

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115382

Principal: Mr Alan Whelan

Reporting inspector: Mr Robin Coulthard
11746

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 May 2002

Inspection number: 244892

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of students: 11 - 16

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Norman Way
Colchester
Essex

Postcode: CO3 3US

Telephone number: 01206 549222

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Mary Moriarty

Date of previous inspection: May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

St Benedict's College is a Roman Catholic, voluntary aided, comprehensive school, situated in Colchester. Its 826 students come from Colchester and a wide surrounding area. The college, which is below the national average in size, has similar numbers of boys and girls aged from 11 to 16. The profile of students' backgrounds is slightly above average, and the number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all of the students are white. None of the very small number of students for whom English is an additional language requires additional help with learning English. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs (15 per cent) is below the national average. Thirteen students have a statement of special educational need. Their needs relate mostly to learning difficulties and to a range of physical disabilities. Although local selective schools take some higher-attaining students, overall the standard attained by students on entry to the college in Year 7 is average.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

The college provides its students with a very good education. Its students achieve very well, and overall standards are well above average by the end of Year 11. The percentage of students gaining one or more A* to G grades at GCSE is in the top five per cent nationally. Staff are very committed; teaching is very good and students of all levels of attainment make very good progress. The governors, principal and others with responsibility provide excellent leadership and purposeful management. The teaching and the curriculum are very well managed and so the college caters successfully for the needs of all students. The college's ethos is strongly rooted in its Catholic foundation. Students are valued, and their successes and effort are constantly celebrated. The college provides very good value for money.

What the college does well

- Students achieve very well overall and do very well in national tests in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations.
- The teaching is very good overall and helps students to learn very effectively.
- The college has a very good academic curriculum, enriched by the wide use of information and communication technology (ICT) and supplemented by very good opportunities for personal, social and recreational development.
- Leadership is excellent, and those with responsibility manage the college very well.
- The college looks after its students very well, and monitors their work and social development very closely.

What could be improved

- No areas of the college need significant improvement.

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in May 1996 and has made very good improvement since then. Issues from the last report have been successfully tackled. Links between the senior management team and subject departments are stronger and monitoring of departments is now more consistent. The number of learning support staff has increased and they are very well used. Issues about daily collective worship and the procedures for registering attendance have been resolved. ICT is now extensively used across the curriculum and is a developing strength of the college. Teaching has improved and is now very good. Teachers' lesson planning has improved and now makes very good use of information about students' previous attainment. Target setting in individual subjects is now well developed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average total points score in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools *	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D very low E

* This refers to schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Since the last inspection, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have risen faster than the national rate of improvement. Results in English were above average in 2001, whereas results mathematics and science were well above average. The results of teacher assessments in other subjects were above average.

The upward trend in the college's GCSE results over five years has been above that found nationally. In 2001, 69 per cent of students achieved five or more A* to C grades, which was well above the national average of 48 per cent but just below the college's target of 71 per cent. All students gained one or more GCSE passes at A* to G in 2001, which was above the target of 98 per cent and put the college in the top five per cent nationally in that category. In 2001, GCSE results were well above average, in comparison with similar schools and with schools where students' results were similar at the end of Year 9. GCSE results in geography and ICT were outstanding in 2001, with very high proportions of students gaining A* grades. In other subjects, apart from English language and history, students gained a lower proportion of A* grades at GCSE than is the case nationally. Students did relatively less well in science, art and design and German. Results in religious studies were below the national average for both boys and girls, but religious education did not form part of the focus for this inspection.

Overall, standards are above average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. In relation to their attainment on entry in Year 7, students' achievement is very good. Written work is thorough and detailed because the college encourages very good standards of literacy. Students have a good grasp of technical vocabulary in each subject. Standards of presentation are high, often enhanced by the use of ICT.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Excellent. Students are proud of their college, enjoy attending and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour in lessons is generally very good. On formal occasions, such as masses and assemblies, their behaviour is excellent. Students move around the college calmly. The temporary exclusion rate is below average and for several years no student has been permanently excluded.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Students relate very well to each other. They collaborate purposefully in lessons, support each other well and value each other's views. They get on well together out of lessons.
Attendance	Good. Students attend on time, despite many living a long distance away, which

