

INSPECTION REPORT

COLLINGWOOD COLLEGE

Camberley, Surrey

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125301

Headteacher: Mr J Oddie

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan
1352

Dates of inspection: 14th-18th October 2002

Inspection number: 249624

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11-18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kingston Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Gradwell

Date of previous inspection: 28th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
1352	John Carnaghan	Registered inspector	Geography	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? The school's results and pupils' achievements. What should the school do to improve further?
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils?
28199	Peter Lawley	Team inspector	English	
27719	Paul Metcalf	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
30433	Christopher Corp	Team inspector	Biology	
2496	Tony O'Sullivan	Team inspector	French	
8076	Terry Bendall	Team inspector	Design and technology	
2501	Raye Alison Smith	Team inspector	Art and design	
2495	Brian Munden	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
13623	Jim Waddington	Team inspector	Psychology, Health and social care.	
11746	Robin Coulthard	Team inspector	Music	
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education	
10761	Pat Willan	Team inspector	Economics, History	
24142	Sylvia McConville	Team inspector	Theatre studies, Media studies	
3674	Grace Marriott	Team inspector	Business education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Collingwood College is a comprehensive college for students aged 11 to 18. It has been designated a technology college since 1994. It serves a large area of social and owner occupied housing which is broadly average in socio-economic background. With 2062 students it is much larger than most schools. The proportion of students (three percent) known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Where comparison is made to similar schools and colleges in this report, these are schools where up to and including five percent of students are eligible for free meals. The proportion of students on the special educational needs register (19 percent) is broadly similar to the national average; the proportion with statements of need (one percent) is below average. There are 58 students at the higher levels of the special educational needs' code of practice. Their needs, in the main, concern specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of students speaking English as an additional language (two percent) is average. Less than five percent of the students in the college are of ethnic minority origin and, compared to national averages, this is low. The numbers of students who join or leave the college during the course of the college year are also low. Turnover of staff has been high; 70 new teachers have joined the college in the last two years. The attainment of students when they enter the college, as shown by the outcomes of national testing and standardised testing undertaken by the college, is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

Collingwood College provides a very good standard of education. Those who work there constantly strive for improvements. It expects and gets the best from its students and they achieve very well. Students reach standards of attainment which are generally well above average and a considerable improvement on those with which they start college. The college is well placed to maintain and improve on these standards. Behaviour and relationships are very good and the college has a positive ethos. Students are well cared for. Teaching is very good; it is very well planned and teachers are very knowledgeable. The sixth form is a thriving and successful element in the college but governors are not sufficiently involved. Teaching and learning are very good in the sixth form as they are in the rest of the college. The library does not effectively meet the needs of students of all ages. The very good leadership of the principal and the strong sense of teamwork, have contributed significantly to the strengths of the college. The overall effectiveness of the college is very good, and, while the cost of educating each student is relatively high, it gives good value for money

What the college does well

- The principal provides very good leadership. Supported by an able and committed governing body and very effective and enthusiastic senior management, he manages the college very well and has done much to ensure that standards of attainment remain high. He ensures that the college fulfils its technology college brief. The quality of recent staff appointments has ensured that the college has retained good capacity for improvement.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers work consistently to ensure that students achieve very well and reach their full potential.
- The college has very good assessment procedures and is using the results of assessments to set clear targets for students and raise understanding and expectations of what they can achieve.
- Most subjects are very well led and managed.
- Relationships between students and between staff and students are very good and make a significant contribution to the quality of students' learning. Behaviour is very good.

What could be improved

- Reports to parents, while meeting statutory requirements, do not consistently provide clear information and guidance on students' progress or what they should do to improve.
- Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory in that multi-cultural understanding is not developed or celebrated sufficiently.
- The library is too small, has too few books and is insufficiently promoted to meet the needs of all students.

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

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in October 1996. Standards in tests at the end of Year 9 have seen clear improvements since then, despite some fluctuations. The well above average results in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 have, overall, been maintained. Teaching was good in the last inspection; it is now very good. Most of the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. The college has improved the planning and teaching of religious education. Time lost in moving between lessons has been minimised by adopting a new timetable for the college. The management of special educational needs is now excellent and there are now effective procedures to assess and review the achievements of students with special educational needs. The role of middle management in the college is now clearly defined. Personal, health and social education are taught effectively and the college's expressed aims as a technology college are now fully met. The library has seen some improvements but it is still not adequate to meet all students' needs. Overall, the college has made good improvements since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	A	B	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	B	B	B		

In 2001, the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. They have been at these very high levels since 1998. Indications from students' current work and 2002 results are that the college is well placed to maintain these standards. In comparison with similar schools in 2001, both English and mathematics were above average; science was below average. The college has recognised the underlying reasons for the lower standards in science and has taken measures to rectify the situation. The trend over the last four years is of improvement at a better rate than the improving national trend. The attainment of these students on entry to the college was broadly average, therefore these figures represent very good achievement.

