for monitoring and promoting students' personal development and academic progress. The work of form tutors is overseen by heads of year and regular meetings where issues concerning students are discussed ensure that problems are quickly identified and action taken. Students are well prepared for post-16 decisions through a very effective careers education programme that includes visits to colleges of further education and places of work. The college holds the Quality Standard Award for careers education and guidance.

42. The college has developed systematic procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress. This information forms the basis of a termly 'snapshot' report that identifies students' attainment and effort. This is used to inform parents and to help students develop individual targets to improve their work. Some subjects include on-going self-assessment procedures within their schemes of work. These help students to take an active role in monitoring their own performance and, as assessment data to inform curriculum planning and teaching strategies, they are effective in subjects such as mathematics, but are currently not a sufficiently established practice to ensure a consistent approach across the college. The detail of some individual education plans for students with a statement of special educational needs is too general for precise assessment of progress.

43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent with a series of effective strategies in place to identify any student whose attendance level is a cause for concern. The education welfare officer works in partnership with the college to monitor attendance levels and provides effective support. Excellent use is made of the computerised attendance recording system to identify patterns of non-attendance that enables pastoral staff to take immediate action. Students returning to college after an absence are supported by subject staff to catch up on missed work. At present there are no formal assessment and reintegration strategies in place for those students with poor attendance records who have been encouraged to return to college.

44. The college's procedures for monitoring and promoting good and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The college's expectations of good behaviour based on self-discipline and respect for others are clearly understood by even the youngest students. There is a range of sanctions that includes removal of students disrupting the learning of others from lessons. Oppressive behaviour is addressed through the life skills programme, which ensures that students know what action to take if incidents occur.

45. The life skills programme is wide ranging and makes a significant contribution to the personal development of students and preparation for life after college. Students in Year 11, for example, are given practical exercises on how to complete application forms and draft personal statements for colleges of further education. Year 8 students discuss the effect of the Human Rights Act on the population of war-torn countries. All students in Year 10 attend a college of further education one afternoon a week to follow a course related to a career of their choice.

46. The arrangements for child protection are very good. The child protection officer is experienced in the procedures involved and is conversant with recent changes to these procedures. There are appropriate links with relevant external support agencies. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow if an incident occurs and receive regular training in recognising signs of abuse.

47. Health and safety procedures are good, except in science. There are regular health and safety checks that involve a member of the governing body; responsibilities are taken seriously. Issues are discussed regularly and action taken recorded. Risk assessments have been undertaken in all areas, except science, which is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents' views of the college are very positive. They are comfortable about approaching it if problems occur. The effectiveness of the college's links with parents is very good and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the college is also very good. Most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and completed the questionnaire say the college enables students to make progress and expects them to work hard. Parents also feel that the teaching within the college is good.

49. The college attempts to involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and to work in partnership with it to ensure that all students achieve their potential. At the beginning of each year information is sent to parents on what their child will be studying during the year in all subjects. Parents of those studying for a GNVQ in business studies are regularly invited to meet with staff to discuss their progress and are given guidance on how to support their child. Many parents attend courses run by the community education team and some help with English classes for those for whom English is an additional language. Very good community relations are a strength of the college, seen, for instance, through the classes on the Koran run by community religious leaders that parents and students attend. The college has a full complement of governors, most of whom are parents.

50. The college measures carefully the attendance of parents at parents' evenings and other college functions. Parents' views are sought on a range of topics, normally through questionnaires. The information gained is used to inform future decisions such as changes to the college day and changes to format of parents' evenings.

51. Some parents expressed concern about the lack of information they received about the progress their child is making. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about progress, is very good. There are regular newsletters and the homework diary is a generally effective means of daily communication between home and college. Parents receive termly 'snapshot reviews' that inform them clearly of the grades students have been awarded for effort and attainment in all subjects and enables them to monitor progress. There are very well attended, bi-annual consultation evenings that give parents the opportunity to discuss 'snapshot reviews' with teaching staff. The college provides interpreters, a crèche and refreshment for parents, or for a person nominated by the parents, on these occasions. Targets to raise students' level of attainment are recorded in homework diaries based on the termly 'snapshot reviews'. At present, there are no annual reports to parents that review what students have learned during the course of the year and what they need to do to improve their work, but the snapshot system provides an effective alternative whilst the college researches improvements in conventional reporting.

52. The parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved with their annual reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

53. The principal's excellent leadership is the main reason for the continuing and above average rises in standards since the previous inspection and for the esteem in which the college is held in the local community. There have been no changes to the catchment other than the smooth adoption of over 200 students from a college that closed nearby. The leadership and management of most other key staff are very good. The principal is very strongly supported by a senior management team that has an effective range of complementary skills, covering relevant aspects of college life, including its place in the community and, particularly, making precise assessments of students' performance to raise standards. The college has, as a result, an excellent sense of commonly shared purpose and educational direction. Its coherent, all-embracing aims are fully reflected in its everyday running and life. Systems are very well documented in a thorough, readable staff handbook, the preface of which sets the clear tone of equality of opportunity that pervades all that is done. The college has twice won the Investors in People award and was commended as the best example of team collaboration in either the public or private sectors in the area. Teamwork is the college's real strength.

54. Delegation is very good. Middle management is effective amongst faculties and student support structures. There are particular strengths in the leadership of the English and

mathematics faculties and leadership in history, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education is also very good. There is a clear vision of how the subjects should be taught. Leadership in all other subjects is good, except business education where it is satisfactory and science where it is unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in some subjects, for example in the consistency of marking.

55. Procedures for the evaluation of performance are fully in place and increasingly effective, although not rigorous enough. Teaching is effectively monitored through the very good support structures for newly qualified teachers, collaborative teaching and through formal procedures that are implemented when persistent weaknesses occur. There is good practice in the evaluation of teaching in modern foreign languages, the expressive arts, design and technology, history and geography. Elsewhere, practice is less-well developed, particularly in science.

56. The line management structure through the vice and assistant-principals to heads of faculty provides a very effective basis for improving rigour. A system of annual reports on the work of faculties provides the basis of monitoring how improvements are being made. At present, the perceptions of its effectiveness are too disparate. Some heads of faculty are unclear about how the arrangements help to improve quality and standards. Although the regular meetings with line managers are carefully recorded and discussed, there are still some unresolved aspects of performance, for example in the management of science. Similarly, the absence of clear procedures for evaluating individual students' quality of writing from subject to subject on the part of senior management is a weakness.

57. Development planning is excellent. It covers staff training needs and professional review; it is tightly allied to the budget and results of initiatives such as student tracking are included. The current plan has relevant projects for improvement of literacy, numeracy, the spread of ICT across the curriculum and policy review on homework – one of the concerns of parents in their responses to the governors' questionnaire. Planning covers citizenship, a national priority, and is flexible enough to incorporate issues such as excellence in cities, performance management and building developments. The preparation and monitoring of its running are effectively aimed at raising standards: continuous improvements amongst 14 and 16 year-olds' tests and examination results demonstrate its worth.

58. The college has a widely shared commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed is very good. It sets demanding targets for improvement and attains them. The analysis of assessment data is excellent. Comprehensive information is the basis of leadership's detailed, effective student performance tracking procedures. It is the success of these that is one of the main reasons for the college's rising attainment profile.

59. The college's strong emphasis upon providing effectively for the students with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and on community education is indicative of its effective provision for all. The college supports and benefits from its local community through participation and leadership in business partnerships and national urban initiatives to bring the interests of decision-makers together. The college is a leader in promoting a community spirit and benefits from the extra interest its activities generates, for example in the appointment of governors, for which there is a waiting list for membership.

60. The governors satisfactorily shape the direction of the college and are given a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors support the college vigorously and hold it satisfactorily to account, although they do not regularly check the successes or otherwise of some of their important decisions, for example the recent alterations to the college day. The governors fulfil their statutory obligations satisfactorily in all respects other than in the provision of a daily act of collective worship, ICT to 14-16 year-olds and all required aspects of design and technology. There is a weakness in the management of computers and their use in each subject, so the college is unable to verify that provision does meet the statutory requirements.

61. The college is fully staffed and the match of teachers' qualifications to the subjects they teach is satisfactory. Procedures for staff training are very good. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The increase in numbers has resulted in significant overcrowding, however the college makes good use of the accommodation, which is generally well maintained. Standards are adversely affected by unsatisfactory accommodation for mathematics, design and technology, drama, physical education and special educational needs. Disadvantages include a lack of specialist provision and cramped conditions. A substantial building programme is in hand to address these problems.

62. The quality of resources for learning is generally satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in the provision of ICT resources in design and technology and music. Other subjects also lack computers: this inhibits the provision of some required learning experiences. However, the provision of resources within the ICT department is good.

63. The central library provides a good resource area with computer workstations providing Internet access and CD ROM facilities. It is well furnished and has a congenial atmosphere for learning. It is now too small for the increased student roll and this does limit access to one-year group per day at lunchtimes. This is a weakness. The library is well used by the students and over 7000 of the 12000 books in stock have been loaned out at some time during the past year. There is also a loan service for CD-ROMs and videos. There is a satisfactory range of books in most subjects with good provision in English, modern foreign languages and religious education. However, book provision for physical education and community languages is unsatisfactory; for example, there is only one bi-lingual dictionary in Panjabi and none in any of the other community languages.

64. The college provides very good value for money, based on excellent financial management. The budgetary procedures employed are sound and are well understood by the staff. The efficient way that the college's finances are managed has been confirmed in the last two auditors' reports. Planning for expenditure is very well organised. The college successfully uses formula funding: decisions are based upon a clear rationale and are appropriately related to educational priorities in the development plan. The college also receives various specific grants, which are for designated purposes. These funds are, likewise, deployed efficiently and effectively, helping the college to achieve its educational objectives. Expenditure on staffing is in the lower quartile for secondary institutions and the quality of the financial planning, and rigour by which the budget is managed, has allowed the college to reduce its annual rollover significantly.