	causes problems with transport. Lessons begin punctually.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good overall; it was good or better in over three quarters of the lessons observed, and very good, and sometimes excellent, in just over half. Teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations of students' work. Lessons are well planned and time is used efficiently. They challenge students well, using carefully prepared materials. The careful setting arrangements which occur in almost all subjects help teachers to target the work at an appropriate level for students' needs, including those who are gifted and talented. Teachers generally use questioning well to check and extend students' understanding. They teach students appropriate research skills and students use ICT very effectively for research and presentation. Homework is very well used to extend the work done in class. Students' learning is very good. Students concentrate well, are keen to refine their work and achieve high standards. Students work well both individually and collaboratively.

Literacy is very well taught and the teaching of numeracy is good across the curriculum. In the small number of lessons where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, teachers did not check sufficiently that students were absorbing what was being taught, and the pace of the lesson was sometimes slow.

The teaching of students with special educational needs is very good. Groups who are withdrawn for intensive tuition are taught very well and their achievement is very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good, particularly in the breadth and diversity of subjects available in Years 10 and 11, and in the quality of extra-curricular provision and the careers guidance. The college makes good provision for gifted and talented students.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Students' needs are well met through suitable grouping and teachers' careful planning. Support teachers and assistants provide useful help in class. Students with special educational needs are very well catered for in withdrawal groups, where their literacy and numeracy are effectively developed, often through computer-aided tasks.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. All students have opportunities to take responsibility. The strong Catholic ethos underpins the moral development of students. The varied extra-curricular provision contributes much to their social and cultural development. The personal, health and social education programme strongly supports their personal development
How well the college cares for its students	Very good systems enable the college to deal very effectively with students' problems. Underachievement is detected early and followed up. Students receive strong support from form tutors and year heads, which is very well co-ordinated.

	Very good use is made of information from assessment to set academic targets.
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HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Very good. The principal provides excellent leadership. The senior management team have clear roles which they discharge very effectively. Departmental leadership is good. Leadership and management clearly reflect the college's Catholic aims and values.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are highly committed to the college and very well informed. They visit regularly, monitor teaching and fully discharge their responsibilities. Governors play a major role in planning the development of the college. They work in close partnership with staff and are well informed about the wishes of parents.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The college evaluates examination results thoroughly and sets rigorous targets for future attainment. Subject departments are externally reviewed on a rolling programme. The college regularly takes part in national initiatives as a means of comparing its performance with that of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The college manages its finances excellently in implementing its aims. All expenditure is carefully linked to very well researched priorities for development. The principles of best value are applied very well. The college secures the best possible value for the money it spends.
Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning	Staffing is good; all teachers are well-qualified, and display a high level of specialist skills. Accommodation is of good quality, but cramped. The library is adequately stocked and well organised as a learning resource. Resources are good and students make very good use of the extensive resources for ICT both in and out of lessons.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like college, make good progress and are helped to become mature and responsible. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good and the college has high expectations of its students. • The college is well led and managed and parents are well informed about how their children are getting on. • The college is approachable, responds well to questions and problems raised by parents and works closely with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No areas for improvement were identified by a significant number of parents.

The inspection team agreed with all the strengths of the college noted by the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE COLLEGE DOES WELL

Students achieve very well and do very well in national tests in Year 9 and at GCSE