There were no significant differences between the performance of girls and boys in Year 9 tests. 2001 is the last year for which full comparative data is available. The college GCSE results, based on average points scores, were well above the national average in 2001. The proportion of students gaining five or more grades in both the ranges A*-C and A*-G was well above average. The proportion gaining at least one grade A*-G was above average. In comparison with similar colleges, students' average points score was average. The results of girls and boys were very similar. The trend in results since 1997 has been of improvement, but at a rate below the national trend. Judged by average points scores, students exceeded the college average in mathematics, computer studies, geography, physics, statistics and vocational studies. Results in biology, chemistry, combined science, design and technology, French and German were below the college average. Given that these students entered college with standards which were broadly average, these continuing overall high standards represent very good achievement for students both in Years 10 and 11 and very good over their first five years in the college. The college has set challenging targets for 2002 and 2003 in terms of average points. It met its targets in 2001 but early indications are that it fell short in 2002, although results showed an overall improvement. In the sixth form, students' standards and the most recent results indicate often well above average attainment. This maintenance of very high standards represents very good achievement.

Overall, current standards of Year 9 students are well above nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. This represents very good achievement for these students. Standards of students currently in Year 11 are well above national expectations in English, mathematics and above average in science. Standards in design and technology are well above average. The achievement of these students, with their increasing commitment and maturity, is very good. Students show standards of literacy which are well above national expectations, with particularly high standards of speaking and listening. These skills are developed in a wide range of lessons, including drama and mathematics. Strong mathematics teaching and frequent contributions from other subjects, such as science and geography, result in standards of numeracy that are also well above expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Very good. Students have very positive attitudes to college life and show maturity and commitment to their learning and to the college as a whole.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Students are generally calm and courteous and behave sensibly both in and out of classrooms. There is little misbehaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Warm relationships make a strong contribution to the positive ethos of the college. Students co-operate well, helping one another as they learn. There are good opportunities for students to take responsibility in the life of the college.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Broadly similar to national averages.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 - 13
Quality of teaching	Very good	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 and has strong consistency. Almost all teaching seen was good or better, nearly half of it was very good or better. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Teachers give due attention to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy, which are very well taught and promoted across the curriculum. Speaking skills are promoted in lessons by encouraging boys and girls equally. Lessons are very well planned and usually have a range of brief activities which maintain pupils' interest and the pace of their learning. Planning effectively takes into account the varied learning needs of pupils and resources are frequently informative, interesting and relevant. Teachers demonstrate strong subject expertise, which inspires pupils' confidence. Pupils learn very well, responding positively to teachers' high expectations. This is largely because the college meets the needs of most of its pupils so well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning; in particular, individual education plans indicate specific learning targets. These are summarised in a way which raises teachers' awareness of each individual's targets and the appropriate strategies to employ. Learning objectives are usually explained carefully at the beginning of the lesson and reviewed at the end so that pupils know how well they have achieved and what the next step is in their learning. Many lessons make effective contributions to the development of pupils' information and communications technology (ICT) skills. In a small minority of lessons, less effective teaching can be dull with too little emphasis on students working independently. Teaching in the sixth form is very good; the quality of teaching shows great consistency.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to students' needs. There are strengths in the very effective implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in English and mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and the extension of its principles to Years 10 and 11. Detailed curriculum planning within individual subjects like modern foreign languages is very good. Good opportunities to use ICT are planned for in a number of subjects. The curriculum in the sixth form provides a wide range of opportunities for students but does not meet requirements in the provision of religious education. The college does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Procedures to identify and support students with special educational needs are very efficient, giving these students very good opportunities to achieve well. Centralised assessment records are a very good feature.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. Planning for the delivery of English as an additional language is very good. The very few students with English as an additional language are very well provided for.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Students' moral and social development is well supported in the college through activities and teaching, such as of personal and social education and religious education. Spiritual provision is not sufficiently planned but is satisfactory overall. Cultural development is unsatisfactory; in particular insufficient attention is paid to developing multi-cultural understanding.
How well the college cares for its students	Well. Teachers know students very well and care for their needs. The monitoring of personal development and the strategies to eliminate bad behaviour are very effective and the college successfully strives to be

	inclusive. Assessment information is widely available and is used to set targets for improving standards. However, college reports do not consistently report students' progress clearly or effectively.
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The working partnership with parents is good and parents are both interested in and very supportive of the college.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Very good. The principal displays strong leadership qualities and has a clear vision for the future of the college. He receives strong support through the capable management of the senior staff and middle managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. They provide strong support and bring a wealth of experience to their work with the college. Involvement is very good for Years 7 to 11 but less so in the sixth form.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The college has a wide range of information and data on its performance and uses it to make improvements. It analyses any fall in standards and quickly takes effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are sensibly allocated in accordance with identified needs and the college development plan. Specific funding is clearly used for its designated purpose. The college is active in developing new funding opportunities.