65. Good use is made of new technology particularly in the college's administration; it is more piecemeal in subjects. Where new technology has been most successfully deployed, expenditure has been thoroughly planned. For example, recent investment in the computerised registration system was only undertaken once sufficient staff training had been provided, reducing the scope for errors. The early results of this innovation include a further improvement in the already above average levels of attendance. New technology has been successfully applied to other areas of administration including staff recruitment and the

production and distribution of the college's prospectus. By making a prudent use of the Internet, the college has secured significant savings in reproduction and postage costs. Such enterprising use of new technology improves the college's efficiency. Financial management is not only based on sound procedures. The college's senior managers have a very good understanding of the principles of best value, which are rigorously applied. Senior staff use comparative data well, ensure that competition is applied when buying contracted-out services and consult all relevant parties when planning expenditures and curriculum changes. The benefits of challenge are also recognised, though the governing body is not sufficiently critical whenever it examines the college's financial management.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. The governors and staff should address the following weaknesses in their post-inspection action plan for further improvements:

- (1) Improve the rigour and frequency of the evaluation of teaching with a view to improving performance and also to celebrate good practice more widely. Do this by:
 - using the line management structure more rigorously in its evaluation and reporting on the quality of education provided;
 - making sure that the teaching challenges all the students equally, especially the higher-attainers by improving their opportunities to research and learn with less reliance on the teachers.(Paragraphs: 5, 23, 56, 96, 102, 133, 182)
- (2) Improve strategic leadership in science by:
 - ensuring there is greater direction and purpose in the organisation of the subject through:
 - improving planning in the faculty;
 - monitoring more stringently performance to raise standards;
 - clarifying responsibilities;
 - conducting risk assessments in line with policy.(Paragraphs: 54, 56, 101)
- (3) Improve the way that senior leadership and management monitor the quality of learning by establishing a formal, regular scrutiny of the full range of written work to make sure that students try equally hard in each subject.
(Paragraph: 56)
- (4) Improve the precision of target-setting in individual education plans to make it simpler to make sure the targets are being met.
(Paragraphs: 6, 21, 25, 42)
- (5) Improve the curriculum by:
 - refining the management of ICT to make sure the college can show clearly how provision meets the legal requirements for 14-16 year-olds, particularly in the use of computer technology in design, manufacturing, graphics and control technology.
 - ensuring compliance with the regulations on providing a course in design and technology for students in Years 10 and 11.
 - increasing the time allocation for the study of music for 11-14 year-olds.(Paragraphs: 63, 78, 97, 102, 140, 165)
- (6) Improve the quality and frequency of assemblies.
(Paragraphs: 37, 61)

In their action plan the governors and staff should also address the following comparative weakness:

- Emphasise the need for students to share a responsibility for their actions outside as well as inside lessons. (Paragraph: 17)

UNIT FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

67. The local education authority maintains a special unit for students with hearing impairment within the college. Currently, 7 students are taught part-time by specialist teachers who also provide other good forms of learning support including liaison with parents and guardians. In other respects, including most lessons, the students are fully integrated into the life of the college.

68. The local education authority and the college make very good provision for the education of the students in the unit. The specialist teachers attached to the unit have subject training which covers most subjects of the curriculum. Thus, they are able to teach the subjects from which students are withdrawn such as English and humanities, to prepare them for other lessons and to discuss with them any difficulties they might have encountered in lessons. Other teachers respond well to clear guidance on how to meet the needs of students with hearing impairment. Students benefit from good quality teaching, so they make good progress in their learning. An example of excellent learning was observed in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, and good learning was noted in a Year 11 science tutorial and Year 8 lessons in English and geography. Good teaching and learning result from the positive response made by students to the high expectations that teachers have of their effort and achievement. Because relationships within the unit are so good and because students are so well integrated into the college they gain in self-esteem and become confident communicators.

69. The specialist staff members of the unit share a strong commitment to the academic and personal progress of students. Records of progress are well maintained and reviews are held at appropriate intervals. The targets set for students are usually achievable within given time limits so that they have a positive effect. Transition plans are established to support students' progress into the next stage of their education or training after leaving college.

PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

70. The standards achieved by students who are learning English as an additional language in all years are good and most make good progress towards their individual targets. Observations of lessons show that learners make progress because they are fully involved by committed teachers. A good example of this commitment is the lunchtime and evening 'Booster' reading sessions to help students improve their skills. Students are well catered for, either by in-class support or by specific planning for their needs. Liaison between all teachers is good and this helps ensure effective teaching. Students progress well, as they are taught to read with insight and many can read challenging texts. Some of their writing is accurate and well presented. The more confident learners are able to express their own viewpoint convincingly. However, spelling is often poor. Teachers are promoting good practice in speaking, reading and writing. Language development teachers work effectively alongside 'mainstream' teachers to help all students benefit from appropriate language practice. Language support teachers take an active part in teaching and marking students' work. This 'partnership' teaching programme is very effective.

71. Teaching is interesting and exciting and teachers feel free to experiment and innovate. They have proved to be successful in repeating and refining what they have found to be effective with their own students. Teachers share successes and explore failures with their colleagues, learning from each other. Lessons were observed of some learners working towards being autonomous, confident speakers of English. The teachers were equally rewarded by the enthusiasm of the students starting along that path. Most learners were interested in language and uninhibited in using whatever they had learned as a foundation upon which to build when further opportunities arose. Students are involved in active tasks

that involve discussion. Students successfully work alongside bilingual peers fluent in English. This stimulates English language learning. Teachers worked easily with differing levels of competence. Some learners had a cursory reading knowledge of English, some a thorough reading knowledge, a few a high degree of listening comprehension and reading ability, others a good degree of aural-oral proficiency. The teachers of English as an additional language were able to diagnose and select according to the particular situation of a specific class or student and adapt materials and techniques accordingly. Crown Hills has delegated responsibility under a Standards Fund Grant for Ethnic Minority and Travellers' Achievement. This funding is used well to support bilingual students.

72. There are good policies and procedures, which provide coherent course of study. These are necessary as teachers are confronted with groups of mixed-attainment learners, united only by the fact that they meet regularly for their English class. Teachers use the mainstream classroom as an appropriate, active learning place for learning English by students who are beginners or bilingual learners of the language. Occasionally, students are withdrawn when special, separate attention is considered appropriate. Use of mother tongue is encouraged and students can switch between languages naturally, easily and without any confusion. This is good practice, as it improves confidence. For all initial English learners the target is to progress beyond English language level 1 within a year of starting. Most students confidently reach or pass this target. Students moving into the mainstream curriculum achieve predicted grades and levels.

73. Where a new student's progress is slow or there is a clear learning difficulty, referral is made to the special needs teachers. There are regular, productive meetings between language support and special needs teachers to exchange information about students.

74. The teaching of English as an additional language has made progress since the previous inspection. Teachers use a range of different techniques and approaches which include; more explicit teaching with attention to word and sentence-making skills; an emphasis on learning rather than completing coursework or getting through set texts and there is an increase in the opportunities for whole class interaction.

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	205
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	111

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	20	50	21	5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the college's students

Students on the college's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the college's roll	1204
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	285

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	42
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	224

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	1111

Student mobility in the last college year	No of students
Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	79
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	5.8
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	1.2
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	129	113	242

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	63	98	69
	Girls	66	66	54
	Total	129	164	123
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	54 (59)	68 (53)	51 (45)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	20 (21)	37 (24)	12 (13)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	59	65	37
	Girls	67	54	46
	Total	126	119	83
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	52 (52)	49 (51)	34 (39)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	19 (14)	7 (20)	2 (12)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	105	108	213

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	45	95	102
	Girls	53	101	106
	Total	98	196	208
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	College	46 (40)	92 (88)	98 (95)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	College	36.69
	National	38.4

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	College	13	69.2
	National		N/A

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	42
Black – other	41
Indian	731
Pakistani	75
Bangladeshi	7
Chinese	0
White	76
Any other minority ethnic group	119

Exclusions in the last college year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	5	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	30	1
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	8	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	76
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	33
Total aggregate hours worked per week	722

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.9
Key Stage 4	21.1

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3 149 228
Total expenditure	3 212 321
Expenditure per student	2 668
Balance brought forward from previous year	53 617
Balance carried forward to next year	96 092

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1204
Number of questionnaires returned	401

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	51	42	4	2	1
My child is making good progress in college.	47	46	2	0	4
Behaviour in the college is good.	49	39	5	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	44	8	3	2
The teaching is good.	48	43	3	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	40	11	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	47	38	6	1	8
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	1	1	3
The college works closely with parents.	37	45	8	2	7
The college is well led and managed.	47	40	3	1	9
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	40	5	2	4
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	38	6	5	13

Other issues raised by parents

Individual responses commented upon the library availability; disruption caused by transitions from primary schools; the uneven way in which homework was spread through the week; the poor accommodation and sports outside the college week. A number of parents insisted the college had come on in leaps and bounds since the previous inspection and parents of students with special educational needs were particularly keen for them to do well.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

75. Results have risen significantly since the previous inspection, particularly in the levels achieved by students in national tests at age 14 and in GCSE English literature.

76. In national tests at age 14, over half the students are reaching National Curriculum Level 5 or above, which is still below the national average, but represents good achievement for these students and an improving trend for the college. Fewer than 10 per cent reached the same level at the time of the previous inspection.

77. Further improvement takes place for students preparing for GCSE examinations, and the number achieving higher grades, A*-C, in English has been close to the national average in recent years. In 1999, boys at the college were indeed ahead of their counterparts nationally in achieving the higher grades. In 2000, however, attainment in English GCSE suffered a slight dip, with just under half the candidates here achieving higher grades, A*-C. The faculty is investigating this, particularly in the light of the English literature results, where the same students were nearly 10 per cent above the national average for higher grades, with both boys and girls doing well. Results in English literature were also better than in English in 1999, but the difference between the subjects was not so marked. Although it is not easy to indicate trends, given these fluctuations, it is apparent that compared with candidates in other schools and colleges, boys at the college do comparatively well.

78. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirms the pattern of standards seen in tests and examinations, and shows that students achieve well between the ages of 11 and 14. By the time they are 14, most students write in a variety of styles and sometimes at some length. They read enthusiastically and make notes on the books they read. Most present their work well and take a pride in redrafting it, often using computers. In lessons, they demonstrate good speaking and listening skills, and read aloud with expression. This progress in lessons accelerates between the ages of 14 and 16, where the same skills are refined; students produce sensitive and thoughtful work on a range of topics and in a variety of written styles. Presentation is usually good, and most redrafted work is effectively word-processed. Much of the writing produced is in response to literature, and the best of this is of a very high quality, including responses to texts written over 100 years ago and to contemporary issues. Students are adept at note making: a class was observed making useful notes whilst watching an excerpt from *Romeo and Juliet* on video. Most students have a good knowledge of their own learning, and many will be aware that their work is approaching GCSE grade C standard, although not yet securely at that level.

79. Almost all students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, despite most not having English as their first language. This means that the standard of their English is often low on entry. Some students receive extra support in lessons because of their limited experience with English, and they make good progress, as do students with special educational needs, who also receive good support in lessons from extra teachers or learning assistants.

80. The quality of teaching is good and this undoubtedly contributes to the achievement of students. The teaching seen during the inspection was never less than satisfactory, with any age group; it was mostly good, sometimes very good or excellent. Teachers here know their subject well and also know their students well, often teaching the same groups for three years. They have high expectations of their students and control their lessons well. Lessons are well planned and make good use of the time and resources available. Teachers use a

variety of methods; often basing the work on a fictional text, inviting responses to the text in paired work, group work and whole class discussion. Relevant work sheets are used, sometimes differentiated according to the attainment of different groups of students, as most of the teaching is done in mixed attainment groups. Students learn through reading aloud, discussing and writing. They concentrate well on their work and can achieve much in the course of a typical lesson. Most participate actively in lessons. A good example was in a lesson based on the novel *Buddy*, where six students represented characters in the story, in role, with the rest of the class posing questions to those in the 'hot seats'. Teachers are not afraid of raising sensitive issues, and texts are studied that deal with racial discrimination and prejudice. Students are encouraged to join in discussions on the ethics of arranged marriages and the dietary laws of different religions, and different viewpoints are treated with respect. The interest shown in fiction is well used by teachers, who are also adept at enlarging the vocabulary of students, who show much interest in words and their meanings. Spelling tests are based on vocabulary relevant to the topic or book under consideration, and students take these very seriously.

81. Positive attitudes by students to their work can also be identified as contributing to their progress. Behaviour in lessons is always satisfactory, and is mostly good or better. Excellent attitudes and behaviour were observed in one lesson. Students relate well to each other and to their teachers, and are well motivated towards their work. They respond quickly and well when asked to work in pairs or groups, and are keen to volunteer ideas in whole class discussions. A few enthusiasts fail to raise their hands when wishing to contribute, and the concentration of a few wanders, but most remain focussed throughout lessons and are eager to learn. They ask for help when they need it and respect the beliefs and values of others in discussions.

82. All students take both English and English literature in examinations at 16, with nearly all being entered for GCSE in both subjects. More, in fact, are entered for literature. A few are entered for certificates of achievement. Drama is taught within the expressive arts faculty, and is a separate option at GCSE. The English faculty is well led by an experienced teacher, who, though relatively new to this post, is already giving a strong sense of direction to the subject. He has a well-qualified team with a range of experience, who each have their own well-resourced teaching rooms. Most have access to video players, but ICT is currently under used. The faculty has identified this as an area for development.

Literacy across the curriculum

83. The college is making very good provision to overcome the clear language difficulties most students have in coping with the demands of the curriculum. Students start, in most cases, with a limited use of correct idiomatic English. The college helps them to overcome much of this language deficit by the time they leave at the age of 16.

84. Provision is good and literacy is a main priority for the college. Much current improvement is unplanned: the National Literacy Strategy has not yet been implemented to any great extent. Notwithstanding, some of its features are followed. Key words are taught in several areas, including English, drama, art and design, science, humanities and business studies, and many students acquire a good vocabulary of subject-related words. Effective use of extended writing is a common feature of work in modern foreign languages, English and humanities. Students have the opportunity to read aloud, in art and design, drama and English, for example, discussion work features in many lessons, including English and religious education. Spelling tests are used regularly by some teachers. Note-making skills are taught in the humanities, art and design, English and business studies. Reading schemes, including reading logs, are used both in English and modern foreign languages. But, inconsistency in teaching for literacy means that many students persist in poor spelling and inaccurate grammar, such as the frequent omission of determiners before nouns.

85. A recently appointed literacy co-ordinator has instituted several initiatives in line with the National Literacy Strategy. Standardised tests establish the true level of attainment of Year 7 students. 'Module' lessons, with a literacy focus, have been introduced in Year 7, with students grouped according to attainment. These allow for specialist staff to teach students with special needs or those new to English in smaller groups. Members of the English faculty teach other groups. A literacy focus has also been incorporated into all schemes of work for English, with appropriate plans for information to be shared about literacy levels with all heads of faculty in the near future. Effective provision, including voluntary after-college sessions, helps students with particular problems to prepare for examinations. Paired reading between students aged 11 and 16 has been successfully introduced and is being extended. Student organisers include lists of basic words, but not yet subject-related vocabulary. There is a pilot scheme to develop wider use of dictionaries and thesauruses outside English lessons, which is just one of the responses to an audit across faculties to establish the extent to which a literacy focus has been incorporated into lessons and to identify needs. It is intended that literacy feature in all schemes of work by the end of the college year, with relevant training and resourcing in place, and with designated literacy staff in all faculties. Better information on student standards on entry is being sought, and better provision for students for whom English is a new language is being planned.

MATHEMATICS

86. Mathematics is a successful subject. All students are helped to think for themselves and learn to work independently at solving problems and applying mathematics to real situations.

87. Standards are improving and in 2000, results in tests for 14 year-olds were in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Results in these tests have risen steadily for the last four years, by more than the national trend. Standards in GCSE have also risen and in 2000 the results for both boys and girls were very close to average. Both the boys' and the girls' results rose from below average in 1999, the girls more steeply so than the boys.

88. In the work seen during the inspection standards were in line with these results, and in a number of lessons students were seen working at higher levels. By the end of Year 9 standards are average. Students use the four rules of number confidently in arithmetic and algebra and have a good understanding of shapes, symmetry and angles. All can record statistical information on tally charts and the more able plot graphs, analyse the information and come to logical conclusions. Students build successfully on this basic understanding. By the end of Year 11 standards are average. Most students collect and analyse information, using frequency tables and cumulative frequency curves to find the median and interquartile ranges. They understand more abstract ideas such as probability. Students in lower sets understand that probability is a way of measuring the chance that a particular event will occur; most can use tree diagrams to work out the likelihood that two related events will happen. All have a sound grasp of the basic ideas of algebra and middle and higher groups have a good understanding of the properties of algebraic functions. For example, they solve quadratic equations generated in investigations, choosing the most appropriate method depending on the particular equation.

89. In all years, students of all levels of ability learn well and make good progress. In Year 7 many arrive below average in their ability to carry out calculations and solve simple problems, but effective teaching quickly gives them the skill and confidence to tackle more difficult work independently and with pleasure. To have reached average standards from this low base represents good achievement. The achievement of the large minority – about one

third – whose English is very limited on arrival, is very good. In Years 10 and 11 students' achievement is good. Although results in 2000 were average, this group of students were below average in what they could do at the end of Year 9 and had to work hard to achieve average levels in their examinations this year. Students in the current Year 11 are also making good progress and achieving higher standards than their test results at the end of Year 9 predicted. Their ability to carry out investigations is particularly good and highest-attaining students are keen to go beyond the level expected of them by researching and using mathematical techniques, such as calculus, that are outside the required syllabus.

90. Good progress and achievement is due to good teaching in a well-run department. The head of department has a clear vision of the way mathematics should be taught and all the staff share this. Mathematics teaching is based on problems and applications that interest students and make them want to persevere and find out more. For example, some of the work on shapes and measurement in Year 9 is centred on designing a chair and students draw the plan and elevation based on their own observations. Work in books shows how keen and interested students are when they can see the point of the calculations and measurements they have to make. Learning is consequently good.

91. The department has maintained the common philosophies and consistent approach to teaching noted in the previous report in spite of many staff changes since then. Nearly half the full time teachers are newly or recently qualified but the teaching is good. Teaching in almost all lessons is at least satisfactory and in nearly nine out of ten lessons in Years 7 to 9 and three quarters of lessons in Years 10 and 11 teaching is good or better. An instance of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 10 was due to discipline being insufficiently firm. There is some very good teaching and in a few lessons the teaching is excellent. Teachers use effective ways to give students ownership of their work. For example, when calculating percentages a Year 8 group worked through a real life problem finding out the cost of rail tickets for a family when a number of discounts are offered. As reinforcement they made up a series of special offers and vouchers of their own and gave these to their partners to work out. In this way what could have been an arid exercise became fun.

92. Excellent teaching in the lowest sets helps these students, including those with special educational needs, to make at least good, and sometimes very good, progress, so that those who have very little grasp of mathematics when they start in Year 7 usually leave with a GCSE grade. Students whose home language is not English respond well to the practical nature of the courses and quickly find themselves able to cope with the work. The highest attaining students are encouraged to reach the highest grades and exceptional students – one or two in most years - are able to take GCSE a year early and spend Year 11 studying for the additional mathematics GCSE course.

93. Teachers have visited primary schools to see the National Numeracy Strategy in use and introduced the best features - starters based on mental mathematics and good summaries at the ends of lessons - into the department's teaching schemes. Sometimes, however, starters such as quizzes and games take too long and erode the time for the main focus of the lesson.

94. Students' behaviour is usually good. They are interested, keen to do well and work well individually or in groups as required. However, there is a small amount of poor behaviour. This is partly caused by unsatisfactory teaching and is also due to the inadequate accommodation that leads to a few lessons being taught in rooms a long way from the main mathematics block. Teachers in such rooms are too far from the support of colleagues and do not have easy access to the department's discipline procedure.

95. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. Standards have risen so that the proportions of students achieving average levels in tests and at GCSE have doubled. Teaching has improved and is now more lively and engaging. Resources, particularly the supply of textbooks, have improved and are sufficient. The main area for improvement now is presentation and spelling. Some students' work is neat and easy to read but many lay out their work untidily so that their reasoning is hard to follow. Spelling is also often inaccurate, and although teachers emphasise the spelling of new mathematical terms when they are introduced, mistakes in books are not corrected and are still made, even by older students.

96. The department is well led and organised. There are very good systems for assessing students and putting them into appropriate teaching groups. This is contributing to the rise in standards. The head of department monitors the department's effectiveness through rigorous checking of test results and students' books. This has led to the department adapting the curriculum in order to improve girls' results. The emphasis on investigation work appears to favour boys, so the department now includes more work to consolidate skills, while keeping the focus on applications. Girls' results have since improved.

Numeracy across the curriculum

97. The head of the mathematics department has carried out a survey of opportunities for reinforcing numeracy in other subjects and identified areas where mathematics teaching can support them. For example, he has worked with the head of science to recognise formulae commonly used in science. Mathematics teachers use these when teaching use of formulae. Where students have to apply mathematics in other subjects they do so competently. They measure accurately in design and technology and use and interpret graphs and statistics in geography. In business education students apply number with understanding and accuracy in many lessons. For example, they use and improve their skills when dealing with topics such as production and ordering.

SCIENCE

98. The proportions of students achieving the expected Level 5 or higher in the 1999 National Curriculum tests were below national averages. The average point score was also below average compared with all and similar schools. There was no difference between the performance of the boys and of the girls at this stage. Over the period 1997-1999 test results fluctuated, but were consistently below average. Results for 2000 show a slight improvement, but remain below average and are similar to those found at the previous

inspection. Results in science were similar to those in English, but well below those in mathematics.

99. In GCSE examinations, the proportions of students obtaining a higher grade, A*-C pass in 1999 was significantly below national averages. On the basis of average point scores, the boys' performance was better than that of the girls overall. The 1999 GCSE results show a considerable decline from those of 1997 and 1998 when they were above average in the one and about average in the latter. Results for 2000 indicate an improvement with boys and girls performing similarly.

100. Inspection evidence shows the students achieving slightly higher standards than those shown in the national tests for 14 year-olds. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection and standards are now about those expected. Standards in lessons are variable. Despite grouping arrangements by attainment, there is a broad range of attainment in each class and in many lessons, expectations of achievement are set at the middle to lower level, so higher-attainers are not stretched enough. Standards are also inhibited because the work does not cover frequently enough applications to everyday life. For example, Year 9 students have a good knowledge of the nature of electricity, but do not apply this to more complicated circuits and applications. Others have a good understanding of the structure of the heart, but cannot relate structure to the heart's job of feeding blood to the body. The students make good progress in developing their experimental and investigational skills, but there are too few opportunities for them to plan and conduct their own investigations. The students have the skills to conduct experiments planned by the teachers or themselves, can record observations and take measurements and present data in the form of graphs and charts, reaching at least average levels of attainment.

101. By the end of Year 9, most students achieve at least satisfactory and often good standards in relation to their prior attainment. Students with special educational needs make good progress because the teachers have high, but realistic expectations of them. The same is true for those students with English as an additional language. Generally, the improvement of the students' literacy skills is well supported, with most having a satisfactory and sometimes good understanding of basic scientific terminology. Numeracy skills are satisfactory, but the students' ICT skills are not well developed, as there is a lack of computers to improve learning in the subject.

102. Most students' attainment is well below the national average when they start the college as 11 year-olds. From the work seen in the inspection, most achieve well by the time they reach 16 in relation to this: they make good progress. Standards are, however, below those expected and show a slight drop over attainment in recent examinations. This is against the college trend of improvement. Students in Year 11 know that plants can reproduce asexually, but many do not understand the way genetic information is passed from parent to offspring and the importance of asexual reproduction. Sometimes progress is very good, as when a group grasped quickly the idea of energy conversion. Practical skills improve and the students are able to draw conclusions that are consistent with evidence, explaining them showing scientific knowledge and understanding. Investigative skills and planning and evaluating their own investigations are not well developed. Middle and lower attainers reach standards that are in line with or better than might be expected. The students with special educational needs make good progress, because their teachers have high but achievable expectations. The same is true of those with English as an additional language. As with 11-14 year-olds, a significant number of higher-attaining students achieve less than should be expected, as the tasks they are given are not sufficiently demanding and because they cannot relate the work to everyday situations. Their depth of knowledge and understanding is too shallow to enable them to achieve the highest GCSE grades. Overall, students attain equally well across the attainment targets: life processes and living things;

materials and their properties; physical processes and experimental and investigative science.

103. Students' attitudes and responses to science and their behaviour are good overall. Students in the 11-14-age-range are enthusiastic experimenters, willing to try out new ideas and techniques and keen to pose questions. Good relationships lead to effective collaboration in practical groups. 14-16 year-olds have less positive attitudes and some lack real enthusiasm, though the will to broaden their knowledge and skills is high. They are good listeners, but their responses lack fluency and are short on scientific questions or ideas.

104. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall: it ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory, with more unsatisfactory teaching in science than in any other subject. Teaching is better amongst the keener 11-14 year-olds than later. The discrepancy in teaching quality means that not all students have the same experience of science as they move through the college. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, about three-quarters were taught satisfactorily or better, indeed over half were good or better, but one-quarter, a large proportion were unsatisfactorily taught. There is inadequate monitoring of teaching and learning and insufficient sharing of good practice. The differences in teaching quality between lessons produces marked differences in the students' responses. The most effective teaching occurs when the teacher's good knowledge and expertise combine with high expectations, enthusiasm and effective planning. These give the students confidence: they respond positively and try hard. In these better lessons, teachers share the lesson's aims with the class, challenge the students with carefully constructed open-ended questions to explore understanding and to make them think critically. This happened in a Year 9 class exploring combustion as an instance of chemical reaction. The pace of work was high, so learning was effective and progress good. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by time wasting in the lesson, slow pace and insufficient learning in any depth. Other weaknesses are in planning that does not identify specific learning outcomes. In some lessons that were taught satisfactorily, the students were too passive, so they did not learn through experiences and progress was less. Teaching fails too often to prepare the students to write carefully at length about their science experiences.

105. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Strategic leadership lacks direction and purpose. There is an insufficiently rigorous emphasis upon planning or upon monitoring and evaluation to raise standards. The day-to-day management of the faculty is satisfactory and the staff works well as a team. Responsibilities in the faculty are not well defined and there is a lack of regular monitoring of the curriculum. Risk assessment is not carried out and this affects standards and safety adversely, with for example, some potentially dangerous practice in a lesson in which the students were using acids.

106. Overall there has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. GCSE results have improved from well below to just below national averages. Students with special educational needs now make good progress but, sometimes, higher attainers still underachieve. There is now more unsatisfactory teaching. Both accommodation and technician support have improved. The use of ICT has increased though there are still deficiencies in some applications such as data logging and a lack of management of textbook provision undermines standards for some students.

ART AND DESIGN

107. Attainment has improved since the last inspection. By the time the students reach 14 years of age, their attainment is average. Attainment in Year 9 lessons is similar to this. Recent changes in the way the curriculum is organised mean that younger students do more art and design. This, coupled with a complete revision of what is taught has improved the

attainment of students in Years 7 and 8. There is no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls at this age, and students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

108. In 2000 the attainment of 16 year-olds was above the national average. Girls do better than boys but the attainment of boys is still better than the national average, and that of the girls is significantly so. When compared with the other subjects they do both boys and girls often achieve higher grades in art and design. Students who are currently in the last year of their GCSE course show average attainment. Students who have completed one term of this examination course have levels of attainment better than average.

109. Combining the materials used to make art and design creatively is a good feature of the work of all students. For example, Year 11 students making three-dimensional pieces based on an autobiographical theme use colour, surface and texture which drawing upon their own cultural heritage. Similarly Year 10 students working on a natural form theme combined paint and collage to evoke the natural world producing images with strong pattern qualities, which again are related clearly to their different cultural backgrounds.

110. Teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject, demonstrated in their understanding of the theory and the practice of art and design. Most projects have a clear structure and lessons are broken down into easily understood parts. Such careful planning supported by clear guidance about how work might be approached, often illustrated by inspiring examples prepared by teachers, helps students to clarify their thinking and promotes high standards, as in Year 8 lesson on memory. Similarly, where stimulating first hand visual resources are used and students respond directly through observation drawing - as in Year 10 project on fish and shellfish. Students readily develop initial ideas into different creative avenues such as prints and paintings. Where work is less challenging, for example a copying task, students are content to expend little creative effort with the result that attainment is lowered. New projects are often introduced with the aid of worksheets. Good discussion is promoted where these are well used and students are effectively encouraged in their use of a specialist vocabulary. Worksheets are not always so well used. On such occasions too much time is devoted to this introductory task and students are demotivated.

111. Responding with enjoyment, students have a positive attitude to their learning. Behaviour is good and many students show high levels of motivation both in the work done in class and in the sketchbook work done at home. For example, a Year 10 group had nearly full sketchbooks after only one term of study. On the few occasions where attitudes are less good there is a direct link between the level of challenge in the lesson and less positive attitudes of students.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards of attainment are above the national average at the end of Years 9 and 11. The proportion of students gaining GCSE higher grades, A*-C, in 2000 was above the national average. There has been a substantial rise in standards over the last three years, from well below average results in the 1998 examinations.