1. The college is very successful in enabling students to do well in tests and examinations. Students' results at GCSE in Year 11 and in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved steadily since the last inspection and at a faster rate than is the case nationally.
2. Students' attainment is overall in line with the national average when they enter the college in Year 7. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were above the national expectation at the time of the last inspection. In the last five years, results have mostly been well above average. In 2001, girls' results were above those of boys in English, as is the case nationally. Boys did particularly well in mathematics in 2001, but both girls and boys achieved well above their national averages. In science, boys did a little better than girls each year, which reflects the national picture. In comparison with similar schools, that is schools with a similar proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals, results in 2001 in English were above average and results in mathematics and science were well above average, as were results overall.
3. In 1998, the college gained a proportion of five A* to C grades that was above average. Since then the proportion has been well above average each year. Sixty-nine per cent of students gained five or more grades A* to C passes in 2001, which was just below the challenging target of 71 per cent which the college had set itself, but well above the national average of 48 per cent. All students gained one or more A* to C grade in 2001, which put the college in the top five per cent nationally in that category, as it had been in 1998 and 2000. This indicates that the college does very well for its lower-attaining students.
4. The college's GCSE results are also well above average in comparison with schools where a similar proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals and with schools whose pupils achieved similar standards at the end of Year 9.
5. The profile of students' attainment on entry to St. Benedict's indicates that the college does not receive as many of the potentially highest-attaining students as it might. The college believes the reason for this to be the availability of selective education in Colchester. At GCSE, despite overall results that are well above average, the majority of subjects gain fewer A* grades than is the case nationally. Exceptions are English language and history, and, most notably, geography, where 22 per cent of candidates gained the highest grade compared with six per cent nationally, and ICT, where 35 per cent of the candidates gained A* compared with four per cent nationally. Almost all of the candidates in ICT were boys. Nationally, only 3.4 per cent of boys gained an A* grade. Results from 2001 indicate that, in comparison with their other subjects, students do relatively well in computer studies, geography, English language, English literature, French and history, and less well in design and technology, drama, sports studies, mathematics, science, German and art and design.
6. At the time of the inspection, Year 9 students were taking national tests in English, mathematics and science, and Year 11 students were completing revision prior to study leave and GCSE examinations. This prevented the inspection team from observing enough lessons to make overall evaluations of the standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 9 and 11. Nevertheless, the evidence of their written work and test results and lessons observed indicates that standards throughout the curriculum are above average or well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11.

7. From their average starting point, students achieve very well over their time in the college. They are naturally well motivated and respond well to the teachers' high expectations. Teachers encourage them to develop good working practices. Students develop their ideas through high standards of discussion and questioning. The use of appropriate technical vocabulary is developed from the start. High standards of literacy and presentation enhance students' achievement, as do clear lesson objectives and suitably targeted challenges. Rigorous individual targets focus students on raising their achievement, and the regular assessment of students' progress quickly indicate where additional help is needed. Very good home/school liaison provides further encouragement for students to respond successfully to the college's ethos of high achievement.

8. In modern foreign languages, the constant use by teachers and students of the language being studied encourages the development of skill and confidence. The careful oral evaluation of each other's work in history, observed in Year 10, helped students to focus their ideas clearly on the lesson's objectives, developing well their skills in analysis and speaking. In music, in Year 11, students' natural motivation was stimulated because the teacher encouraged them to follow their own tastes and strengths when composing

9. A sample of students' written work was analysed in English, mathematics and science. The Year 9 students have covered a good range of work in English. They write substantial amounts, paying good attention to technical accuracy and presentation. Their writing covers a good range of styles; creative writing is imaginative and students make very good use of ICT both for researching, and presenting their work. In Year 11, students showed thoroughness in analysing literary texts, a good facility for analysing and comparing different styles of emotive writing, for example about the morality of animal experimentation.

10. In mathematics, students are working at levels above the national average in the good range of mathematical activities they undertake. Higher-attaining students are able to express number sequences in algebraic form. All students can construct and interpret simple line graphs, whilst higher-attaining students can construct scattergrams and draw conclusions from them. By Year 11, students can apply mathematical principles confidently to problem-solving, identifying algebraic equations to represent general trends (people getting on and off trains).

11. In science, too, students overall are working at levels above national average. In Year 9, higher-attaining pupils can use ideas of electronic structure to explain different bonding types. They use the reactivity series for metals to predict reactions. By Year 11, students confidently undertake investigative tasks, an area which was under-developed at the time of the last inspection. They use ICT proficiently in presenting their results.

Teaching is very good overall and helps students to learn very effectively

12. The evidence of the lessons observed during the inspection, students' written work and their views confirmed parents' belief that teaching is very good overall in all years, and a strength of the college. Teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection, since when the proportion of very good and excellent teaching has risen from just below ten per cent to almost a half. In many lessons, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is a conspicuous feature. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Their good grasp of technical language communicates itself effectively to students, enabling them to use specialist terms confidently, both orally and in their writing. Students develop their spoken and written language well across the curriculum. Almost all subjects now make significant use of ICT for research and presentation.