Accommodation is spread over a large campus but is satisfactory for Years 7 to 11. The library is too small and the current sixth-form accommodation is unsatisfactory. Best value principles are applied well across the college. Comparison and consultation are strong, particularly in the planning of a new sixth form building.

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 are expected to work hard and achieve • the college is well led and managed • good teaching • they feel very comfortable about approaching the college if they have worries or concerns • the college helps their children to develop and mature • that students like college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information they receive about their child's progress • they do not feel the college works closely with them • their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home • they do not think behaviour is good.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that students make good progress. | |
|---|--|

Almost half of parents and carers returned questionnaires, which was a good response, and 75 attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting. Parents' views of the college are generally very favourable. Inspectors endorse all their positive views and agree that, although information for parents is satisfactory overall, reports to parents are not sufficiently informative. On the other hand, the college does work closely with parents. Concerns about homework were not apparent during the inspection; the way that homework is used by teachers is generally good. Students behave very well.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

COLLINGWOOD COLLEGE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has nearly 400 students and has remained approximately this size in recent years. It is much larger than the national average. A very small number of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and even fewer speak English as an additional language. There are approximately equal numbers of male and female students; a very small number of students have special educational needs. The proportion of students who have free college meals is very low. The students are broadly average in their socio-economic background. Just over two-thirds of the students in Year 11 stay to join the sixth form. Others come from other nearby schools. Students' attainment when they start Year 12 is, overall, well above average and the vast majority complete their courses at the college. The sixth form provides a range of academic and vocational A level subjects and a number of intermediate vocational courses

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provides a very good education for its students. Teaching is very good overall. Students achieve very well and reach results which are frequently well above average. A level results, based on average points scores, were above the post-16 national average in 2001, the last year for which national comparisons are available. The average points score per student in 2002 shows a distinct increase. Some individual students gain very high A-level grades. The sixth form has its own separate building and identity as well as being an integral part of the school. It is well led and managed, is cost-effective and meets the needs of its students well. It has made good improvements since the last inspection.

What the college does well

- Examination results and standards of work are above, and often well above average.. Students achieve very well in the sixth form. This is linked to the very positive attitudes and high levels of motivation shown by students.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good. There are particular strengths in teachers' knowledge, both of their subjects and of examination requirements.
- Senior and middle managers provide good leadership and management of this large sixth form.
- The curriculum is broad with a good balance of vocational and academic subjects and is well planned. It helps to develop students' key skills in many of their subjects.
- The college has very good assessment procedures and in most subjects uses the results to set challenging targets for students and raise their expectations of what they can achieve.
- Most subjects are well led and managed.

What could be improved

- Governors are insufficiently involved with the sixth form and the curriculum does not meet requirements in religious education.
- Some students are insufficiently aware of the opportunities for personal support that the college provides.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English literature	Very good. Standards of English are well above average. The subject benefits from very good teaching, showing very good subject knowledge and very high standards of organisation in the classroom. Time is used productively, students are challenged intellectually and their enthusiasm and interest are well engaged. There is very good leadership and management.
Mathematics	Very good. Current standards are well above national averages as a result of very good teaching, excellent relationships and the strong leadership and management of the subject.
Biology	Satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. Teaching is good and is linked to good assessment of what students can do. There are very good relationships. The leadership and management of the subject are new but have a good capacity to make improvements.