113. Standards of attainment in work seen at the end of Year 9 are above the national average. Students have a good understanding of the design process and use it effectively to design and make products from wood, metal, plastics and textiles. For example, students make well-constructed wooden containers for a variety of purposes such as to hold jewellery, which are very well finished and often decorated to meet consumer needs and wants. Students demonstrate good construction skills when they make fabric bags of different kinds and use computerised sewing machines to design and make suitable logos for their bags, simulating industrial techniques. Students often reach well above average standards in graphic products. Formal drawing skills and sketching ideas are of a high order and students use colours skilfully and effectively to present their work clearly and attractively. Understanding of components and systems in electronics is below average. Students construct simple alarm circuits but are unable to explain the purpose of components or how the system works. They have satisfactory construction skills for assembling components onto printed circuit boards but are heavily reliant on the teacher to guide them through the process.

114. Standards of attainment overall are above average at the end of Year 11. Students have good practical skills, producing design work that demonstrates creativity and originality, for example in fashion garments in textiles. Skills in working with resistant materials are of a high order and students take great pride in successfully joining materials accurately and smoothing them to give a good finish. Drawing skills are frequently well above average. Students demonstrate patience, creativity and skills of a high order when they, for example, sketch ideas for their projects making effective use of colour. Presentation of work is very good and students have a very good sense of design. Students have a good knowledge of food products and nutrition. They evaluate commercial products critically for nutritional value, taste and texture. Coursework for examinations is well structured and clearly and attractively presented because students are provided with very good guidance from teachers and they put much time and effort into achieving good standards. Written work is of a lower standard when students are required to complete written work independently, for example, under examination conditions.

115. Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9. Students make very good progress with learning to use hand and machine tools safely. They learn to measure and mark materials accurately, which both contributes to their numeracy skills and enables them to construct good quality products from resistant materials and textiles. Students develop very good drawing skills, which effectively support their communication in writing. Students achieve well because they consistently work productively and sustain concentration in lessons and are keen to learn. Students' attitudes to learning are good in all years. They behave well and listen attentively to teachers. Students make less progress in electronics lessons because of limitations of accommodation and an insufficient range of learning resources restricts teaching methods. They make good progress in textiles lessons with learning about materials and learning to design and construct products. They make good progress with learning to work creatively but the textiles room is too small to accommodate the full range of techniques for surface decoration of textiles. This is compensated to a small extent by

provision of extra lessons outside normal college times, which increase the range of learning opportunities for some students who choose to attend.

116. Achievement is well above average in Years 10 and 11. Students continue to build skills and knowledge and make particularly good progress with practical skills and graphics. At the start of Year 10 students have a very good knowledge of formal drawing and sketching skills and their experience of constructing models in earlier years means that they can begin examination work at a higher level than is expected. This leads to well above average standards of practical drawing and modelling by the time they reach the end of Year 11 and, consequently, improved examination results. Students' good attitudes to working patiently and creatively significantly raise the standards they reach. In food technology, students make good progress with learning about nutrition and in preparing food to appeal to specified consumers, such as products that might be found in a food hall of a departmental store or at a motorway café.

117. Students with special educational needs make good progress because they are effectively supported by teachers who know them well and by learning support assistants. Students with behavioural difficulties make particularly good progress because they are well managed in practical lessons and take pride in the work they do. Students with hearing impairment make good progress because they are effectively prepared for lessons by the staff of the hearing impairment unit and supported in lessons by teachers and support staff. They are integrated well into lessons and other students are supportive of their needs.

118. The quality of teaching is good. In just under half the lessons seen it was good, in one quarter it was very good, occasionally excellent. In the remainder teaching was mainly satisfactory and it was only rarely unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers have very good relationships with students, plan work, which is suitably challenging for all and is highly motivating. In these lessons the learning objectives are clearly explained and teachers have high expectations. Because students' confidence and self-esteem have been increased by successful work in previous lessons, they respond very well to the challenge and work co-operatively and with high levels of interest. Teachers conduct their lessons at a good pace and review progress at the end of lessons which keeps students informed of what to do to improve. This keeps students interested and involved in their own learning. Teachers keep good records of students' attainment and progress, which they check frequently to ensure that no one falls behind. Those who exceed expectations are provided with appropriate extension work. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively to explain work in a clear and interesting manner. Occasionally, in less successful lessons, teachers use methods which restrict opportunities for students to think for themselves which results in poor retention of knowledge and an unsatisfactory understanding of the work.

119. Students are provided with a broad range of learning opportunities in Years 7 – 9. Food technology, however, has been temporarily withdrawn from provision pending the appointment of an additional specialist teacher but students follow courses in resistant materials, electronics, textiles and graphic products. In Years 10 and 11, statutory requirements are not met because not all students study the subject. There are good systems to record and monitor the attainment and progress of all students. Assessment information is used effectively to help teachers plan lessons which are suitably challenging for all students, including the most able, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

120. The department is well managed and there is a good spirit of co-operation between staff. There is effective monitoring of achievement that enables weaknesses to be detected and appropriate action taken to rectify them. The improvement to standards is partly a result of this, as is planning to improve the curriculum next year. Learning resources are adequate to teach most of the requirements for the subject but there are insufficient resources for the teaching of aspects of ICT, such as computer-aided design and manufacturing, control technology and design software for graphics. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts the range of activities that can take place in electronics and textiles. The department makes very good use of the resources available.

121. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection to standards of attainment, to the quality of teaching and provision for graphics and electronics.

GEOGRAPHY

122. Students are interested in the subject because it puts them in touch with the real world around them, both natural and man made.

123. Attainment of students at the end of Year 9 is below the national expectation, although standards are rising and there was a significant leap between 1999 and 2000. Standards of work seen in lessons reflect this picture and careful monitoring of students' progress, with effective target setting, is commonplace.

124. Students' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7-9 and is higher than expected according to predictions on entry to the college. By the end Year 9, students are well skilled at map reading, interpreting symbols and map drawing in its varied forms. They can collect data and other information, through doing practical tasks or fieldwork and know how to "tell the story" in graphical form by concise annotating or labelling. Those who have difficulties with writing text, achieve success equal to their colleagues in this way, while enhancing their numeracy skills. Through contrasting and comparing regions of the world, including Kenya and Japan, with their own locality, they understand what influences economic poverty and prosperity in urban and rural environments and how people's lives are affected by natural phenomena and intervention by man. Those on the special educational needs register keep pace and higher attaining students produce extended writing of notable quality.

125. Below average time allocation at this stage is limiting students' experience; fieldwork is not frequent or broad enough; students' ability to express opinions and speak at length using knowledge as evidence is underdeveloped. They lack discussion opportunities to tease their way to the depths of issues such as migration or inequality so that they reach levels of real empathy with young people like themselves.

126. The promising start made with ICT and exciting future plans with the Globe programme are not yet fully incorporated into whole-class work for self-determined investigations and data manipulation through spreadsheets.

127. The GCSE results in 2000 were below national averages for higher-grades, A*-C, although the boys were near national averages. Predictions for 2001 suggest that a small downward trend over three years has halted, as new strategies for the monitoring of both teaching and the progress of students take effect. This represents a good response to the previous inspection. In Year 11, overall standards of work seen in class demonstrate average attainment and there is a group of high attaining students who reach impressive levels. In the light of predictions made in Year 9, the achievement of these students is good, sustained because they monitor their own targets and are committed to improving. Lower attaining students do a Certificate of Achievement. They are well supported by carefully designed

guidance for assignment writing, glossaries of geographical terms, which they build up throughout the two years and by opportunities for reading aloud. By the end of Year 11 students' work combines all the skills of data collection, interpretation and presentation. They understand the concept of sustainable development and environmental change and can explain how political attitudes and values can stimulate or sabotage economic development. From studies of Rio de Janeiro and Leicester, for example, they evaluate the meaning of progress. Poster work on glaciation shows a very high level of geographical accuracy and understanding of the processes of landscape formation. Some students frequently use the Internet web-sites effectively for information and to help presentation.

128. Teaching is good overall and always at least satisfactory. Students learn steadily because lesson planning takes into account their need for a variety of activities, which reinforce knowledge and skills and give them confidence when it comes to writing. Beginnings and ends of lessons follow a consistent pattern involving students sharing what they know. Students' English is considerably improved because teachers expect them to use geographical terms and phrases, to read aloud instructions, text or their own work. Key words and explanations are on display for reference. At Year 11 learning is a collaborative, challenging, experience where students have high aspirations because they are taught to recognise the characteristics of good quality writing and, in this way, be responsible for doing their best. Consequently, standards of literacy have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge, enthusiasm and patience underpin all lessons and students therefore trust them. There is a need for consistent adherence to Faculty policy on providing approaches that match students' differing needs at all levels. Small pockets of restlessness and lack of concentration occurred in Year 8 lessons where this was missing.

129. Well focused, practical leadership has implemented strategies for raising standards through monitoring the work of colleagues, analysing student attainment, delegating responsibility and supporting non-specialist colleagues. This has been good progress in responding to most of the recommendations in the previous inspection report. The deployment of specialist teachers to Years 9, 10 and 11 has had a positive impact on standards. However, inadequate time allocation, the modular arrangement and use of non-specialist teachers in Years 7 and 8 increase pressure on monitoring and support mechanisms to maintain consistent quality of teaching across the board.

HISTORY

130. Students are enthusiastic about learning history and realise that past and present go hand in hand.

131. Attainment of students at the end of Year 9 is below national expectations. Standards have risen over the past 3 years and significantly improved in 2000, the result of improved deployment of specialist teachers in Year 9 and support for non-specialists in Years 7 and 8. Standards of work seen in lessons reveal the same picture. Good records are kept and performance is effectively monitored from these.

132. Students' achievement is good, exceeding expectations when their attainment on entry to the college is taken into account. By the end of Year 9, students' confidence with placing events in time and their skills in using a wide range of sources and explaining what they know, are well founded. They understand the meaning of reliability in relation to factual, visual, fictional and eyewitness accounts. They know how democracy, freedom and human rights have been hard-won through their studies of monarchs, governments, entrepreneurs and reformers in Britain, France and America. Students' writing shows that they understand how it feels to be exploited, humiliated and powerless, expressing their views in various forms. For example after studying examples of Jewish persecution at the time of the

Holocaust, some Year 9 students were moved to write to Government High Commission in a country where Christians are being persecuted today; others put messages on the Anne Frank website.