13. The lessons observed during the inspection were generally challenging and lively, reflecting the view of parents that the college has high expectations of its students. Planning is a very good feature of lessons and includes clear objectives which are made clear to the students. Worksheets are of high quality and very well produced using ICT. Resources are good in quality and quantity and make a positive impact on learning. Lessons generally have a good variety of tasks to extend and confirm students' knowledge and understanding. As a result, students learn at a very good rate, they maintain their concentration well and are capable of sustained independent work. These qualities were evident in a Year 8 music lesson, where

students reviewed their previous knowledge of Chinese music, together with technicalities of composing, such as *'ostinato'* and *'ternary'*. They listened to and analysed orally several excerpts of Chinese music and then in pairs composed their own examples. Their independent work was very productive, helped by the individual assistance from the teacher. The students' positive attitudes meant that they were keen to do well and their paired work was very efficient. Learning was enhanced by the students' good relationships with the teacher and each other, which is a notable feature in many lessons across the college. Working together and then constructively evaluating each other's performances provided a useful opportunity for social development.

14. In their planning, teachers take into account the knowledge they have of students' previous levels of attainment and challenge them appropriately. The system of setting for most subjects works very well, enabling teaching methods and lesson content to be suitably matched to individual needs. Students with special educational needs make very good progress because their needs are carefully analysed and the college allocates substantial time and resources to providing for them. These students are very well taught in withdrawal groups for English and mathematics, where they make very good use of ICT to develop their literacy skills. Where support is available in mainstream lessons, it is managed very well and the students are able to make good or very good progress. Learning support assistants make a good impact in mainstream lessons by showing initiative and working with students other than just their immediate charges.

15. Teachers expect students to think for themselves and test their ideas in discussion. For example in a French lesson in Year 7, the teacher used questioning very well to extend and check students' understanding of vocabulary associated with family trees. She secured a good oral response from them, which enabled her to identify and fill gaps in their understanding. She enabled the whole class to learn methodically by using the white board effectively to organise information. Very challenging questioning by the teacher in an outstanding English lesson in Year 10 probed the students' understanding of racial prejudice in the 1930s in southern America, as described in *'To Kill a Mockingbird'*. This lesson enabled students to develop well their skills in literary analysis. They increased their understanding of the moral, social and cultural implications of racial prejudice by widening the discussion to include the Klu Klux Klan and the Holocaust. The lesson achieved an impressive depth of discussion and also covered much ground because of the tight use of deadlines, which was a characteristic of many other lessons.

16. Teaching is very good overall in English, mathematics and science, and has improved in consistency since the last inspection. In all three subjects, the teachers have a very good knowledge of the course requirements. Planning, as in all subjects, identifies what higher, average and lower-attaining students should achieve in each lesson.

17. The very good quality of the displays of students' work in classrooms provides a stimulating learning environment and encourages students to take a pride in their work.

The college has a very good academic curriculum enriched by the wide use of ICT and supplemented by very good opportunities for personal, social and recreational development

18. The college offers a very good curriculum, which has developed in line with its aims to provide a broad education at the heart of which is the Catholic message. In Years 7 to 9, the full National Curriculum is taught, together with drama and personal, social and health education. ICT is taught as part of the technology curriculum, and students are also able to develop their computer skills well in other subjects. Students can study either French or German.

19. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is based on a large core of subjects and three option choices from technology, creative subjects and humanities. This preserves breadth in the curriculum and some 23 subjects are available, meeting the aspirations of students of all levels of attainment, from those who wish to study three separate sciences to those who benefit from a GNVQ course in ICT. All students are encouraged to study nine or ten subjects to GCSE level. A small number follow an ASDAN course instead of a modern language. The college is evaluating other vocational courses and will introduce these as they correspond to students' needs and aptitudes. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and there are no weak areas

amongst the subjects inspected. The Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy is firmly embedded in the college's provision, and the numeracy strategy is gradually being more strongly implemented, although it is not yet co-ordinated by a college policy.

