

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIGHTON HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Basingstoke, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116441

Headteacher: Mr A Kilpatrick

Lead inspector: Mrs S D Morgan

Dates of inspection: 10th-13th May 2004

Inspection number: 258581

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11-16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1266
College address:	Brighton way Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG22 4HS
Telephone number:	01256 350606
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend R Simmonds
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

Brighton Hill is a large comprehensive community college. It has 1266 students on roll in Years 7 to 11, with similar numbers of boys and girls, although almost all year groups have slightly more boys. The college takes its students from the local area which has a mixture of privately owned and social housing. Overall, students' attainment on entry is average. The percentage of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, at just over seven per cent, is below the national average. Seventeen per cent of students have been identified as having special educational needs, which is slightly above the national average. These students have a range of needs, with most having learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is below average. Almost all students are white British, with small numbers from a range of other ethnic groups. No students speak English as an additional language.

Brighton Hill has Sports college status and is a training school. The college is popular with parents and is oversubscribed. It has received a number of awards, including the DfES Achievement Award, Sportsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and has gained Charter Mark and Investors in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9537	Mrs C Marden	Lay inspector	
32278	Mr D Roberts	Team inspector	English
1503	Mr T Browne	Team inspector	Mathematics
33651	Mr R Turner	Team inspector	Science
32785	Dr W Allt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
32367	Ms J Pike	Team inspector	Art and design
32590	Mr R Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology
18663	Mr P Burchell	Team inspector	Geography, history
15075	Mr B Stephens	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages, English as an additional language
30814	Mrs E Coley	Team inspector	Music, citizenship
30800	Mrs B Colley	Team inspector	Physical education
14633	Mrs J Bannister	Team inspector	Religious education
7926	Mr J Bowden	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brighton Hill is a good college with a number of very good features. The college has a very good ethos which values students and encourages them to do their best. Students are proud of the college and parents are very supportive. Standards are above average and have shown continued improvement. Teaching is good and students achieve well. The leadership and management of the college are very good. Staff share a very clear vision of how to improve the college further and work very well as a team. The college provides good value for money.

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are

- GCSE results are above the national average
- Students achieve well due to good teaching and their very positive attitudes
- Very strong leadership from the headteacher and governors is driving the college forward successfully
- A very caring ethos in which students feel confident and are motivated to do their best
- Very good links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges
- An excellent range of enrichment activities
- Not all statutory requirements are met and a number of minor weaknesses are identified in the report which need to be dealt with

The college has worked hard to improve all aspects of its work and **good improvement has been made since it was last inspected.** Since gaining sports college status it has quickly become a regional focus point for the promotion of sport. Almost all of the issues identified in the previous inspection report have been dealt with effectively and strengths have been built upon. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and this has led to a continued improvement in standards. However, although the college has put a structure in place to provide a daily act of collective worship this does not fully meet statutory requirements. The college community shares a strong commitment to further improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	-	B	B	C

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

Students achieve well throughout the college.

Students enter the college with average levels of attainment, overall. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Students achieved much better than might have been expected in relation to their previous results in English and mathematics and better than expected in science. Standards in Year 9 tests have risen at a rate faster than that seen nationally. Overall, current standards are above average and are well above average in English and mathematics.

GCSE results were above average in 2003 when compared with all schools nationally and students did as well as expected in relation to their previous results. Current standards are similar and students achieve well, overall. Inspection evidence showed very good achievement in English, mathematics, history and music. Students following vocational courses achieve well.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, overall. Students are proud of the college and their attitudes, values and behaviour are very good, as is their attendance. Students are supported by the college's very good ethos which has a clear focus on the achievement of all.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The college is providing a good education for its students.

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the college. This enables students to learn effectively and is a major factor in their good achievement. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all subjects and good in almost all. It was very good in a number including English, geography and music. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare students well for examinations. Work is planned well by teachers and they work hard to engage students' interest and make work challenging. They have a high expectation of what students will achieve and this is shared with students. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and this means that time in lessons is used effectively. Assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good. However, the college recognises the need to ensure greater consistency in the quality of on-going feedback to students to help them improve the quality of their work.

The curriculum is good and the introduction of a range of initiatives, such as early entry to GCSE examinations, vocational courses and "out of hours" learning is helping to meet the needs of all students. The range of enrichment activities is excellent. At present, the college is not meeting the statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11, but this situation is to be rectified in the coming academic year. The quality of support and guidance provided for students is very good and the college has a very effective partnership with parents. Links with other schools, colleges and the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is very good as is the governance of the college. Leadership is characterised by a drive for achievement through improving teaching and learning and innovation. Through this approach the headteacher, senior managers and governors have been successful in bringing about improvement in many aspects of the college's work. Currently, statutory requirements relating to a daily act of collective worship and religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not being met.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

The college is very popular with parents and is oversubscribed. Parents are supportive of the work of the college and the vast majority are very positive about what it offers. Students are very positive about the college and the opportunities it provides. In the questionnaires returned some expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying. However, in discussion students were confident that bullying was dealt with effectively and were positive about their education.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The inspection team identified no major areas for improvement. However, a number of minor weaknesses are mentioned within the report which need to be tackled.

and, to meet statutory requirements

- For religious education in Years 10 and 11, as planned
- For a daily act of collective worship

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In national tests at the end of Year 9, results have improved at a rate faster than that seen nationally. GCSE results have shown improvement but this has been slower than that found nationally due to a dip in results in 2002. Students' attainment on entry to the college is average. Their achievements are good throughout the college and standards are generally above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students do well in GCSE, overall results being above the national average
- Students' achievement is good overall and very good in subjects such as English, mathematics and history
- In the national tests at the end of Year 9, students did very well in English and mathematics and well in science
- Students' skills in language, literacy, and numeracy support their learning well in other areas of the curriculum. However, there is no whole-college approach to the teaching of these skills to ensure that they are developed consistently
- Not all students study religious education in Years 10 and 11, so this statutory requirement is not met

Commentary

1. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Overall, results were well above those of similar schools (schools in which students had gained similar results in their Year 6 tests). The trend of improvement is above that nationally. Students' achievements were well above average in relation to their performance in national tests at the end of Year 6. The performance of girls was slightly better than that of boys.
2. Current standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. In geography, history, modern foreign languages and music standards are above those expected for their age. In art, citizenship, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education standards are as expected. Inspectors have judged standards at the end of Year 9. The college is, however, running a two-year Key Stage 3 which is being piloted by the DfES. This means that the Teacher Assessments of many students in subjects other than English, mathematics and science take place at the end of Year 8, depending upon their option choices in Year 9.
3. Students achieve well, overall, and particularly well in English, mathematics, geography, history, French and Spanish. Students with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented also achieve well. The high expectations of teachers and the challenge and the engagement of students in lessons, together with students' very positive attitudes contribute to their good achievement.

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

Standards in:	College results	National results
English	36.3 (35.0)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	38.0 (36.5)	35.4 (34.7)
science	35.3 (35.7)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 253 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. GCSE results are above the national average and have risen since the previous inspection. In 2003, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades was well above average. An above average proportion gained five or more A*-G grades. The proportion of students gaining one or more A* - G grades was average. Over the last three years, boys' results have been well above

average and girls' above. However, the trend of improvement has been below that nationally. This is because overall results showed a slight decline in 2002. Students achieved satisfactorily in relation to their performance in national tests at the end of Year 9.

5. Results show continued improvement, for example in English literature, modern foreign languages, ICT and physical education. However, in design and technology the trend has been downward. Students did best in English literature and history, and least well relative to their performance in other subjects in English language, combined science double award and design and technology. The proportion of students gaining A*-A grade passes in English literature, history and physical education was well above the national average. However, not all students study religious education in Years 10 and 11, which is a statutory requirement.
6. GCSE results in 2004 are expected to show some improvement on those of 2003. Students in Year 11 have achieved well and, overall, standards are above average. Students do particularly well in English, mathematics, history and music, as the teaching of these subjects is particularly strong. A number of students now follow vocational courses as well as extra GCSE courses in the upper college (Years 9 to 11). Standards of work seen were above or well above those expected and students achieved well. Students with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented achieve well, the former being entered for a range of GCSE and vocational courses. As yet, though, little use is made of whole-college data to show how well individual students have progressed.

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

	College results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	69 (52)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (91)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	37.1(36.3)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 235 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

7. As they progress through the college, students' language and literacy skills develop well and are above average. Students' competence in mathematics is well above average. The ICT skills of students in Years 10 and 11 are average. Those of younger students are above average and they show confidence using a range of applications. Whilst students' skills in language, literacy, and numeracy support their learning well in other areas of the curriculum, there is no whole-college approach to the teaching of these skills to ensure that they are developed consistently.
8. No students are at an early stage of English language acquisition and there is no history of such students in the college. The few students in the college without English as a home language achieve in line with their peers and were observed contributing positively to class and group discussion.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and personal development are very good. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' high level of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Excellent relationships within the college community
- Students' behaviour and their very positive attitudes to learning
- Attendance is well above the national average
- The college does not fulfil the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship

Commentary

9. The strengths in students' attitudes seen in the last inspection have been maintained while students' behaviour and attendance has improved. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has remained substantially the same and although provision for the daily act of collective worship has improved it still does not meet statutory requirements.
10. The college is a very harmonious community where all members show respect for each other. The respect teachers show students underpins students' high level of self-esteem. Nearly all the students spoken to felt that bullying only rarely occurred and when it did it was effectively dealt with. The relatively high number of fixed-term exclusions is accounted for by the college's insistence on very high standards of behaviour in all aspects of college life and is in line with the college policy.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last college year

Categories used in the Annual Student Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1224	80	3
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British - any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Information not obtained	3	0	0