133. Below average allocation of time in Years 7-9 limits the students' experience. A full fieldwork programme for every year group is missing from the schemes of work so the students cannot construct their own extended enquiry and confront actual historical evidence, with the help of those who preserve and care for it. This is particularly important since many students do not study history any further after Year 9.

134. Attainment in Year 11 is below national levels based on the number of students gaining higher grades, A*-C, at GCSE. The trend over three years is variable, owing to a lack of continuity in staffing. Newly appointed teachers and monitoring are already having a positive effect and attainment in lessons in Year 11 has reached satisfactory levels. Students' achievement is good. They discuss targets with their teachers and keep a record of how they are improving. By the end of Year 11 students cope well with the complexity of events which shaped the 20th century world. They are efficient and discriminatory in scanning, searching, taking notes and evaluating a variety of types of evidence. Students' writing is impressive. For example in studies of the evacuation of children from cities in World War II, Year 11 students skilfully interweave judgements about the reliability of sources with reasons for and against morale-boosting propaganda. Supporting their observations with factual references or quotations, they gradually unfold the picture – the mood of the time, the treatment and feelings of evacuees as well as those who accepted or rejected them. Students with special educational needs in all years make good progress through the provision of in-class support and opportunities for taking an active part.

135. ICT already has a place in history. Students are given good recommendations for web-sites; there is imaginative group work in Year 9 and use of the Intranet. However, the use of the Internet for guided and independent research and computers for desktop publishing and manipulation of, for example census data on spread-sheets, is insufficient to help learning.

136. The quality of teaching is good. It ranges from good to excellent is having an impact on standards and represents good progress since the previous inspection. Strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm brings the topics alive because teachers make comparisons between past and present and draw modern parallels. There is a confidence and imagination in the methods and materials teachers use to make students think as historians, so expectations are high. Teachers develop their students' English through encouraging them to read aloud and to use historical words and phrases. They ensure success in writing by building up and reinforcing factual knowledge in a variety of ways and by providing guidelines matched to the range of need within the class. All teachers create an atmosphere of collaboration where younger students are at ease in asking for help and where older students treat the teacher as a consultant, seeing it as their own responsibility for improving the quality of their work. Opportunities for longer, reflective, discussion-centred activities are unsatisfactorily few. This inhibits the students' in balancing reasoning with emotional arguments, teasing out deeper meanings and learning at first hand the influence of alternative views and being accountable for their own.

137. Good leadership in the department reflects a deep commitment to the values of history and there is considerable appreciation for the team of colleagues who share it with the same enthusiasm. Therefore monitoring of teaching alongside regular discussion of good practice represents professional support, which is already having a positive effect on raising standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138. GCSE results for summer 2000 were well above the national average in this subject. The percentage of students achieving the highest *A to A grades is increasing year-on-year. Although few girls were entered, their results when compared with those of the boys were marginally better.

139. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations. Students enter the college with mixed experiences of ICT but standards overall are generally below average. The evidence from the inspection supports the national curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 that show that by this stage students have made good progress and improved their attainment from below average to average.

140. Students have timetabled lessons in ICT up to the end of Year 9. It is in these first three years that most students, including those with special educational needs, develop a sound base of essential knowledge and skills. Standards in handling and communicating information are particularly good; for modelling and control they are unsatisfactory. Students can use a range of software for word processing, desktop publishing and for using databases and spreadsheets to make polished presentations of text and numerical data. In one Year 8 class students were able to use PowerPoint to produce a chart showing comparisons between different types of favourite chocolate bars. Already at this early stage of learning students are encouraged to become active independent learners; for example, choosing for themselves which chart-pie chart, bar chart, etc., - to use in presenting their findings. By the end of Year 9 nearly all students are confident users of ICT including their use of the Internet.

141. Students in Years 10 and 11, taking the GCSE examination, make very good progress and standards are well above average. Students can communicate, retrieve and analyse information efficiently and reliably. They can investigate patterns and relationships. They can apply real-world applications of ICT to solve problems. One Year 11 student, for example, had analysed the paper-based procedures of his local video shop and had drawn up a detailed plan for improving the running and efficiency of the business. This included preparing a database of members, a publicity leaflet for advertising to local residents and a spreadsheet for cost analysis. Another student had analysed the perceived needs of the Leicester Asian Youth Association and was able to draw up a detailed plan to increase the popularity of the club within the city, through the computerisation of the organisation and structures of the club.

142. Students in Years 10 and 11 who do not take a GCSE course do not have any separate lessons and their experience of ICT through other subjects is unsatisfactory. These students, most of Year 10 and 11, are not following the National Curriculum. This is in breach of the college's statutory duty. This is particularly disadvantageous to girls who tend not to get on a GCSE course.

143. Students enjoy their work and behaviour is good. They listen attentively to instructions and co-operate with each other when sharing resources. They show great enthusiasm for the subject and are capable of working independently. They will attempt to solve any problems they encounter themselves before asking the teacher for help.

144. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In nearly all the lessons seen, teaching was good or very good. Excellent subject knowledge is a common feature of the teaching and an important factor in motivating and encouraging students. Ideas are explained clearly. Teachers provide straightforward and effective demonstrations of applications, sometimes using the effective self-help sheets developed by the subject co-ordinator for students in Years 7 to 9. Teachers expect students to work to high standards. They set challenging tasks and problems that draw upon students' knowledge and understanding of ICT. Work is assessed at the end of each project or module of work when students are informed of the level they have reached, are involved in self-evaluation exercises and set targets for further improvement. Relationships with students are very good, which gives them the confidence to ask questions and risk mistakes.

145. Subject leadership is capable and enthusiastic. The excellent base of knowledge and skills brought to the subject by the co-ordinator permeates the work of the department and has had a major impact on the improvement in standards since the previous inspection. The department is innovative and imaginative. The co-ordinator has worked with a steering group to produce an excellent college Intranet in which each subject has developed its own web site, with subject information and archives of resource materials. All students have their own e-mail address and can use the Intranet site to communicate with their teachers and with each other. The computer club is popular and thriving and helps to raise money for worthy causes. During the week of the inspection over three hundred students were involved either during lunch-periods or after college.

146. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of improvements. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is now good; the management of the subject is better; resources have improved and there is greater access to out-of-college ICT. There is still no complete cross-curricular plan to ensure the delivery of National Curriculum ICT to non-GCSE students in Years 10 and 11 and a review of the scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 to provide better coverage of the modelling and control elements. Other weaknesses include the regular monitoring teaching and learning and the imbalance between boys and girls on the GCSE course.

ICT across the curriculum

147. Opportunities for students to use ICT in other subjects are limited and insufficient although students' skills in this area, particularly in relation to communicating and handling information, are good. In physical education students use digital cameras to give feedback and help self-evaluation of performance. In business studies students use spreadsheets to calculate profit and loss. In history and modern foreign languages as in some other subjects, students use the Internet for research and retrieving information. Overall, however, despite there being rooms of computers available and technician support on hand, teachers are not providing students with sufficient opportunity to use ICT in their learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and German

148. Standards of attainment range from above to well below the national average and, overall, centre close to the average. Achievement, judged against students' prior attainment, is generally good. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is slightly above average and by the end of Year 11 is average.

149. Listening skills are strongly developed throughout. By the end of Year 9, students understand the foreign language at or near normal speed; this includes material on tape, at levels that are particularly good for this age. By the end of Year 11, listening is still good but the more complex demands at this time mean that levels of comprehension vary more noticeably. Students' achievement in speaking French or German is often as strong as listening for 11-14 year-olds, while for 14-16 year-olds speaking is satisfactory. The frequency and range of speaking opportunities afforded the students varies too greatly and does not help to develop speaking fluency and the recall of previously learned language regularly enough. Reading is quite good at both key stages, enhanced by regular application of the very worthwhile reading scheme. Reading aloud is often very good and accomplished with some gusto. The writing of 11-14 year-olds is satisfactory with usually neat handwriting and presentation. By the end of Year 9, students engage in some extended writing on personal topics with a reasonable degree of accuracy. By the end of Year 11, writing has become a strength; different tenses are well handled and there is some good writing at length in reasonably well-structured language.

150. Lower-attaining students and students with special educational needs often achieve standards above expectations. On the other hand, higher-attaining students are not set a sufficiently demanding work, borne out by the lack of grade A passes at GCSE in French.

151. At GCSE, both French and German have enjoyed a considerable improvement over the past three years. In 1998, the proportion of candidates in French gaining passes at higher grades, A*-C, was much less than 10 per cent; by 2000, that had risen to very nearly 30 per cent, still well below the national average, but the trend is good. From a much smaller entry, the German higher-grade, A*-C, pass rate has risen from well below to above the national average, in the same time.

152. In nearly all cases, behaviour is good (it is often very good) and students' attitudes are positive. They participate willingly in classes and clearly enjoy communicating in the foreign language. Girls in classes for 14-16 year-olds tend to be quieter than in those for 11-14 year-olds. In some classes with 11-14 year-olds there is low-level but insistent chatting by a number of students which inhibits the amount of progress made in a lesson.

153. At the time of the previous inspection, French GCSE was optional and, while results were very good, only a small number of students had chosen to do it. German had not reached Year 11 at that time. The 2000 results in modern languages represent the best performance since the national introduction of languages for all.

154. Since the previous inspection, the amount of excessive noise in lessons caused by inattentive students has been greatly reduced, though not entirely eliminated.

155. The quality of teaching overall is good. Amongst 11-14 year-olds, teaching in one lesson was satisfactory; in all but two others, it was good. In one lesson, teaching was very good and in another it was excellent. Amongst 14-16 year-olds, teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good in all the others. Teachers generally make full and effective use of French and German and their linguistic proficiency is very high. There are many good features to the teaching: roll calls require a reply in the foreign language linked to recent work, lessons start briskly and teachers display real enthusiasm for the subject. Lessons are well planned and usually thoroughly prepared. Class control is good and praise and encouragement are used to positive effect. Pair work is well integrated, particularly in Years 7-9, and support given to individuals is thoughtful and unobtrusive. Lessons are led at a business-like pace and, in the best ones, the students enjoy rising to the challenge of demanding, but amusing activities. One main weakness, in what is an otherwise satisfactory lesson, is where a teacher allows one activity to continue too long it slows the pace of the lesson and students lose interest. Occasionally, the reasons for doing an activity are not explained clearly enough and there are lessons in which the teacher talks too much, so denying the students time to practise the language for themselves.