20. Students' needs are effectively met by placing them in sets based on previous attainment for most subjects. Provision for able, gifted and talented students is good; there is a clear college policy and a co-ordinated approach to identifying these students and providing for their needs. Standards of planning within individual subjects are very high and have improved since the last inspection. In science, the deficiency in investigation that was noted then has been remedied and the curriculum covers thoroughly every aspect of what is required.

21. The college has made great strides recently in developing ICT as a very successful GCSE subject, and as a means of extending students' achievement in every area of the curriculum. All teachers have been provided with a lap-top and appropriate training to enable them to develop their own skills and to use ICT widely in lesson preparation. The three networked rooms are in constant use during lessons by classes and at other times during the college day by enthusiastic students. ICT lessons in Years 7 to 9 have provided students with the skills needed to supplement learning in all areas in Years 10 and 11. Students learn word-processing, the production of spreadsheets and the skill of data-processing. They carry out research using CD ROMs and the Internet, and use computers extensively in presenting their work. Students are taught to make discerning use of the information and material they acquire through their use of ICT, rather than presenting it uncritically. In Years 10 and 11, students are learning to create websites. ICT is an important tool in the college's recent development of the business links and initiatives it is developing locally and abroad.

22. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the academic curriculum, with particular strengths in sport, music, and activities for gifted students, such as Russian, Latin and an advanced reading club. Extra support and revision sessions are offered in many subjects. These are much appreciated by students. Various visits and journeys are made and the French and German exchanges are thriving. Students are prepared for the world of work through work-shadowing in Year 9, work experience in Year 10, a taught careers programme and careers interviews. There are strong links with local commerce and industry, and the college's business links provide a useful means of enhancing the college's development as a specialist centre for business education.

The college looks after its students very well and monitors their social development and work very closely

23. The college provides a high quality of care for its students. The significant strengths in the college's provision for students' academic achievement and personal development contribute significantly to the ethos of high achievement. The procedures for monitoring their academic performance and personal welfare and development are very good. A wide range of data is effectively used by heads of subjects to predict individual performance at the end of Years 9 and 11. Termly assessment data is well used by heads of department and teachers to monitor students' performance, set targets and detect under-achievement. Students are aware of their levels of performance and have a very good understanding of how to improve. Heads of year and tutors are provided with very good information to monitor students' progress and personal development.

24. The learning support department works closely with the year teams to identify and provide for individual students' needs. They provide a very good range of assistance, including an individual, ICT-based programme to aid the development of literacy and numeracy, and support for students in class and with homework. As a result of these very effective systems, almost all students complete their GCSE courses successfully.

25. Students are well known by their teachers, form tutors and heads of year. The college has very good systems to promote regular attendance and high standards of behaviour. Teachers have high expectations of attendance and punctuality. Students value the certificates they receive in recognition of the efforts they have made. Procedures to eliminate oppressive behaviour are excellent. Students feel they could approach staff

and trained peer group counsellors, and they have appreciated the anti-bullying week held recently. They feel safe in the college environment and are happy and proud to belong to the college.

26. Relationships throughout the college are excellent, with mutual trust and respect evident between students and all adults. Teachers provide very good role models for students, showing that they value each individual. The college's reward system acknowledges both achievement and effort. The regular presentation of certificates, which can be gained by students of all levels of attainment, underlines the uniqueness and value of individual students. A flexible system for grouping students appropriately for almost all subjects enables them to be taught in a fashion suitable for their needs. In this way, all students are positively included within the college community. The outstanding achievement, compared with national figures, of students in gaining at least one A* to G pass at GCSE indicates the success of the college's principle of providing the most appropriate and worthwhile educational opportunities for all its students.

27. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are very good. An outstanding aspect of the college is the sense of community to which everyone, adults and students, contribute and from which all benefit. The strength of this community spirit is indicated by the wholeheartedness with which the college undertakes initiatives, such as their regular fund-raising for charities, and their involvement in the Healthy Schools Award and Essex Schools Award Scheme. Many students help contribute towards the effectiveness of the college community. Students exercise responsibility in many ways, for example as prefects, librarians, peer-counsellors, form captains and captains of sport. Students represent the college regularly at events and competitions in the community. The student council makes decisions and has had a real impact on various aspects of provision.