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

11. Students are keen to take part in lessons and listen well to each other's contributions to discussions. They confidently appraise their own and others' work, giving sensible suggestions on how it can be improved. Students enthusiastically attend the many extra-curricular activities available.
12. In lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of students with special educational needs are generally no different to that of others. Where special needs assistants (SNAs) are present to support students with special educational needs this is accepted well by all; others often taking advantage of their presence and seeking extra help themselves. Year 11 students with Statements of Special Educational Need are particularly appreciative of the help, support and guidance they have received from the special needs department throughout their time in college.
13. The very good computerised monitoring system for attendance is contributing to the very high attendance of students. Teachers can immediately see if a student who is missing in their lesson attended the previous one and any discrepancies can quickly be investigated.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
College data	6.2
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
College data	0.6
National data	1.1

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

14. Students' understanding of right and wrong is consistently promoted throughout the college with staff treating students fairly. Students also discuss moral issues in different subjects, some about complex issues. For example, in one religious education lesson students discussed the use of embryos for medical purposes and when life begins. Students have many opportunities to take part in sporting events and through this develop a clear understanding of the importance of rules and fair play as well as developing social skills. Students have a good range of opportunities to take responsibility within the college community, including sports team captains and college councillors. Students carry these responsibilities out diligently.
15. Students' spiritual development is promoted well, especially in respect to them reflecting on their own and others' achievements, so encouraging them to have high aspirations. This was particularly evident in physical education where in one lesson students were overwhelmed with how much further the long jump world record was compared to how far they could jump. Other opportunities for spiritual development do occur in other subjects, notably religious education, but they are rarely specifically planned for. The "thought for the day" does not always occur in tutor time and the quality of assemblies is variable. Some provide a clear focus for reflection while others are ineffectual, consequently the college still does not meet the statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.
16. A number of subjects offer good opportunities for students to gain an understanding of cultures different from their own. For example, in art, students study African masks and their use, while in English they study literature from a range of cultures.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE

The quality of education provided by the college is good. Teaching and learning are good, as is the curriculum. The quality of accommodation and learning resources is very good. Very good arrangements are in place for pastoral guidance and support and the college has a very good partnership with parents. Links with other schools, colleges and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment procedures have improved and are now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning throughout the college enable students to achieve well
- Teaching was very good in a number of subjects
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare students well for examinations
- Teachers work hard to engage students' interest and make work challenging
- Both teachers and students have high expectations of what they will achieve
- The very good behaviour of students helps them learn effectively
- The quality of feedback to students on their work is not consistent
- The targets set in individual education plans (IEPs) for students with special educational needs are too vague

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 152 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (2.6%)	43 (28.1%)	62 (40.5%)	42 (27.4 %)	1(0.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

17. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection. The percentage of satisfactory or better teaching has increased from 95 per cent to 99 per cent. Just under three-quarters was graded as good or better, and just under a third very good or excellent. The high level of good teaching is a major factor in students' good achievement.
18. Students were positive about the quality of teaching they receive. In questionnaire responses and discussions, both students and their parents expressed the view that teachers had high expectations. Overall, teaching was at least satisfactory in all subjects. It was good in a large number and very good in subjects such as English, geography and music.
19. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare students well for examinations. In lessons they discuss how to approach examination questions and how to ensure that the maximum marks are obtained. Techniques such as group work and discussion are used effectively to develop students' speaking and listening skills. For example, in a Year 9 leisure and tourism lesson students worked in teams to organise sports events for local primary schools. Students engaged in discussions and were very mature in their approach. They made decisions based on the ideas put forward by team members and then decided who would undertake various tasks. This approach motivated students and they worked hard and collaborated very well. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and physical education, teachers make good use of resources such as ICT and video. For example, in a Year 9 dance lesson the use of a video camera for analysis and evaluation enabled students to think about how performances could be improved.
20. Very good relationships, evident in lessons, help students learn effectively. Students support and help each other in lessons. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and students respond positively by coming to lessons on time and settling quickly to work. This means that time is used well. For example in English, lessons start at a brisk pace and the focus of the lesson is shared with students. Students are clear about what they have to do and what they are going to learn. In a Year 10 lesson, on the comparison of poems for a literature examination, the teacher set out the objectives for the lesson clearly. GCSE grade criteria were discussed and students were asked to note themes, structure and language used. The teacher gave strong encouragement to students to have high aspirations. Tasks were very well planned and focused and provided a high degree of challenge. Students were absorbed by the work and worked together very well. The lesson reinforced previous learning and prepared students for their examination very well.
21. In the best lessons, teachers show a high degree of enthusiasm and make the work interesting. In a Year 10 German lesson related to health and illness, an authentic text from a newspaper on the topic of anthrax was used. The article was both challenging and interesting for the students and developed their reading skills very well. In a Year 7 music lesson, studying the music of China, the teacher's enthusiasm was conveyed to the students. They learnt about the stylistic features of Chinese music and the pentatonic scale. The students were very keen to write their own compositions and were inspired by the teacher.
22. The college has worked hard to overcome recruitment difficulties. However, due to these problems and timetabling difficulties some teaching groups have more than one teacher and some have non-specialist teachers. This is a particular problem in design and technology where, despite good systems being in place to support the non-specialist teachers, it has an adverse effect on students' learning. In mathematics, the impact has been minimised through careful organisation and good support.
23. Setting arrangements in subject areas mean that the lower-attaining sets have smaller numbers; this benefits students with special educational needs who are placed in these. In mathematics, for example, the teacher with responsibility for special educational needs within the department teaches

the lowest sets. In English, lessons are very structured and enable students with special educational needs to achieve very well. However, in ICT lessons, the work is not always fully matched to the ability range of students in lessons and in art the low literacy levels of some students are not being dealt with sufficiently well. Where observed, the quality of support SNAs provide in lessons for students with special educational needs is generally effective. In an English lesson, for example, support was unobtrusive yet ensured the full involvement of the student being supported. However, support in a mathematics lesson was less successful because of a lack of proactive communication between the SNA and the students supported.

24. The quality of assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good, overall. Teachers formally assess all students' work every six weeks by marking a test or piece of work in detail and check performance against individual targets. This approach keeps students and parents well informed about progress made, and overall it contributes substantially to raising achievement, especially on GCSE courses where assessments are more frequent. Although students know their levels and what they are aiming for, they do not always know the detail of how to improve their work. Much of the teaching in English and ICT for example provides very helpful evaluation and opportunities for students to critically evaluate their own work and that of others. But in other subjects, such as science, design technology and especially citizenship, many students are unclear about how they can improve.
25. Apart from a few one-to-one withdrawal sessions in tutor time, students with special educational needs are taught in normal lessons. Teachers are well aware of the broad needs of students with special educational needs. However, the actual quality of target setting in IEPs is a weakness because targets set are not specific enough. As a result, this does not make it easy for teachers to plan their work sufficiently well to meet the individual and specific needs of these students. A good range of assessment tests are used to identify students with special educational needs that have the potential to enable the progress of students to be tracked over time. However, the analysis of this data and the effectiveness of re-testing as students move through the college are not sufficiently well developed. There is no analysis of exam data to show how well students with special educational needs achieved in the 2003 GCSE examinations or in national tests at the end of Year 9. As a result, the college is not really in a position to show how effective it is in supporting students with special educational needs.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It provides a good preparation for employment or further study. However, it does not fully meet statutory requirements for religious education and a daily act of collective worship. Extra-curricular opportunities in the form of out-of-hours lessons, clubs, sporting and musical activities are excellent and make an outstanding contribution and enrich students' learning to a high degree. The accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good, overall, and it is very good in music and physical education
- The college has an innovative approach to curriculum development and regularly and systematically evaluates initiatives
- Extra-curricular opportunities are excellent
- The pre-vocational education provision in Years 10 and 11 for students with special educational needs is very inclusive
- Many opportunities are provided to develop and motivate gifted and talented students
- Currently, statutory requirements are not fully met for religious education and a daily act of collective worship
- Limited time is available for design and technology in Years 7 to 9
- Students benefit from the very good resources in the college that enable them to learn well
- Additional funding has been directed at improving the learning environment, in particular increasing the access to ICT
- The college makes very good use of cultural visits and family exchanges to enhance the learning in modern foreign languages

Commentary

26. The curriculum provides a suitable range of learning opportunities for all students and is good, overall. An excellent enrichment programme is provided. Sporting provision is very good. The college has achieved the national target of providing two hours of quality physical education time per week and students have very good timetabled provision, overall. This is enhanced considerably by excellent extra-curricular activities and by the wide range of accredited courses that provide very good opportunities for students.
27. The curriculum is reviewed annually as part of the development planning process which enables the college to respond quickly and flexibly to issues, concerns and initiatives. However, the curriculum does have some weaknesses. Religious education is not currently taught in Years 10 and 11, although there are detailed plans to rectify this at the start of the new academic year. Since the time of the last inspection, improvements have been made to the provision for a daily act of collective worship, but these do not fully meet statutory requirements. Limited time is available in design and technology in Years 7 to 9 to cover the programmes of study of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth. Although attainment in literacy is above average and well above in numeracy there is no monitoring of their delivery across subjects.
28. The college has introduced an accelerated Key Stage 3 and an extended Key Stage 4 curriculum as part of a national pilot being run by the DfES. In this initiative, students complete the National Curriculum programmes of study in Years 7 and 8. Additionally, they have a well-organised course in citizenship and follow a comprehensive course in personal, social and health education (PSHE). They then start their GCSE options at the beginning of Year 9. A strong core curriculum is in place comprising English, mathematics, science, physical education, citizenship, careers and PSHE. Religious education is currently taught in Years 7 and 8 and from next year it will be added to the core in all year groups. Students can choose four other subjects. These subjects include a full range of pre-vocational courses through links with the local college, many GNVQ vocational courses such as leisure and tourism, ICT, art and design and business studies. In addition, there is a good choice from amongst the traditional academic subjects, enhanced by subjects such as drama, dance and physical education. Students also have good careers education and receive advice from Connexions staff. Well-organised opportunities for work experience are provided. A well-stocked careers library for research about future employment or further study is available to students.
29. The curriculum is further enhanced by an outstanding enrichment programme, which is very well attended. The extra-curricular provision in physical education is excellent. Links with outside establishments are excellent and provide first-rate coaching in tennis, golf and fencing. This raises standards for all who participate, but is of great benefit to gifted and talented students. The extra-curricular provision in music is also outstanding. Several choirs, a scholarship string group and a college wind group meet and perform regularly. All of these activities are of a high standard and make an excellent contribution to the taught curriculum. The programme of visits and exchanges to Europe, organised by both the modern languages and the expressive arts departments, makes a very good contribution to students' personal, linguistic and cultural development. An excellent after-hours programme of lessons in over twenty different subjects is provided. These include junior sports leader award, physical education, ICT, dance, drama, psychology, media studies, electronics French and Spanish. These lessons are very well supported and attendance, which is carefully monitored, is very high.
30. Overall, provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs have full and equal access to the curriculum and are fully involved in the life of the college. Alternative courses to GCSE in the upper years benefit students with special educational needs, for example GNVQ courses and a pre-vocational skills course.
31. The very strong ethos of inclusion and support for students with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experience of these students as well as that of all other students in the college.
32. The college has recently taken steps to formally identify gifted and talented students. A rationale has been clearly established for identifying these students and a list has recently been drawn up. Enrichment activities provide very well for these students and are particularly strong in physical

education as a result of the college's sports college status. Coursework opportunities, for example in science also provide good challenge for these students.