156. Although students often learn new language slowly, their perseverance and hard work overcome any initial difficulties. Students are enthusiastic, concentrate well and mutually support each other's efforts. These attributes, combined with good and sensitive teaching, ensure that, in most cases, progress is good.

157. The department is very well managed and led with vision, determination and energy. Supported by the departmental monitoring system, thorough schemes of work and an appropriately focused departmental development plan, the drive for higher standards is set to continue to meet with increasing success.

158. It is a strength of the college that both French and German are taught from the outset but it is a weakness, especially given the level of expertise available, that students are limited to learning only one foreign language.

159. Marking of work is inconsistent across the department and the recording of scores is not always particularly helpful. Students do not benefit from the services of any foreign language assistants.

Gujarati and Panjabi

160. Considering that Gujarati and Panjabi are only taught from Year 9, attainment by the age of 14 and also by the age of 16 is average in speaking and listening, especially. In view of the low base at which students start to learn Gujarati and Panjabi in Years 9 or 10 and their continuing difficulties in literacy, most of them achieve satisfactorily. This is because teaching promotes positive attitudes and is effective in enabling students to reach examination standard.

161. The GCSE examination results have greatly improved in both Gujarati and Panjabi since 1998. Only one-quarter of the candidates gained higher, A*-C, grades in 1998 in Gujarati, but over two-thirds did so in 1999 and just under this proportion did so in 2000. This was still below the national average, but a big improvement. However, the results were above the national average for the full, A*-G, grade range in 1999 and 2000.

162. In Panjabi the results were also well below the national average in 1998. However, this situation changed greatly in 1999 and in 2000. In 1999 the results were in line with the national average and in 2000 above the national average.

163. The boys performed better than girls did in 1999 in both Gujarati and Panjabi, but in 2000 the girls out performed boys in both languages.

164. Evidence of standards in class and in the samples of work reflects the examination results. By age 14 and 16 the attainment of most students in their listening and speaking skills is average. The attainment of a few students in each class is above average, but that of others is below average. Students show confidence in responding to teachers' questions and are able to use present, past and future tenses correctly in both languages. For example, in one Year 9 Gujarati class students could say several things about their home and prepare a role play and act it with confidence showing good ability in listening and speaking skills. In another Year 9 Panjabi class students comprehended the text on family well which they listened to on the tape. By the age of 16 students can understand longer texts, get more confident and can take part in short and long conversations. For example in one Year 10 Panjabi class students were able to express their views on different types of food and in another Year 10 Gujarati class students could say several things about travel and transport.

165. However, it is not the same picture in reading and writing skills in both Panjabi and Gujarati. The attainment of most students in reading and writing skills is below average. It is mostly because they have to learn totally a new script. Most students in Year 9 and also those who started only in Year 10 without learning it in Year 9 can only read and write simple words and sentences in both languages. In one Year 9 Gujarati class some students needed help to read from the worksheet and the vocabulary list. A few students can read and write short texts without the teacher's help. Most of those students who started in Year 9 and continued learning the language in Year 10 and 11 can read and write short texts and higher attaining students are able to read and write longer texts at average standards. For example, higher attaining students in one Year 11 Gujarati class could read the text of a letter and also adapt it to write its reply. Similarly, higher attaining students in another Panjabi Year 11 class could read a longer text from the textbook and write answers correctly. Average and lower attaining students make spelling and grammatical errors in their written work and do not reach expected standards in the time available.

166. The quality of teaching is good in all the lessons observed in both languages and has a positive impact on students' achievement. Students work productively and are generally positive and enthusiastic. As in the previous inspection, teachers of Gujarati and Panjabi are still unqualified but this does not have adverse effect on standards. Both are native speakers, have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and are now more experienced. This shows in the overall lesson planning with clear learning objectives and a planned and structured variety of activities. These help to motivate students to build on what they already know and can do. Teachers sustain challenge through the use of the spoken language and help students achieve by being acting and setting realistic tasks. Teachers' high expectations for behaviour and discipline help create the positive learning atmosphere in the class. Students with special educational needs achieve well because they are fully supported and tasks appropriately explained to them to make sure that they understand what to do.

167. The resources are used well, but there are inadequate teaching materials such as appropriate textbooks. This is more so in Gujarati than in Panjabi. The absence of the use of ICT in teaching community languages is a weakness. To support students' learning the library does not contain many suitable books in community languages.

168. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, if in one case small and inconvenient; but teachers have good storage space. There is good display of students' work and other materials such as items of bilingual vocabulary, which contributes to students' learning.

169. The department is well led by the head of modern foreign languages and the teachers are fully supported by her. The quality of teaching and learning is undermined by the lack of suitable books and other teaching materials such as computers.

170. Since previous inspection teaching time for community languages has been reduced greatly. However, the examination results have much improved in both languages.

MUSIC

171. GCSE results have improved since the previous inspection, but are still well below the national average. The attainment of both 14 and 16 year-olds is below that expected nationally. By the age of 14, the students are familiar with the keyboard and able to control it well, identifying notes easily. They play melodies with some fluency but very few students show good use of fingering techniques to improve their performance. Use of notation is very restricted and mainly confined to reading from letter names. Singing is lacking in pitch definition and tone quality although classes often sing with enthusiasm. Composition techniques are weak, with students lacking a clear grasp of the principles of melodic construction. The same weaknesses are evident amongst 14-16 year-olds, but by Year 11 keyboard skills are better: some students combine chords with melodies. Composition skills are still weak and students have difficulty with harmonisation. Performance standards in extra-curricular groups such as the steel band and banghra drum group are good. The students play with enthusiasm and give up their own time to achieve this level. The level of achievement is satisfactory and students with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls or students of different ethnicity.

172. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and almost half were good or very good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to use it to enrich the musical experiences offered in the lessons. Lessons are usually well structured and planned effectively, with clear objectives that permit the students to make satisfactory progress. An important factor is the good management and control of the students; this creates a good learning atmosphere in which effective use of resources, such as the keyboard laboratory, lets students learn independently at a level appropriate to their prior attainment. Music support staff are also well deployed and this enables a high level of individual attention to be maintained. The pace of lessons is sometimes slow, with explanations becoming overlong. As a result, the productivity of the lesson is unsatisfactory and students are not always able to complete the set tasks. Homework is not used effectively to consolidate learning. The emphasis placed on independent learning does result in a high level of concentration from the students and this, in addition to the essentially practical nature of the activities, is a great help to those students with language difficulties. However, there are not enough opportunities for corporate music-making.

173. In Years 7 to 9, an important factor contributing to the low standards of attainment is the very limited amount of time given to the subject, which has not increased since the

previous inspection. The college allocates less than half the time that most schools and colleges feel is necessary to teach the National Curriculum in music. In addition, the method of allocation, which means that students sometimes have no music for six weeks at a time, leads to a lack of continuity and the need for repetition of previous work. Nonetheless, the students now benefit from greater opportunities for listening and appraising music. The accommodation, although spread out around the college at present, is of a very good standard and will be centralised under the new building programme. The quality of resources is otherwise very good, but a lack of computers affects standards in composition in Years 10 and 11. However, the college has addressed this problem and awaits the delivery of new equipment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. Attainment as the students reach the age of 14 is in line with that expected nationally. Attainment amongst 11-14 year-olds is average, although there are fluctuations. In Year 7, for example, standards in swimming were above expectation in the evaluation of their own, and others' stroke techniques. In Year 9, standards in basketball for both boys and girls are well below expectation, as are standards of Year 9 students in netball and volleyball, because of disaffection amongst students and some unsatisfactory teaching.

175. Students in all age-ranges reach above average attainment in planning, performing and evaluating their performances in dance. They interpret music imaginatively in small groups and many demonstrate very good control, balance and cathartic interpretation, as they perform "gang" work imaginatively.

176. Attainment amongst 16 year-olds as they reach the end of their time in the college is in line with the national expectations. GCSE results were well below national averages for higher-grades, A*-C, in 2000. The evidence of the inspection finds standards rising: the students' knowledge skills and understanding are improving in both practical and theoretical areas. In Year 11, standards in practical activities in the GCSE class were above average, as they demonstrated sound understanding of attacking strategies such as "faking" and "rolling". One GCSE theory lesson revealed unsatisfactory standards where students had poor knowledge for example of the cardiovascular system. The attainment of 14-16 year-old students is generally in line with national expectations in performance and technical proficiency in basketball and badminton. By Year 11 the standards of 16-year-olds not taking GCSE are in line with national expectations in skills, knowledge and understanding of attacking principles in basketball and soccer demonstrated by their ability to pass and dribble competitively.

177. Students of all ages with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but there is not enough help provided to support students with behavioural difficulties.

178. Although adversely affected by absence through illness, the overall quality of teaching is good. Amongst 11-14 year-olds, it is variable as witnessed in two lessons, where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Good and very good teaching was observed in all dance lessons and in a Year 9 basketball lesson and a swimming lesson in Year 7. Teaching is uniformly good amongst 14-16 year-olds and it was very good in a Year 11 GCSE theory lesson. Lessons are well planned by specialist teachers and there are good relationships. Non-participation levels are low and those students who are not participating are suitably occupied with observation and analysis worksheets that clearly developed their knowledge and understanding in swimming and in basketball. All specialist teachers of physical education demonstrate good subject knowledge and are well qualified. Teachers use appropriate questions well to improve students' understanding of their own and others' performances in swimming, dance and basketball. Demonstrations, such as how to "set",

“spike” and “dig” in volleyball, are used effectively in all lessons. This improves students’ progress. Teachers share the learning objectives effectively with students at the start of their lessons, giving them a clear focus. Good use is made of ICT, for example the use of video for observation and analysis purposes in a Year 8-badminton lesson. It is also used effectively to improve students’ learning in health-related exercise lessons, so the students’ achievement is good in these lessons.