Leadership is excellent and those with responsibility manage the college is very well

28. The principal provides excellent leadership for this popular and over-subscribed college, based on the values and beliefs enshrined in the college's Catholic principles and aims, and on the ideal of the college as a friendly community. On a day-to-day basis, he is conspicuous around the building and site and informally accessible to all students, reinforcing the friendly ethos of the college while maintaining its high expectations for every student's conduct. He is well aware of the progress and achievements of students and takes time to commend them individually. The principal has managed the development of the college very well and has successfully implemented change and development while retaining as a priority the maintenance of good relationships. All those working in the college with non-teaching responsibilities meet regularly together. They are kept informed about developments by the principal. The good relationships that prevail amongst all who work in the college ensure a high level of social cohesion and a well-developed sense of common purpose. Parents rightly praise the effectiveness of the college's leadership and management.

29. Since the last inspection, the principal, with the active support of staff, governors and parents, has raised the academic standards to their present high level. Management is very effective. The roles of senior managers and subject and pastoral heads have been successfully developed in accordance with the college's aims and priorities. Members of the senior management team and other staff reflect the style and ethos of the college in their work, working relationships and demeanour with students. The curriculum and pastoral arrangements are very well co-ordinated so that they successfully cater for the academic needs of students of all levels of attainment and ensure their welfare. All students are provided with the opportunities they need for success, which is clearly reflected in current levels of attainment. The development of the whole individual is further promoted through the very good range of opportunities for social and cultural development. Staff at all levels give their time very generously to extra-curricular activities.

30. The governing body is highly effective. Governors visit the college regularly and their efficient committee structure ensures they are well informed about every aspect of development. They support college events enthusiastically and are well known to teachers and valued by them in their monitoring role. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties conscientiously and play a major part in monitoring the college's progress, setting targets and shaping its development. All the areas for development are appropriate and incorporate national

priorities and specific areas chosen by the college, such as the plans related to the extension of business education.

31. Grants, such as those for supporting students with special educational needs, are scrupulously used as intended and the college constantly strives to achieve the best value for the money it spends. Financial procedures are excellent. The college monitors its provision very closely, comparing what it provides and achieves with what is found elsewhere. The awarding of Investor in People status and Charter Mark provide additional, national criteria for the evaluation of the college's work.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32. The inspection team found no issues requiring action by the college.

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

34

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students

16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	14	7	7	1	0	0
Percentage	15	42	21	21	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages as each lesson represents approximately three percentage points. Numbers do not add up to a hundred due to rounding.

Information about the college's students

Number of students on the college's roll	827
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	29
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of students on the college's special educational needs register	94
Number of students with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

Students who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Students who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	7.7
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	80	91	171

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	52	72	71
	Girls	80	76	80
	Total	132	148	151
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	77 (73)	87 (80)	88 (72)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	48 (31)	67 (56)	51 (39)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	74	69
	Girls	79	83	82
	Total	130	157	151
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	College	79 (78)	92 (83)	88 (78)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	College	36 (40)	56 (58)	47 (42)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	60	92	152

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	40	57	60
	Girls	65	92	92
	Total	105	149	152
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	College	69 (70)	98 (99)	100 (100)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	College	48.5 (48.2)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	815
Any other minority ethnic group	6

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	25	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.5
Number of students per qualified teacher	15:1

Education support staff:

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	613

Deployment of teachers:

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.9
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Average teaching group size:

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	2,757,010
Total expenditure	2,816,980
Expenditure per pupil	3,410
Balance brought forward from previous year	229,899
Balance carried forward to next year	169,929

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	7.4
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	827
Number of questionnaires returned	346

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	47	45	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in college.	51	44	3	1	1
Behaviour in the college is good.	43	52	3	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	55	10	2	1
The teaching is good.	51	46	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	43	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	62	31	5	0	2
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	24	2	0	0
The college works closely with parents.	45	48	4	1	2
The college is well led and managed.	73	25	1	0	1
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	2	1	1
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	47	12	1	4