33. The college is fully staffed and the needs of the curriculum are met well. The college makes the best use of recruitment from its innovative training programme for the initial training of teachers and its very good links with the graduate training programme. Initial recruitment can be as difficult as with other schools, but retention of staff is good. The numbers, qualifications and experience of teaching and non-teaching staff are appropriately matched to the curriculum in most areas and split teaching in some subjects is usually well managed, but non-specialist teachers in design and technology are having a negative impact on achievement. Generally, teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and examination requirements, and this has helped to raise students' examination performance. A part-time specialist for specific learning difficulties also enhances staffing provision for students with special educational needs. Sufficient SNAs to support students with Statements of Special Educational Need are in place. However, at present, not enough support staff are available to help other students on the special needs register.
34. Accommodation is very good. Although some of the buildings date from the late 1960s, the college has the appearance of a much more recent build. This is due to the facilities being very well maintained, free of graffiti and signs of vandalism. The impression overall is of a modern, light learning environment set in a safe, attractive landscape. Facilities for the physically disabled are good, with easy access to most areas. Litter is not a problem in the college because students are very well supervised at lunchtimes and required to eat food together in the canteen area, hall or coffee bar. In poor weather this communal space becomes more restricted. The sports hall and the theatre have to be used, because of the wet unprotected outdoor areas used for assembling students for lunch.
35. The additional funding from specialist sports college status has been directed at providing good practical facilities for sports including a multi-gym and dance studio that are widely used by the community in the evenings. The management of buildings takes account of aging facilities and a refurbishment programme has been planned for the all-weather pitches and sports halls. Corridors from changing areas become congested at peak times and the physical education department does not have linked classrooms for teaching the theory work that forms an essential part of the GCSE course. At certain times of the week there are insufficient specialist rooms for the teaching of art and, design and technology. This is affecting achievement and standards in these subjects. Since the last report, eight new teaching rooms have been added and with the funding gained from becoming a recognised training institution a new professional development suite has been established.
36. Departments have very good resources and use them well. High investment has been made in ICT since the last report. The number of computers available to students is above the national average. Every teacher now has a laptop computer that is used for electronic registration and the preparation of learning materials. Laptop computers have been provided to the English and science departments to improve access to ICT, but these sometimes do not all work in lessons. Modern foreign languages have a purpose-built computer suite that is well used and is reliable. The learning resources centre has very good ICT resources, but these are not always available to students during lessons because they are often timetabled for the teaching of ICT. The book stock is sufficient and very well used by students. Music has benefited from being involved with the 'Yamaha music school project' through the regular updating of electronic keyboards to the latest specification. Students have the benefit of using an off-site professional recording studio in the out-of-hours programme. Physical education has very good resources, including software to analyse sports performance. The developing citizenship course has made good use of guest speakers whose input has been linked well to the modules being taught. Although computer-aided design and manufacturing equipment has been purchased for technology, it is still not being used, an issue raised in the last report.

Care, guidance and support

The college takes good care of its students. Provision for guidance and support is very good. Opportunities are available for students to be able to express their views and the college takes action as a result of this.

Main strengths

- The induction procedures for new students are excellent, ensuring a very smooth transition to the college
- Staff know students very well and provide very effective support and guidance
- The students have access to counselling and support by the college chaplain and community police officers
- Transitional and annual special educational needs reviews are well established

Commentary

37. Child protection procedures are good and are overseen by experienced and senior members of staff. Staff are aware of these arrangements. Good provision is made for the health and safety of students. Designated staff monitor the condition of the college accommodation and procedures are in place to ensure that any problems are dealt with immediately. In their tutor base, students have access to information on emotional health and well being. First aid cover within the college is good. Very good arrangements are available for students who are unwell. The college has good procedures in place for the safe departure of students at the end of the day and when they are not in lessons. In addition to other means, the college web site is used to give information to parents and students on care support in the college.
38. The pastoral system is well managed and structured. There is currently a Head of Year connected to a group of students with attached tutors. A new system is being introduced at the start of the next academic year, as it was felt that the current system did not respond sufficiently to the needs of older students. The new system will have specialist Year 7 and upper college tutors who are trained to support these students. Students can turn to a variety of people if they need support, including the college chaplain who is available two days a week and local community police officers. This support is to be expanded with a member of staff available as a counsellor for longer periods. Students say they feel safe in college and that there are adults whom they can trust and talk to. The college has good links with primary schools and the induction process is excellent enabling new students to settle in quickly. Year 6 pupils are visited in their schools and attend the college for two full days in the summer term. Most new students take part in a two and a half day team-building visit to the New Forest along with their form tutors. Form time is used effectively to deliver citizenship and overall tutors make good use of this time, with many showing confidence in leading discussions or allowing students to think for themselves and develop their ideas. Students feel that teachers value their ideas. The college council is taken seriously and students' views are considered important.
39. Students and parents receive very good advice and guidance. When option choices are made and later when students are considering courses post-16, parents and students are involved at a very early stage. All students have a careers interview and the college has good links with the Connexions service. Good careers links are in place with two post-16 colleges. Students attend open days and students from the colleges visit Brighton Hill. The college runs a pre-vocational course in Years 9-11. Students on this course value the opportunity to follow skills based courses one day a week at a local college and many follow post-16 training as a result of this.
40. The college has effective relationships with outside specialist agencies – this enhances further the quality of support and guidance for those students with special educational needs. Annual reviews are effective and support students with Statements of Special Educational Need as they move through the college. Parents and students' views are taken into account because they are involved in the setting and reviewing of their targets. The college meets the curricular requirements as outlined in students' Statements of Special Educational need.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent procedures for reporting attainment and progress to parents
- Excellent involvement of parents in the development of the college through consultation
- Excellent involvement with sport in the local community
- Excellent support for sport in other schools
- Students with special educational needs and their parents are not yet fully involved in the setting and review of targets on students' individual education plans

Commentary

41. The college has made very good improvement since the last inspection, especially in reporting to parents and in developing sporting links with other schools and the local community.
42. The college consults parents regularly through different means, including questionnaires and meetings. As well as testing parents' general level of satisfaction with what the college is providing the college also seeks their views over proposed developments. Extensive consultation was undertaken over the change in the college day and the organisation of the curriculum for Years 9, 10 and 11. The college was also thinking about introducing lap-top computers for every student in the college but due to parents' concerns about this they did not proceed. Overall, involvement of parents in the development of the college through consultation is excellent. The college has good procedures for seeking and acting upon the views of students, for example through college councillors.
43. The college works hard to maintain an effective partnership with parents and publishes annually the standard of service parents can expect. To enable parents to play a full role in supporting their children's education it has developed an innovative approach to reporting students' progress to parents. At the beginning of each academic year the college provides parents with a description of six assessments that each student will undertake for each subject during the year. It includes what will be assessed, how it will be assessed and when. Students also have a grade card that records the level or grade the student is working at and an effort grade for each subject after each assessment. Parents should also receive the written assessments with the teachers' comments but this is not happening consistently. The college is aware of this and is putting measures in place to ensure that all teachers send the assessments home. At the end of the year, tutors report on students' personal development.
44. Effective links are in place between the special needs department and the parents of students with special educational needs. They are invited to and attend annual and transitional reviews of students with Statements of Special Educational Need. Their views are recorded; hence they are fully involved and informed as to their child's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review process. However, parents and students are not yet fully involved in the setting and review of targets on students' individual education plans. They are, though, kept informed of procedures for support of students with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator has close links with the main primary feeder schools and as a result is able to plan provision for incoming students in advance.
45. As part of its role as a Sports college, the college is very actively involved in supporting sport in other schools. Primary schools speak highly of the support they receive in improving and extending their sports provision. For example, a local special school is very appreciative that they can use the college's facilities and the quality of specialist teaching in dance. In addition, the college is the lead organisation for the Basingstoke and Deane School Sports Co-ordination Partnership which is again focused on developing sport in a wide range of schools. The college has good links with local sixth form and further education colleges. This results in them being able to offer a wide range of vocational courses to students in the upper college. These courses are highly regarded by the students.