179. Teaching resources are well prepared and used effectively, with equipment well set out for lessons. Students are not, however, warmed up before lessons effectively, nor are most students in all the year groups able to warm themselves up independently at the start of their lessons: this is a weakness. All teaching was effective in reinforcing students’ knowledge and understanding of fitness and health throughout the lessons observed. Relationships in lessons are good and subject specialists bring enthusiasm to their teaching, which fosters student confidence, especially in dance where students are encouraged to develop complex and demanding routines. Library provision for GCSE examination courses is poor and has an adverse impact on students’ progress, as they are unable to work independently outside lessons. All teachers actively promote students’ health, safety and welfare. Assessment is effectively used to raise standards, records are kept up to date and parents are informed of students’ progress. Unsatisfactory teaching was a result of poor student management and classroom control or a lack of subject knowledge and expertise.

180. The curriculum is well co-ordinated by the head of department. Literacy is well promoted through good displays of key words. Safety checks are regularly made on all equipment and regular in-service training is provided for department staff. The monitoring of teaching quality is, however, ineffective and there is no information provided by the feeder primary schools with regard to students’ prior attainment. Accommodation is insufficient and not conducive to good learning.

181. The previous inspection report identified the quality of teaching as less than satisfactory amongst 14-16 year-olds, but it is now good. There were no examination courses in the subject, but these are now firmly established. So progress since then is good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

182. By the age of 14, students’ attainment overall is below the standards expected of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. In lessons, achievement is satisfactory, but the limited time available for 11-14 year-olds and especially in Year 7, significantly reduces the teaching and learning of knowledge and skills in the required depth. Nearly all the students have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world’s main religions relating to the founders, Holy Books, places of worship and some specialist vocabulary. But most students’ understanding of faiths, other than their own, is rather superficial. Standards in literacy are about average for many 14 year-olds but there is too little extended writing, especially in Year 7 and 8.

183. In 1999, the GCSE results were well above the national average for A*-C, higher grades and just below the average for A* to G full grade ranges. The higher-grade, A*-C, results in 2000 were not as good as in 1999, but the A* to G grades were better with 100 per

cent passes. Over the past 3 years most students' results were consistently better than in other subjects; 1999 was an outstanding year in this respect.

184. GCSE results are generally about the national average for most students, with a significant number reaching above average standards, but many below expectations. The subject is taught only as a GCSE option for 14-16 year-olds. Most students reach the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the students' personal faith. Between 13 and 16 years of age, the students' literacy and analytical skills greatly improve, especially through extended writing. Extended writing is often of good quality in essays and coursework done by 14-16 year-olds. Skilled teaching enables all students to develop good skills in listening, reflecting and empathising with the views of others, as in Year 11 where probing questions resulted in very good understanding by the Sikh and Muslim group of a Christian's perception of confirmation. Most students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, particularly in years 9-11.

185. Teaching is good throughout. More than half of the teaching seen was good with much very good teaching particularly with 11-14 year-olds, including an excellent lesson in Year 7. This high quality teaching greatly improves students' learning, as good subject knowledge is generally very well-used to develop students' thinking skills and understanding, focussing on what is to be learned rather than simply on tasks. Good workbooks, sheets and revision booklets help students to acquire a good understanding, building on previous knowledge and extending their skills. Also, there is some very good teaching of skills such as essay-writing techniques, accompanied by some impressive marking of 14-16 year-old students' work and excellent teaching of basic skills lesson to lower-attaining students in Year 7. The staff are very good role models, committed to students' high achievement and very hardworking, for example in teaching at least 2 religions simultaneously to 14-16 year-olds. Students respond with equal enthusiasm, commitment and hard work creating a very good learning environment. Relationships and behaviour are very good and values such as respect and courtesy are effectively fostered, as students are given very good opportunities for their personal development. In some lessons, however, girls are more reticent than boys. Seating arrangements in Year 7 help to address this problem and to develop girls' oral skills and self-confidence. Within the faculty there are some inconsistencies in marking in Years 7 and 8, which limit some students' knowledge of their achievement and targets for improvement.

186. There is effective management by a new head of department. Development planning is satisfactory and there is a clear vision for systems and procedures to raise further the standards in teaching and learning. There is currently no tracking of students' progress in specific knowledge and skills in Years 7-9, but appropriate procedures have been introduced this year. Current planning is also addressing the need for specific resources and a teaching focus on the needs of higher and lower attaining students. ICT skills are not formally taught to extend students' expertise in research and presentation of information. Since the previous inspection, assessment procedures have not progressed and the subject is still not provided for all 14-16 year-old students, as most parents withdraw their child from the subject. Financial controls are now satisfactory.

KEY STAGE 4

187. Extra courses are provided in business studies, dance and drama, outside English.

Business education

188. The attainment of students entered for GCSE business studies in 2000 was well above the national average for both higher grades, A*-C, and A*-G. Girls gained particularly

good grades with over 90 per cent achieving A*-C grades. Such results are significantly in excess of national attainment. The results for boys over the higher grade, A*-C, range were slightly better than national average figures. A quarter of students entered for the GCSE examination gained either an A* or A grade; girls again gained more of these grades than boys. Students following the GNVQ Foundation course in business also met with success. Seven students passed the course, another four gained unit accreditation and only one student failed to gain any qualification. Such outcomes, especially given the prior levels of attainment of those following the course, are praiseworthy.

189. For present Key Stage 4 students attainment is below average for GNVQ students and in line with national averages for GCSE. Most GNVQ students have special educational needs and English is not their first language. Nevertheless they are all making progress and they are all gaining a good, basic grasp of business issues and developing an appropriate vocabulary. Their skills in numeracy and the application of ICT are also being enhanced. GCSE students are similarly developing their business vocabulary. Year 11 students are able to apply their theories of marketing to develop promotional material for firms of different sizes, operating in a variety of markets. Year 10 students are developing their knowledge and understanding of franchises and are able to identify the main features of a franchise. Higher attainers are able to compare this form of ownership with other models and identify comparative strengths and weaknesses. Nearly all students studying business education clearly enjoy their studies and their commitment and willingness to become involved raises their attainment.

190. The quality of teaching is good. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory. 70 per cent of lessons were at least good with 40 per cent being either very good, or excellent. Where teaching is good, or better, staff plan effectively, manage students well, use a variety of strategies and are prepared to challenge the students' knowledge and understanding. In such lessons, expectations are high. This good quality teaching supports learning and encourages students to think for themselves, work independently and stimulates interest and enthusiasm for the subject. For example, in an excellent GNVQ lesson, students were encouraged to perform a series of short acts designed to highlight staff grievances. The students performed their roles with maturity and, aided by well-prepared follow up work, were able to identify a number of possible resolutions. The quality of lesson planning allied to the innovative teaching techniques employed served to inspire and motivate the students and successfully stimulated learning. In this lesson, learning was further improved by the quality of language support offered. A further feature of good teaching is that students are set appropriate extended writing tasks, encouraging research and planning, which reinforce learning. In the isolated cases where teaching is less effective the lessons are too teacher-centred and some tasks lack clarity. There is insufficient attention to extending the knowledge and understanding of the highest attaining students. Assessment procedures are usually good and for GNVQ students they are very good. Assessment serves to inform students and guides their learning. Work samples, however, showed some variations in the quality of GCSE marking. The work of higher attainers was carefully marked. For other students marking was less rigorous with fewer corrections of poor grammar and spelling and a lack of helpful comments. Less rigorous marking offers fewer opportunities for improvement. Though some scope for improvement exists, the quality of teaching is aiding the learning of all students.

191. The provision of two distinct business education courses successfully offers students a challenging alternative to National Curriculum subjects and widens their opportunities for post-16 education and employment. A strength of the GNVQ course is that it is very well planned and taught and is enjoyed by the students. The GCSE course is similarly popular and gains good results, though the management of the course is less clear and this ambiguity may explain the inconsistency in the quality of marking. While business students

have sufficient access to computers and their ICT skills are being fostered, GCSE students do not have sufficient access to textbooks and this constrains their opportunities for individual research. Much good work is produced by business studies, but little attempt is made to celebrate their successes via displays of work around the college.

Dance

192. GCSE average point scores were below the national average point score in 2000. Although 14-16 year-old students have had little earlier experience of the subject, a Year 11 class demonstrated performance skills in line with national expectations for their age. Students observe teachers' demonstrations carefully and can mirror them accurately. They are quick to understand the tasks set for them and are well able to make decisions for themselves.

193. The overall quality of teaching is very good. It is never less than good. Teachers have high levels of personal skill. They set clear targets for students and conduct lessons at a brisk pace with precise time limits for different units of their lessons. Students at all levels of attainment respond positively to their high expectations and encouragement so that rates of progress are very good.

Drama

194. At the end of Year 11, standards match national expectations. The quality of group work at the start of GCSE courses is variable. Although some students make good use of techniques such as mime others lack the confidence needed for effective communication with an audience, despite good support and encouragement from teachers and each other. Improved levels of attainment were apparent in two very good lessons in Year 11. In one lesson, students confidently identified ways in which respect for a religious or political leader might be communicated on stage. In the other, students were able to draw upon a satisfactory range of dramatic techniques to present the misuse of power against a political prisoner.

195. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is often very good and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of students' effort, behaviour and attainment and students' consistently seek to meet these expectations. Because the quality of relationships with teachers is so good, students have high levels of enthusiasm and make good progress in lessons. Teachers make particularly good use of questions both to confirm students' understanding and to encourage them to think more clearly about their work. Teachers have good understanding of different levels of skill and confidence in their classes and ensure that all are appropriately challenged.

196. The pace of students' progress and the quality of their learning are restricted by the lack of appropriate areas for practical work. Those currently used are too small for group rehearsal and do not provide a range of levels for performance except by the use of chairs.