46. The college is very committed to developing sport in the community and has part funded, with the Borough Council and the lawn tennis association, a tennis development officer. The excellent links the college has with local sports clubs extend the range of opportunities to students. Coaches from local clubs take courses and provide taster sessions in a wide range of sports including golf and fencing. The college is well known to local businesses, enabling all students in Year 10 to have a work experience placement with most of the placements fitting students' preferences well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, he has created a vision for the future of the college, which he drives forward relentlessly. He is very well supported by the principal management group. The governors play a strategic role and are very well informed. Leadership of other key staff is good, and they share in the headteacher's vision. Financial and staff management are strengths, which are linked well to improving the work of the college.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The innovative leadership of the headteacher, in translating vision into action
- Strategic planning is excellent and very good teamwork has led to continued improvement
- Governors contribute significantly to the future direction of the college
- Development of quality staff is seen as a key to raising standards and achievement
- Some aspects of learning across the college (cross-curricular elements) are not co-ordinated and some statutory requirements are not fully met
- Financial management is very good and strategic use of finance to support the college's aims is very clear and imaginative

Commentary

47. The headteacher is an astute leader who has created a long-term vision for the college. He has made very good use of opportunities to work towards the vision, recognising that this will take time. He is not afraid to be creative in his thinking and take risks, such as the change to a two-year Key Stage 3, and a three-year Key Stage 4 course. The college development plan shows excellent strategic thinking. It translates the headteacher's vision into goals and points for action. The goals are specific and form very effective measures of success. The long-term direction is clearly mapped out against the current context and focuses on improving standards and achievement.
48. The principal management group are very effective and hardworking, they share the headteacher's vision. They have complementary skills and work well together. Roles and responsibilities are clear. The management of the specialist sports college is very effective, and there is a clear view for future development to raise achievement.
49. Governors know the college very well and are very effective. They monitor the performance of the college closely, and are not afraid to ask searching questions. The decision to run the governing body as one group, rather than several committees, is proving effective and efficient. Governors make significant contributions to the style and content of the college development plan, such that it is a highly readable document, and accessible to parents. However, governors do not ensure that the college meets statutory requirements in religious education for students in Years 10 to 11, nor in providing a daily act of collective worship.
50. Curriculum managers review the work of departments each year and targets are set as a result of this process. The rolling programme of monitoring subject departments by senior managers is rigorous. Alongside these reviews the college is also piloting a peer observation programme. The review programme is having a positive impact in raising the quality of teaching and subject department management.
51. Performance management, seen as central to college improvement, is very well organised and ensures clear links with staff development. The college has training school status and a wide variety of training opportunities is available. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The impact on improvement and of provision is most effective in departments where individual development is well linked with improving subject proficiency. Training has made good use of

external expertise in the creation and development of an observation process designed to improve teaching and learning. Assigned, trained teacher colleagues mentor and support newly-qualified teachers, training teachers and those on the graduate teacher programme very effectively.

52. Leadership and management of subject departments and pastoral teams are good, overall. In English leadership is excellent, and very good in mathematics, geography, history, modern languages, music and physical education. Very good or excellent leadership is characterised by a strong focus on raising standards and achievement. Analysis of data, monitoring of students' work and observing lessons are regularly carried out and help identify areas for improvement. These are being systematically tackled and there is a strong emphasis on staff training. Where leadership is only satisfactory, analysis and monitoring are not regularly carried out. This results in development plans which do not identify key priorities, and little sharing of good practice.
53. The college pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs and statutory requirements are met. New leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership is maintaining the whole-college ethos for the inclusion of and support of students with special educational needs but new management procedures are not yet fully embedded. An appropriate development plan guides the work of the special educational needs department. SNAs are deployed to provide the required support for students with Statements of Special Educational Need. This provides the breadth and level of support required for these students. However, there are occasions when the efficiency of this deployment could be more effective. The monitoring and work of the SNAs is well embedded as a result of the appraisal system they are part of. The fact that the special educational needs co-ordinator does much routine administrative work and record keeping is an inefficient use of time, experience and expertise.
54. The contribution of other subjects, for example to literacy and numeracy is not co-ordinated and this leads to inconsistencies in approach across subjects. Although many subjects identify elements of these aspects of learning in their schemes of work and lesson plans, they are often not made explicit to students.

Financial Information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,402,600.00	Balance from previous year	63,600.00
Total expenditure	3,292,300.00	Balance carried forward to the next	173,900.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,672.53		

55. Financial management is very good, overall. Plans and strategic use of finance to support the college's aims are very clear and imaginative, as is the ability of the leadership team to secure funds for targeted developments. As a result, students benefit from participation in a number of initiatives, which enrich their education considerably beyond the acceptable standard normally seen, especially in relation to sporting opportunities. Administrative systems are very well managed, monitored and evaluated to ensure that there is a clear focus on 'Best Value' for all that the college does. The college is well aware of its need to develop further its facilities for information and communication technology, and to maintain the good condition of its increasingly expensive buildings. Ambitious plans are in place for further development, particularly in support of the college's Sports college status. The governing body offers strong, and constructively critical, support to this aspect of the management of the college.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership ensures that teachers work as a highly focused team to raise standards
- Students achieve very well as a result of enthusiastic teaching and very well planned lessons
- The results of 14 year olds in national tests and 16 year olds in GCSE Literature are well above the national average
- Results in GCSE Language, although above the national average, are below those gained by the same students in their other subjects

Commentary

Examination results

56. In the national tests taken in 2003 by 14 year old students, results were well above the national average. These results continued the upward trend whereby English results are improving faster than the national rate. Girls' results were better than boys', but the difference over time is broadly in line with the national pattern. In GCSE English Literature, the results in 2003 improved significantly and were well above the national average. GCSE English Language results in 2003 were above the national average, as they have been in recent years. They were, however, a little below the results gained by the same students in their other subjects. In English Language, girls' results were higher than those of boys, but in Literature the results were virtually identical.

Standards and achievement

57. When students join the college, their level of attainment is average. Their examination results therefore represent very good achievement and reflect the improvement in students' standards during their time at the college. By the time students reach the end of Year 9, their standards are well above average. The skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are developed steadily through a programme that draws heavily on the government's strategy for raising the attainment of younger secondary students (the Key Stage 3 Strategy). Students of all abilities write with insight in response to First World War poetry, with the higher-attainers doing so in sustained and accurate essays. The writing of lower-attaining students improves as a result of very structured teaching that emphasises the need to make points accurately, with appropriate supporting evidence.
58. In Years 10 and 11, students learn to analyse writing through its meaning, language and structure. This systematic approach accounts for the high standards of work on demanding literature, such as the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage. A further reason for the high standard of students' writing is that they have numerous opportunities to express and develop their ideas orally in pairs and groups before they begin a final piece of writing. There is thus a strong link between the standards of students' spoken and written English.

Teaching and learning

59. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. As a consequence, students learn very well. Teachers adopt a common approach to planning their lessons, based on the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and contain a very good range of activities so that students can learn in a variety of ways. Where the pace flags, learning is less effective. Teachers ensure that lessons have sharply focused purposes that are apparent to the students. Key assessment tasks are marked in great detail, with explicit guidance to students on how to improve their predicted National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Students are also encouraged to assess their own and one another's work against national criteria so that they gain a greater understanding of how to achieve higher levels or grades. Appropriate use is made of ICT.
60. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and teaching skills and use these to foster the learning of students of all levels of attainment. During the inspection, a group of higher-attaining Year 7 students made excellent progress in preparing oral presentations because of the pace, variety and challenge of the work. Students with special educational needs make very good progress because teachers' planning takes account of their individual needs. SNAs were present in only two lessons inspected where their unobtrusive, but effective support enabled students with a range of special needs to remain fully involved in the lesson.

Leadership and management

61. Teachers have a strong sense of teamwork deriving from clear, common objectives determined by a rigorous analysis of needs and excellent organisation. The scheme of work is thorough and comprehensive. Monitoring of teaching is of a very high order. The upward trend in the results of 14 year olds and in GCSE Literature is the outcome of systematic planning and staff training. Courses have now been re-structured to place greater emphasis on GCSE Language. The attractive displays of students' work in classrooms create a vibrant subject atmosphere. At the time of the last inspection, English was a strong feature of the college's provision. Since then, the overall position has been maintained, with some important improvements. In particular, results of 14 year olds have been improving faster than the national trend and very large numbers of students gained high grades in GCSE Literature in 2003. Improvement has thus been good and there is very good potential for further improvement.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent monitoring of teaching and learning in English

The English department is greater than the sum of its parts. One of the features of the department that contributes significantly to very high student achievement is the sharply focused programme of monitoring. This has several strands:

- All the written work of particular students in each class, selected by the Head of Department or her deputy, is scrutinised in detail at regular intervals. Teachers are notified of the identity of the students only on the day of the scrutiny. Detailed and helpful written feedback is provided for the class teachers
- Lesson observation by the head or deputy head of department, again with detailed written feedback
- The videoing of staff for training purposes. The training programme is related to the priorities of the department
- Peer observation by teachers of one another's lessons

These activities create a culture in which teachers strive constantly to improve the quality of teaching and learning and in which there is coherence to the department's strategies and teaching styles. The warm, humane style of leadership ensures that monitoring is seen as a constructive and helpful contribution to the development of teachers' professional skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. The college makes satisfactory provision for the development of students' literacy. During the inspection, the overall standards observed were above average. In some subjects and individual lessons, literacy is promoted systematically. For example, in history and geography, provision for literacy is built in to the scheme of work, as well as being evident in the lesson plans of individual teachers. As a result, standards of literacy in those subjects are well above average by the time that students complete Year 11. Most subjects emphasise key words and technical vocabulary appropriately. However, the best practices are not consistently applied across all subjects and not all

teachers take account of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar when marking students' work. The library is a good facility that makes a useful contribution to the development of students' literacy. At the time of the inspection, no member of staff had responsibility for ensuring the coherence and quality of the college's provision for literacy. Further improvement in students' standards depends on the consistent application of the principles and practices of the National Literacy Strategy.

Modern foreign languages

All students take German in Year 7 and there is an opportunity to start French in Year 8 in the after hours programme and in Year 9 during the main college day. Spanish is offered out of hours in Years 9 and 10.

The main focus was on French, German and Spanish, but an extra-curricular Swedish lesson was also seen. In this lesson students were actively involved and enjoyed their learning.

Provision in modern foreign languages is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average in French, German and Spanish.	Above average in French and German. Well above average in Spanish.
Achievement	Very good in French and Spanish. Good in German.	Good in French and German. Very good in Spanish.
Teaching	Very good in French and Spanish. Good in German.	Good in French and German, Very good in Spanish
Learning	Very good in French and Spanish. Good in German.	Good in French and German. Very good in Spanish.

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good achievement by students in Spanish and by students in Years 8 and 9 in French as a result of very good teaching
- The teachers' very good linguistic skills and subject knowledge and their strong commitment to personal and professional development
- The wide variety of activities and teaching approaches and the very effective use of the foreign language in the very good and excellent lessons
- An excellent programme of exchanges and visits to France, Germany, Spain and Italy motivates students and raises linguistic standards and develops cultural awareness
- Occasional inconsistency in the quality of teaching leads to some underachievement

Commentary

Examination results

63. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were in line with those reported nationally. Results in teacher assessments have been broadly similar in recent years. The attainment of boys was below that of girls. In 2003, GCSE results in the French were above average with boys' attainment being significantly below that of the girls. Results in German were well above average with boys attaining slightly better than girls. This represents a big improvement when compared to GCSE results in the previous two years.

Standards and achievement

64. In all three languages in Years 9 to 11 students have well-developed listening skills. They cope well with lessons conducted mainly in the foreign language and listen intently to recorded texts to pick out gist and details. In a Year 10 German class containing many gifted linguists, students understood a

demanding recorded text relating to healthy living and were not phased when confronted with a large amount of abstract language aurally. Students' pronunciation and intonation are well above average and their ability to communicate their ideas and express their opinions is good. In a Year 10 French top set, students read out loud a demanding authentic text with fluency and accuracy. In a Year 7 German class, containing several students with special educational needs, choral repetition was of a good standard. A big strength in all languages is the high standard of grammatical accuracy and correct spelling. In a Year 10 French top set, students wrote imaginatively about film plots, when provided with appropriate support. In Year 7 written work in German, high-attaining students write extended texts containing complex sentences and students with special educational needs copy words and sentences accurately. Students' reading skills are well developed in all languages. In the Year 9 beginners' class in Spanish, students read a transactional dialogue about booking excursions with ease. The progression of students in French German and Spanish in terms of the development of all four language skills is impressive. The progress made in the Spanish beginners' courses is particularly strong.

Teaching and learning

65. All teaching and learning observed were satisfactory or better. In three-quarters of all lessons teaching and learning were good or better and in two lessons were excellent. The most effective teaching was seen when the teacher used the foreign language for most of the teaching, because this helped students to develop their listening and speaking skills. In the best lessons, the teacher had planned a variety of activities which were taught at a very brisk pace and where students had the opportunity to work in pairs or in groups. The effective use of computers in many lessons also enhanced learning. All these activities motivated students to work hard and learn well. For example in a Year 10 Spanish lesson, students were very actively involved in talking about daily routine and listened very intently to a demanding recorded text. In almost all lessons, attitudes and behaviour were very good and relationships were very positive. Gifted and talented students make outstanding progress in all languages as a result of challenging, high quality teaching. Occasionally, the pace of teaching was slow, too much of the lesson was in English and the tasks were not appropriately sequenced. As a result, some students lost interest and made slower progress.

Leadership and management

66. Departmental documentation is good and gives good guidance to teachers on organisational matters and teaching and learning. The excellent programme of visits and exchanges to France, Germany, Spain and Italy helps students to learn and use the language in context, as well as making a positive contribution to their personal and cultural development. Very well-developed systems of assessment help monitor students' attainment and track their progress. The examples of very good and excellent practice in the department are not always sufficiently shared, however. Since the last inspection report, results at GCSE have improved, the college has introduced an impressive array of trips to Europe and Spanish has been added to the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because they work very hard and are very well taught
- The higher-attaining students are enabled to reach very high standards, especially in coursework

- Very effective management reduces the impact of staff recruitment and timetable difficulties
- ICT is not used in lessons to enhance learning

Commentary

Examination results

67. In 2003, both end-of-Year 9 national test and GCSE results were well above the national averages for all students and for similar students. At GCSE, the proportion of higher grades is above average, the proportion of lower grades is low, and the overall proportion of students entered is high. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Results have risen over the last five years.

Standards and achievement

68. Students start Year 7 with average standards which are raised to well above average by Year 11. Achievement is strong across all areas of number, algebra, geometry and statistics. Students are accurate numerically and in applying standard methods, for example in solving equations or using trigonometry. They draw graphs and geometrical constructions accurately. Investigative work is strong especially for the highest-attaining students, as seen in some stunning work on calculus, which would be outstanding at sixth form level. Students make sensible use of calculators, including those that display graphs. Achievement is currently less consistent in Years 7 to 9 where about two thirds of sets have their teaching split between two or more staff, even though the teaching is well coordinated. Timetable blocking in Years 10 and 11 leads to a wide mix of levels of attainment in a few sets, which hinders achievement. Generally, students are less confident when having to think for themselves or explore ideas in lessons, because they tend to rely on instructions from their teacher. However, students are confident to ask questions to clarify ideas, and overall they behave very well and concentrate hard in lessons. These very good attitudes contribute to students' achievement.

Teaching and learning

69. A key strength is the strong core of dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced teachers. Their expectations of students are high for groups of all levels of attainment. Students with special educational needs benefit from expert help in smaller groups. The higher-attaining students are challenged, especially when investigating mathematical ideas. For example, Year 7 students had to apply reasoning when they explored the shapes made when two different squares overlap. Classroom organisation and management are very good. Lessons generally are characterised by good supportive relations between teachers and students, with individual help routinely available after college. Explanations at the board are always clear and are most effective when supported by a variety of activities. Where learning was best, the students were encouraged to discuss or explain their ideas and methods, often at the front of the class. The setting of targets, using regular assessments and tracking progress contribute substantially to raising achievement. Stimulating mathematical displays in all rooms encourage students' positive attitudes towards mathematics. Additionally, the above-average amount of time spent on mathematics each week is a further factor behind the standards achieved.
70. However, computers are not currently used to enhance teaching and learning. This is mainly due to a lack of resources in classrooms both for digital display to the whole class and for students' use. Other areas for development surround the inconsistencies in the stating of clear objectives, using interactive approaches that involve discussion or practical resources, using questioning that makes students think, ensuring students know how to improve and developing students' literacy skills.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership in mathematics sets high expectations. A strong team of colleagues support each other well. Involvement in a new form of GCSE shows vision and commitment to improvement. Results and overall provision have improved since the last inspection, much of this because of the leadership and the experience of teachers. Efficient management appears in the thorough organisation of the scheme of work, target setting, assessment tests and records. The impact of staff recruitment difficulties, timetabled split classes and awkward setting have been minimised through careful organisation and mutual support. The progress of students is evaluated effectively by tracking grades and analysing examination results. However, the monitoring of teaching is not ensuring

consistency in high quality teaching and learning – one example is the variation in the use of marking of students’ work. Also, the recorded development planning is a relative weakness.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Students make effective use of their very good mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, the students’ skills are not hindering their learning - but there is no policy or guidance to promote the development of numeracy in the subject. In geography, students show they can interpret data and charts but extending such skills is not in the scheme of work. There is a similar picture in design and technology, students are accurate in measuring and calculation, although some of this is identified in lesson plans. A co-ordinated whole-college approach, to sharpen the awareness of numeracy in other subjects, is not in place.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good communication skills and positive attitudes to their work, which support their learning well
- Students’ investigative and enquiry skills are not developed sufficiently and the quality of their written work does not always contribute to the development of their scientific skills
- Staff provide a pleasant working atmosphere where students feel supported and confident in their ability to succeed
- The confidence of staff and students in the use of computers develops their knowledge and understanding
- Assessment as a tool to support students’ learning and progress is not developed sufficiently

Commentary

Examination Results

73. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average compared to all schools nationally, and average when compared to similar schools. In 2003, the results for students who took separate science subjects at GCSE were well above average but this was not the case for single science courses where students only gained average results. When both sets of results are taken together the average A*-C pass rate for science was 50 per cent, but for the whole college the overall A*-C pass rate was 68 per cent. Overall, students perform less well in science examinations than they do in English and mathematics.

Standards and Achievements

74. Overall, standards on entry to the college are average. Standards in Years 7 to 9 have shown some improvement. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average and students achieve well. They develop confidence in communicating with staff and each other and this supports their learning well. Students’ good behaviour and co-operation produces a purposeful, safe working atmosphere where they develop their knowledge and understanding. In some lessons, progress is hindered by a lack of stimulating enquiry work which limits opportunities for students to extend their investigative and evaluative skills.

75. Current Year 11 standards are average. Students develop good working relationships with teachers giving them confidence in their ability. All students have good skills in computing allowing them to use the Internet and other computer applications to support their learning. Coursework in the separate science courses is of a good standard and constructive marking has improved its quality. However, in other science courses the quality of work is not as high. Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

76. Students' progress is supported by the knowledge, enthusiasm and skills of helpful and friendly staff, keen for them to succeed. Staff give freely of their time, both in the normal and extended school day. Teaching is most effective where teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which they impart to the students in a well-structured and enthusiastic way. Students have confidence in the teaching and therefore make progress in their studies. A Year 9 lesson was particularly good in using a wide range of methods to stimulate and challenge students. A recent national test question was developed, using a well thought out practical session, which helped all pupils to understand the problem and increase their knowledge.
77. Lessons are less effective, and students make slower progress, when teachers do not have high expectations both for behaviour and quality of written work. In some Year 10 and 11 lessons, students' behaviour and interest in the work was not encouraged by less challenging activities such as "stick and paste". When clear goals are not set and assessment is weaker students are not sufficiently motivated and do not value their work.

Leadership and management

78. Since the last inspection, leadership and management have focused, with some success, on developing suitable courses for students of all levels of attainment. For example, the introduction of a GNVQ course has led to an increase in the motivation of Year 9 students. Further appropriate changes to upper college courses are planned. At present, however, students have insufficient opportunities for investigative work to develop their enquiry skills and scientific understanding. Students' written work also lacks a structured, consistent format. The department is well resourced and supported by a dedicated team of technicians and administrative staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average for all students Above average for those following an examination course
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good assessment enables students to know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve
- Teaching and learning in the vocational course is good because teachers plan their lessons well and make good use of resources
- The national strategy has been introduced into Years 7 and 8 and teaching by non-specialists is well supported by the ICT co-ordinator

- Teaching time in Years 7 to 9 is reduced which means that not all strands of the National Curriculum can be delivered in depth

Commentary

Examination results

79. The results achieved by students in Year 11 have shown a steady improvement and with the introduction of the GNVQ ICT course in 2003 results are now above the national average.

Standards and achievement

80. Students begin Year 7 with a wide range of ICT experiences but, overall, standards are below national expectations. In Years 7 and 8, ICT is taught as a discrete subject to all students, for 30 hours a year. This is below national recommendations and as a result some areas of the curriculum cannot be covered in depth. Teacher assessments indicate that by the end of Year 9, the attainment of the majority of students is well above national expectations, however not all strands are covered in these assessments and this limits their validity. In Years 9, 10 and 11 approximately 35 per cent of the students follow a GNVQ course equivalent to four GCSEs. The rest receive ICT through other subjects, but this delivery has not yet been mapped in detail to record the applications being covered. In Years 10 and 11, all students who do not follow a GNVQ course are able to pursue a Key Skills ICT course. Some are also given the opportunity to complete a GNVQ ICT course as part of the after-college enrichment activities. Achievement by all students is good. In Year 8, students are able to use complex formulae when using spreadsheets and students of all abilities achieve well. In the GNVQ course, students of all levels of attainment achieve well.

Teaching and learning

81. Coursework is well marked and students know the level of their work. They are clear what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve the standard. Students are encouraged in all lessons and this gives them confidence to participate in all activities. Teachers know their students well. They know those students who have special educational needs and support them well. The quality of the teaching and learning in most lessons is good or very good and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well planned. Students know that the teachers have a high level of expectation for behaviour and achievement in all lessons. The attitudes and behaviour of students are very good. In the best lessons, varied activities keep students working productively at all times. Teachers know their subject well and in most teaching rooms are well supported by the available resources. However, some rooms are less well resourced with tools to enhance teaching and learning. Although extension tasks are available for higher-attaining students, they do not provide students with sufficient opportunities to be creative.

Leadership and management

82. Leadership is good. The ICT co-ordinator has vision and is a good role model, demonstrating great support for the subject. Those who teach ICT work well as a team. The ICT co-ordinator meets once a week on a voluntary basis with all teachers to co-ordinate the discrete ICT lessons and to moderate assessed work. All the courses are well planned and the assessment is very good. Since the last inspection there has been considerable investment in ICT equipment, including lap-top computers in subject suites. The ratio of computers to students is above the national average. This has enabled greater access and the development of discrete ICT provision in Years 7 to 11 to support learning in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. The use of ICT in other subjects is not yet mapped across all year groups. Overall, younger students' ICT skills are above average and those of students in Years 10 and 11 are average. Considerable support has been provided in some subject areas with curriculum leaders for ICT in many areas. In English lessons, the use of ICT makes an effective contribution to very good lessons through the use of laptops. In science, laptops are also used well, in Year 11 for GCSE for revision. In other years, simulations are used and they are also used for Internet research. One science lesson included the use of a simulation of cell division and another included Internet research on ultra-sound. In modern foreign languages, the ICT leader gives good support. ICT has a prominent place in schemes of work and students have access to specialist packages. Students are also encouraged to use ICT at home. In physical education, there is access to an interactive whiteboard and extensive use of digital images for analysis and also heart monitoring. In music lessons,

students have access to electronic keyboards. Year 10 students use keyboards for multi-tracking. Currently, access to computers is limited, but plans are in place for expansion. Year 11 students have the opportunity to attend a local studio to develop the use of keyboards for musical composition. In other subjects, the use of ICT has still to be developed; for example, the use of computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) and control in design and technology. In mathematics, some evidence of student use of ICT for coursework preparation is evident. However, the use of ICT in lessons is very limited. Laptops which used to be used by students in mathematics are no longer available. The use of ICT to support the learning of special educational needs students is limited by the absence of a permanent base. However, these students do have access to ten Alpha smart word processors. Although ICT use is identified on the humanities schemes of work, access to facilities is an issue.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above Average	Above average
Achievement	Very Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very Good	Very Good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Years 8 and 9 are well above national averages and students progress very well
- Students are responding with very good attitudes to the improved provision in the subject, and opting for it in increasing numbers in Years 9 to 11
- Teachers' planning, wide range of methods and high expectations lead to very good learning for students
- GCSE results in 2003 were well below the national average, but much improved subject management has resulted in much improvement in current standards
- Teachers use assessment well to support students' progress. However, students are not clear enough about how to improve their work without help

Commentary

Examination Results

84. The results of Year 9 assessments in 2003 were well above those reported nationally. GCSE examination results in 2003 were significantly below the national average, and had fluctuated from below to average previously. Only 41 students took geography and they achieved well below expected grades.

Standards and achievement

85. In Year 9, current standards are securely above average. This represents very good achievement as students enter the college with below average experience of the subject and over half of the students take their assessment in Year 8 rather than Year 9. In Year 11, current standards are also above average, and students' long-term achievement is good, as they are doing well against their predicted targets and progress very well in lessons. Higher-attaining students do particularly well in 'accelerated' sets. Students' achievement has improved due to changes made to the curriculum and teaching approach.

Teaching and Learning

86. In all years learning is consistently very good, because teachers are very well organised and succeed in stimulating, and keeping, students' interest and focus by their knowledge, enthusiasm, pace and expectation. Students' different learning styles are very well supported by teachers' use of a wide range of sources and methods. Students are always required to think, and younger students in particular are building a strong grounding in geographical methods as a result. For example in a Year 8 lower set, students were able to conclude for themselves that Italy has a north-south economic divide by using a range of supplied data. Not all older students are comfortable with the level of challenge set, however, as they have experienced a change in the department's syllabus and teaching approach over the last two years, and have not fully adapted to this. They are still attaining and achieving well.

Leadership and management

87. Leadership and management are both very good. A clear focus has been placed on improvement based on accurate evaluation of priorities, and good systems have been developed. However, insufficient emphasis has been laid on making students independent of teachers, both in lessons and in using assessment information. Use of ICT is satisfactory, but limited by a lack of consistent access to equipment. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; the team have achieved much in the last two years, but changes are too recent to have had full impact on standards and significant impact on results in Year 11.

History

Provision in history is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently well above national averages and students in Years 10 and 11 progress very well
- Teachers use a wide range of sources and methods and have high expectations
- Students' attitudes are very positive and they expect to do well
- Assessment is used very effectively as a management tool for teachers, but does not fully enable students to improve independently

Commentary

Examination Results

88. Year 9 assessment results, in 2003, were well above those reported nationally, and were securely above national averages in the previous two years. GCSE examination results in 2003 were also well above the national average, as they have been since 2001; history was the college's best performing subject in 2003, with a high proportion of students gaining grades A and B.

Standards and achievement

89. Standards in Year 9 are securely above average, being slightly below the results published in 2003. This reflects this year group's level of attainment and represents very good achievement as students enter the college with below average experience of the subject, and over half of them take their assessment in Year 8. Students' motivation is very high and this contributes significantly to their long-term progress. Standards in Year 11 are well above average, and students achieve very well in

lessons and against their ambitious predicted targets. Higher-attaining students do very well in 'accelerated' sets.

Teaching and Learning

90. In Years 7 to 9, students learn very well overall as a result of very well managed teaching and assessment programmes. A few individual lessons seen were only satisfactory, but the longer-term impact of departmental organisation and experience, with students' high motivation is very positive. At their best, teachers' planning, knowledge and use of resources enable students to achieve above expectation, as with average Year 8 students who understood and explained very well the process of lull, bombardment and assault in First World War trenches. In Years 10 and 11, students learn very well because teachers are very experienced at sequencing and structuring exam level work. Students are required to use a variety of techniques to consider issues from many viewpoints, which ensures very good learning.

Leadership and management

91. Leadership and management are both very good at department and faculty level. Evaluation is a particular strength, and all issues raised during the inspection had been identified by the department themselves as priorities for improvement. For example, students are too dependent on teachers for their choice of working methods and for their understanding of how to improve their work. However, the long-term management of assessment and of preparation for examinations are particular strengths, which have increased students' achievement. Use of ICT is satisfactory, but limited by a lack of consistent access to equipment. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good as standards are higher and more secure.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average (for those on the examination course)
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement is supported by very good attitudes and behaviour
- Good classroom management and teacher expertise lead to good learning
- Current provision for the subject after the age of 14 is inadequate
- Students enjoy the subject, know how well they are doing and recognise its value in society

Standards and achievement

92. Standards are average. In Years 7 and 8, students make significant gains in learning from a level of attainment which is below average on entry. However, provision in Year 9 is patchy, and standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with national averages. Those with special educational needs are well supported to express their ideas and listen to each other and their teacher. Only a very few students continue the subject beyond the age of 14. Standards seen in GCSE lessons were in line with expectations. There are no GCSE results to report.
93. Achievement is good. In Years 7 and 8, all students make good progress and satisfactory progress in Year 9. Year 7 students wrote their own psalm as a way of answering mysterious questions. When discussing the variety of religious beliefs in Britain they imagined a refugee family moving into

the area, and described how and why they should treat their new classmate sensitively, recognising and valuing different religious and cultural traditions.

Teaching and learning

94. Good learning is a result of good teaching and very good attitudes. Expertise in devising methods of study is good. Resources such as aids to reading and writing, video and ICT help all students to be fully involved in their own learning. Opportunities for small group and whole-class discussion are frequent. Important questions about our world are explored in a supportive atmosphere. In a Year 9 lesson about euthanasia, students with special educational needs could talk about their own experience of quality and quantity of life, ranging from a great grandmother living in the family home to a father’s untimely death. As a result, religious education contributes well to students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. No statutory religious education teaching takes place in Years 10 or 11. Only thirteen students are studying the subject to GCSE, as a result of the way the options are arranged. They do well and are encouraged to improve examination answers to reach their individual potential.

Leadership and management

95. Leadership is satisfactory with split responsibilities. Management is satisfactory, overall, with strengths in teaching styles and resources, and weaknesses in curriculum coverage, and opportunities for students to continue the subject beyond the age of 14. Improvement has been unsatisfactory because statutory requirements are not fully met. However, plans are in place to start the teaching of a GCSE short course for all students from next September.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

(The department offers a two-year foundation course and then the opportunity for students to specialise in Year 9 with GCSE courses in product design using food, textiles, resistant, and graphical materials).

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE students are taught well and their finished work is of good quality
- Standards are improving and older students are achieving well
- Students have positive attitudes and good relationships with their teachers
- Students in Years 7 and 8 are not receiving the usual depth of experiences because of a lack of time
- The use of non-specialist rooms and teachers, is having a negative impact on standards and achievement in Years 7 and 8
- Designing is not centred sufficiently on the specifications of the product

Commentary

Examination results

96. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 8 for those students not continuing the subject into Year 9 are generous. Students who go onto specialise in one area of the subject in Year 9 attain above

average results. In 2003 boys' GCSE A*-C grade results were well below average, but girls were exactly average. Compared with other subjects in the college, the subject was below average and slightly fewer students than usual were entered for the subject examinations. Over the last four years, results have declined.

Standards and achievement

97. Students arrive with average standards from their primary schools. In Years 7 and 8, some students experience four different teachers, others are taught by non-specialists, in rooms without equipment for the subject. To compensate for the lack of specialist teachers and rooms the curriculum has been diluted. Many students do not study the subject beyond the end of Year 8. They therefore have less time than usual. Students who do not continue beyond the end of Year 8 with the subject do not get to experience the practical use of computer-aided manufacturing, modern materials, components, structures and control systems. All of this reduces the overall standards and achievement of students. Those who choose to continue their studies in one area of design and technology do well in Year 9, achieving standards above the average.
98. Good standards and achievements were seen in all of the practical work. Standards are improving, but the folder work in graphics and resistant materials is less successful than it should be because of the lack of use of ICT resources. One food technology group is very large and some students have to be sent to the learning resources centre whilst the others cook. Students with special educational needs are not having the benefit of using additional literacy techniques to raise their achievements. In all lessons, the students' standards of attitudes and behaviour were always very good due to the very good relationships between teachers and students.

Teaching and learning

99. Year 7 students in textiles lessons, benefit from specialist teachers. Variations occur in the quality of learning in Years 7 and 8, when students experience many different teachers. Good homework habits are established in Year 7 to extend learning. Students are good at co-operative working and therefore learn from each other. Those who do continue with the course have a more focused experience than usual in Year 9, with specialist teachers providing good individual advice and support in lessons. These lessons are well planned and safely organised. Teachers have good subject knowledge and Year 10 students do well in resistant materials because of the good use of high quality demonstrations and examples. In Year 11, the samples of students' work show that the teaching of the practical aspects of the subject is good, and the teaching of food and textiles is becoming more rigorously aligned to examination requirements. Some GCSE students, particularly boys with special educational needs in literacy, are not being supported well enough because they are not using computers sufficiently. Students are not linking their evaluative thinking sufficiently to the product specifications and opportunities are missed to link designing to the local business community.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership of the subject is dedicated, but some significant obstacles have to be overcome to ensure that all students get the full range of necessary experiences. Good documentation is in place and good systems to support the non-specialist teachers. Since the last inspection, a number of the positive points mentioned in the report have deteriorated.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Lessons were sampled in dance and drama.

Dance

101. The first examination in dance was in 2003 with one student only who achieved an above average result. The first full cohort of students go through in 2004. College data suggests that students are achieving well and are close to the national average in performance in Year 9. In Year 10, standards are above average. Students focus and concentrate on fluidity and timing; sustained movements are improving. They understand the importance of good interpretation of music and use of gesture. They respond very well and teamwork is emphasised effectively with students working well together.

102. Teaching, learning and attitudes of students are very good. In one Year 9 lesson, the use of a video camera for analysis and evaluation assisted learning, improvement and progress. Specially organised extra-curricular provision supports students' practice and enhances their work. Teachers review previous learning well, to check understanding before moving on. Good demonstration and effective questioning contribute strongly to the progress students are making, but thorough evaluation at the end of lessons would consolidate the work in the lesson and identify improvement. The facilities for dance are very good. The course is led and managed very well.

Drama

103. Results at GCSE are well above average. In their lessons, students work with enthusiasm and commitment, displaying a good command of a wide range of dramatic techniques and the ability to co-operate well in groups. Students are also able to evaluate their own performances and those of others with perception. For example, in a Year 10 lesson during the inspection, students engaged in a lively discussion on the ways in which social distinctions had been represented through freeze-frame techniques and how successful each approach had been.
104. The subject is well co-ordinated, with a comprehensive teaching scheme and good arrangements for the assessment of students' work. Ambition on the part of the teachers is clearly evident to improve the standard of students' performances. The decision to enter students for GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10 is an example of this. However, at the time of the inspection, the college had not finalised plans for the way in which it would use Year 11 time to extend the experiences of these students.
105. The extra-curricular programme in drama makes a good contribution to the self-confidence of the students involved, as well as to the development of their dramatic skills.

Art and design

Provision in art is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High-attaining students achieve well and reach above average standards
- Students' behaviour and attitudes are very good, and they work hard
- Students' analysis of their own work and that of other artists is below average
- Assessment criteria are not made clear to students, so they do not know how to improve
- The excellent range of enrichment opportunities add a further dimension to students' experience of art
- Students' understanding of techniques is above average because teachers use their good expertise to give clear demonstrations

Commentary

Examination results

106. Results in the 2003 and 2002 GCSE examinations were below average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were above average. This appears to be over generous.

Standards and achievement

107. The attainment of students when they enter the college is average. Current standards indicate that as they progress through the college they achieve satisfactorily. Students in both Years 9 and 11 have average drawing and painting skills. The surrealism project in Year 9 encouraged students to make connections between their work and that of other artists. Students' paintings show competent colour mixing and brushwork skills, and their achievement is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students. The difference between the performance of boys and girls is small, boys' presentation and annotation is less detailed. In Year 11, students explore their ideas. They observe accurately, and achieve well when they use first-hand rather than secondary sources. Students rarely evaluate or explain their exploration thoroughly enough. They research the work of other artists and cultures. However, much of this is copied information, and lacks personal response, except for high-attaining students. Students with below average literacy skills find research difficult, and they do not achieve satisfactorily in this aspect of the subject.

Teaching and learning

108. Lessons start briskly because teachers are well organised and give clear instructions. Teachers do not make clear to students what they will learn, but rather what they will do. Students concentrate very well, because teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers and students have very good relationships, and the ethos is workmanlike. Students collaborate well. During lessons, teachers give good one-to-one support, which helps students improve their work. Where targets are limited and specific, the end-of-project assessments are effective in helping students know what to improve. However, students do not have a clear understanding of the examination assessment criteria, and this affects their achievement. Where teachers and students evaluate work at the end of lesson, learning is reinforced. The GCSE course book and other support materials provide useful guidance for students, but are not explicit enough to support students' research skills. Teacher assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not consistently accurate.

Leadership and management

109. The department is satisfactorily run. The team are all specialists, and work well together. Development planning identifies relevant priorities, and is well linked to teachers' professional development needs. Schemes of work have an appropriate balance, between the development of skills, and learning about other artists and cultures. There is some repetition and gaps between each teacher's scheme. The department has tried to meet students' differing interests and needs, but this has led to topics such as pop art being over represented. The two specialist rooms are well resourced. However, some lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms. This wastes time, and is an unsatisfactory arrangement. The sharing of classes between two teachers does not work well where communication is only verbal. Students participate well in the many opportunities for enrichment, which range from art club to trips to local events, and overseas.

Music

Provision in music is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- High expectations of work and behaviour contribute to the very good quality of teaching and learning
- Students achieve very well in Years 10 and 11

- The range of extra-curricular opportunities available to students is outstanding
- Students' enjoyment of this subject is very evident

Commentary

Examination results

110. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average and slightly lower than 2002, but the number of students taking the subject was small and so any national comparison should be treated with caution. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average, but moderation is not used to assure the reliability of these results.

Standards and achievement

111. Standards observed in lessons during the inspection and in students' work are above expected standards at the end of both Years 9 and 11. Students enter college with average attainment in music. They achieve well by the end of Year 9. The cohort in Year 11 is small with a wide range of prior attainment. These students achieve very well in relation to their varied starting points. Students in Year 11 are very knowledgeable about stylistic features of music and can successfully identify the music of various composers and from different periods in history. In lessons, the support offered to all students, particularly those with special educational needs, is very good and helps everyone to achieve as well as they are able.

Teaching and learning

112. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff have very good subject knowledge and skills which encourage students to try hard at the required task and develop their understanding. Very good targeted questioning is used, and what is to be learned in each lesson is made clear at the beginning so that students are immediately focused on the task; students know that staff expect them to work hard and respond appropriately in lessons. Resources are used imaginatively, for example in a Year 10 lesson, where all students, using their own instruments as well as keyboards, within minutes produced a creditable performance of an extract from Handel's Water Music. The teacher also joined in the performance which encouraged the students in their efforts. Currently for Year 7, a resource booklet has been produced which makes clear the progression of key musical skills. Composing and performing are strong elements within the scheme of work, but opportunities are not regularly given to students to sing in lessons. They collaborate well when using the keyboards and, together with very positive relationships between students and staff, create an environment which is conducive to learning. The brisk pace of lessons encourages a very good response from students and the infectious enthusiasm of staff is conveyed to students so they really enjoy all musical experiences, as seen both in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management

113. The leadership of music is very good. The teaching team of two have complementary skills, and, together with ten peripatetic staff who teach over two hundred students on the full range of instruments, are focused on raising achievement. Very good role modelling inspires students to give of their best, and this is particularly true in the many extra-curricular activities which are outstanding, both in the number available and in the participation rate of students. An innovation has been the recent introduction of scholarships for musically talented students. Management is good, with day-to-day assessments of students' progress which helps the planning of future lessons. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place and there is a strong commitment to professional development which is directly related to the department development plan. This document accurately reflects the areas for development. Accommodation is good and resources are very good, with high quality electronic keyboards available through the Yamaha Music School, and opportunities for senior students to use the recording studio facilities of another secondary school are available. ICT resources are being upgraded imminently in the department.
114. Improvement since the last inspection has been good with all previous issues resolved. In addition, more students are participating in musical activities and achieving higher standards of performance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results were above average in the 2003 GCSE examinations
- Good teaching is helping all students to learn and achieve well
- Leadership is innovative and very effective in the deployment of staff
- Students' very good attitudes assist good learning and achievement
- Extra-curricular activities, supported by excellent links with community sports facilitators, give excellent opportunities for students to extend their learning and experience
- GCSE students do not receive full assessment guidance to help them improve further

Commentary

Examination results

115. GCSE results in 2003 were above average. Results in 2002 were below this. More boys than girls are entered for the subject examinations and boys do better than girls, overall.

Standards and achievement

116. Students have below average skills in most activities when they enter the college as they have had varying prior experience in sport. Students are achieving well in Year 9, in most activities, because teachers are knowledgeable and students respect their expertise. By the end of Year 11, standards in the core curriculum and for those following the examination course are above average and students respond very well to the wide choice of activities offered and acquire skills quickly because teachers and coaches have high expectations. The standard achieved by talented team players is very high indeed, especially in tennis. Students have the opportunity to compete at all levels up to national level.

Teaching and learning

117. Teachers demonstrate skills well and questioning is effective in drawing out all students' learning and understanding. Teachers modify tasks so that all students are pushed to achieve well. For example in a Year 10 long jump lesson, students were well motivated and challenged by the marking out of the college and world records to measure their own achievements against. Students learn well because of well-planned lessons and the high expectations of teachers. In the best lessons teachers encourage students to view one another's work and to help each other, but in too many lessons talented students do not have enough opportunities in leading groups, for example in warm up sessions. Good use of ICT and digital cameras allows students to observe and analyse one another's performance to improve practical assessment. Assessment in the GCSE course is used well to help students to check their progress and measure performance against targets, but marking does not always highlight areas for improvement or clearly relate to grades. Students outside the examination course are aware of their progress because of the very good college monitoring system, which targets students well. Teachers usually review lessons but this is not always well linked to improvement.

Leadership and management

118. Leadership and management have focused attention strongly on improving standards and changes have been made to the curriculum to identify courses and activities to meet students' needs. A vocational course has been introduced and the junior sports leadership award scheme (JSLA) and GCSE courses have been tailored to students' requirements, especially girls. Students are able to start courses early in Year 9. Sports facilities are very good, but there is no specific theory teaching room to meet the increasing needs of the additional courses and to give easy access to link theory and practical aspects of these courses. The extra-curricular programme is greatly enhanced by the work of internal and external co-ordinators including the student sports co-ordinator programme. Teachers and other supporters work excellently together to promote the special sports college status and the very good ethos of the department. Good guidance for teachers is provided in detailed schemes of work, but the implementation of literacy, numeracy and citizenship in lessons is not consistent. Standards and facilities have improved and the college has achieved the Sportsmark gold award.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The college provides a selection of vocational subjects for Years 9, 10 and 11. Lessons were sampled in GCSE business studies, Key Skills ICT, GNVQ leisure and tourism, GNVQ health and social studies and the pre-vocational course. GNVQ ICT was inspected in depth and forms part of the information and communication technology report.

Vocational courses

Main strengths

- The college provides a good range of vocational and pre-vocational courses
- Good opportunities are provided for lower-attaining students to attend skills-based courses at local colleges giving them confidence to proceed to college at the end of Year 11
- Results of GNVQ business studies and health and social care are high
- Students achieve well on GNVQ courses

Commentary

119. In the **business studies** lessons, students achieved well because the teachers knew the subject and their students well. Work was thoroughly assessed with clear guidelines given to students so they knew what they had achieved and what they needed to do to improve. The teachers used good examples and erstwhile dull topics were made exciting, stimulating students' response and achievement. This is a successful course and results in 2003 were well above national average. Standards are well above average.
120. The **key skills ICT** course is followed by students in Years 10 and 11. Students displayed a positive attitude towards this subject and worked hard in their lessons. They showed competence when using spreadsheets, presentation software, word processing and flat file databases. Most were working at level 2 of this course.
121. The **pre-vocational course** is aimed at lower-attaining students. In Years 10 and 11, these students have the opportunity to visit a local college one afternoon a week to follow work-related courses in subjects as diverse as hairdressing, animal care, photography and video to sound engineering, brick work and motor vehicle maintenance. The students enjoyed this course and looked forward to their college visits.
122. Students achieved well in the **leisure and tourism** lessons. Good relationships and students' positive attitudes contributed to their learning. Teachers were knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Time was used well and work for students in Year 11 closely linked to examination requirements. Good advice was given on how to approach answering examination questions. A good range of resources was available to enable students to revise effectively and relevant subject vocabulary used during question-and-answer sessions. The work of younger students involved planning events, such as football tournaments and "mini-Olympics" for local primary schools. In these activities, students developed their ability to work in teams and their organisational skills. They were encouraged to consider the practical implications of running an event and health and safety considerations. Work

was linked very well to citizenship and Sports college status. Very good use was made of ICT to communicate with other students. This is a new course and students will take the examination for the first time this year.

123. In the **health and social care** lessons observed, students showed good recall of previously completed work and good understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers used a good range of teaching methods and gave clear timescales for the completion of tasks. This ensured that students worked productively and time was used effectively. Very good relationships were evident and students worked well together. They settled quickly to the tasks set and showed confidence when answering questions. Students showed commitment to their work and achieved well. Standards are well above average.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and careers education and guidance are taught within the citizenship course. The schemes of work for these aspects are good and make a positive contribution to students’ personal development, particularly their attitudes to moral issues. Students speak particularly highly of the support and guidance they receive when choosing their options at the end of Year 8 and when considering their next step beyond Year 11. Because of timetabling, it was not possible to see any lessons, which are organised on a two-weekly cycle for Years 7 to 9, during the inspection. However, aspects of PSHE and citizenship are also considered during form tutor periods on most days, and this is the main time for teaching these subjects to Years 10 and 11. These periods were sampled during the inspection, discussions were held with staff and a selection of students’ work was examined.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good schemes of work to support teaching and learning are in place
- Current assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory
- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the college
- Opportunities for citizenship across the curriculum have been identified
- Many classrooms contain good citizenship displays

Commentary

Standards and achievement

124. Standards in the form periods observed are average. In a Year 9 lesson, students reflected on the reality of prison life and were able to empathise with what this meant to the prisoner and his family. From examining students’ files, evidence showed that students had a satisfactory knowledge of politics and the democratic process, and ICT had been used to research the main political parties. Students’ achievement is satisfactory. More time is spent on discussing issues in citizenship than on recording evidence of analysis and written responses. The majority of students express themselves articulately and participate in discussions with interest.

Teaching and learning

125. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but, because of the large number of staff involved in teaching this subject, it is variable across the college. In some classes, the citizenship lesson is taught by a different teacher from the form tutor periods which adds to the unevenness of the students' experiences. In the most successful lessons, very good questioning ensures that a large number of students are involved. Well-planned lessons raise awareness of topical issues, for example in a Year 10 tutor period, where students discussed the abuse of prisoners in Iraq and the issues of human rights that this raised. Relationships within the classroom are good and students work well together. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. However, in the less successful lessons, students were not fully focused on, or involved with, the task in hand, and teachers allowed more unproductive noise than would normally be tolerated. Very little of the work on citizenship examined had been marked, and students confirmed this. In discussions, students said they preferred the formal lessons to the tutor periods, and found the former helpful in preparing them to become full members of the wider community.

Leadership and management

126. The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory. A good scheme of work has been devised which draws together the three strands of the National Curriculum, but the assessment of the subject is currently unsatisfactory, as it does not focus on students' knowledge and understanding of citizenship issues, but is mainly concerned with their ability to communicate. Students say that they do not know how well they are doing. Each subject has conducted an audit and identified ways in which it can support the citizenship curriculum, including awarding students with special certificates. However, these connections are sometimes not overtly made, students are not fully clear about the cross-curricular issues involved, and opportunities are missed for developing understanding, for example the topic of bullying in a Year 7 religious education lesson. During the inspection, good displays on citizenship were seen in classrooms and public areas. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not fully established. Students are given opportunities to develop their skills in responsible action through electing and participating in the college council, year councils, team captains in games and involvement within the community, for example through music and sport. In Year 9, students were planning 'mini-Olympics' with a primary student, and intending to award citizenship certificates at the end of the event.
127. The development of citizenship is a priority for the college and a conscious effort has been made to set up the course. A complete review of the content and teaching is currently taking place, with positive changes being implemented next term. This will include an opportunity for all students to study citizenship as a short course GCSE.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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