Art and design	Very good. Standards are above the national average; students achieve very well and have positive attitudes. They are very well taught; teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Leadership of the course is excellent
Economics.	Very good. Standards are well above national averages. Teaching is very good and students make very good progress. Students value and enjoy their lessons. The subject is very well led and managed.
Geography	Very good. Standards are well above national averages; achievement and teaching are very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and the demands of the A-level examination. Teachers work very closely with the head of department to maintain standards.
History	Good. Standards are improving and teaching is good overall. Students make good progress in lessons and have good relationships with their teachers. The subject is well managed.
Sports/physical education studies	Satisfactory. Work is in line with national expectations. Students achieve satisfactorily and work hard, displaying positive attitudes. Teaching is good and students learn well but teaching points are sometimes not sufficiently reinforced in lessons. The subject is satisfactorily managed.
Music	Good. Students are keen and respond well to the good teaching. Learning is good and effectively promoted by teachers. Students achieve well. The curriculum is appropriately varied and the subject is well managed.
French	Good. Standards of work are generally above average and promoted by consistently good teaching. Students are keen and motivated to achieve well and the subject is well led and managed.
Business studies	Good. Standards are well above the national average. Students make very good progress and achieve well. This is developed through good teaching and expertise from staff and a strong commitment from pupils. The subject has good leadership and management.
Design and technology	Satisfactory. Standards are above average; particularly in coursework in food, graphics and textiles. Teaching is satisfactory but space for teaching resistant materials lessons is inadequate. The subject is satisfactorily managed.
Information and communication technology	Good. Standards are currently above average and students achieve well. Teaching is good and students have good access to computers. Leadership and management are good and teachers work well together as a team.
Theatre studies	Very good. Standards are well above the national average, the result of very good teaching and the excellent attitudes of the students. The subject is very well led and managed and there are very good extra-curricular opportunities for students, which contribute to their very good achievement.
Media studies	Very good. Very good teaching is raising standards, which are above the national average. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent and the students' use of new technologies is

	good.
Health and social care	Good. Students are well taught and learn effectively. Their achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. The subject is well led and managed and the curriculum is enriched by visiting speakers.
Psychology	Very good. Teaching is very good and standards are above average and students achieve well. Leadership and management are excellent with a clear vision to develop the subject.

Lessons were also sampled in English language, chemistry, physics, leisure and recreation, music technology, sociology, and German. All the lessons were satisfactory or better, with several lessons good or better, resulting in effective learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Well. Good support and guidance is maintained throughout Years 12 and 13 and the sixth form is inclusive to all students. The induction procedures for students entering the sixth form are limited but they have good information about the courses available. Tutors help students with university applications and there is good careers advice as part of a comprehensive programme. However, some students are unaware of what is available to them. The warm relationships that exist in the sixth form enable subject teachers to give students very good support and guidance. This support is enhanced by the very good assessment and its effective use. Reports to parents do not consistently give a clear enough picture of how their children are progressing. The provision of advice and support after A-level results are announced is very helpful in gaining students appropriate university and other places.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. However, provision for students is not sufficiently monitored or co-ordinated to ensure consistency across subject areas. The college has a very thorough and practical college development plan to improve standards. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in all aspects of the sixth form, for example there is no named governor with responsibility for linking with the sixth form. Accommodation in the sixth form is unsatisfactory; this has been recognised and plans are in place to make sweeping improvements.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are well taught and challenged. • They are helped to study independently. • They value the large choice of subjects. • Teachers are accessible for help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities - especially sports teams. • Advice about future options. • Printed information is not clear and helpful.

Students are generally very positive about the sixth form. They enjoy life in the sixth form very much and the inspection supports the range of their positive views. When questioned, some students declared themselves unhappy with the level of advice and information (both printed and otherwise) on future choices. Inspectors judged these areas to be satisfactory.

The range of activities and enrichments was judged by the inspection team to be satisfactory by the standards of other sixth forms.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement “outstanding” in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to “very weak”.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE COLLEGE DOES WELL

The principal provides very good leadership. Supported by an able and committed governing body and very effective and enthusiastic senior management, he manages the college very well and has done much to ensure that standards of attainment remain high. He ensures that the college fulfils its technology college brief. The quality of recent staff appointments has ensured that the college has retained good capacity for improvement.

1. The principal is very well informed about the college. He knows staff well, is confident and open and a good communicator; he does much to ensure the college commitment to high standards and a relentless pursuit of improvement. He goes out of his way to be a

presence in the day-to-day life of the college and has a cheery greeting for students, teachers and parents alike. His appraisal of the strengths and areas for development in the college was largely confirmed by the inspection process. He is far-sighted in his appreciation of the priorities for the college and acts vigorously to overcome any perceived areas of concern. For example, the college has been very effective in exploring innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to potential recruitment problems. The principal has been very perceptive in appointing staff to improve performance in certain areas of the college which were causing concern. When the inspection looked into these areas it was clear that, even where middle managers had been in post for as little as five weeks, very marked improvements had been made. With each of these new appointments the capacity for further improvement in the area concerned has been raised considerably.

2. The senior management of the college comprises a close-knit team, energetic and thorough in its management of aspects of the college. They have clearly defined responsibilities. However, these arrangements are flexible and responsive to the college's changing needs. For example, the very large building programme planned to replace the antiquated sixth-form block, is likely to lead to a re-arrangement of the management structure to enable the college to continue to function at maximum efficiency. Heads of department and other middle managers feel well supported by senior management. The arrangements for formal and informal monitoring of their performance are good. These include annual reviews to assess their success in meeting targets. The data provided, together with the needs identified in the college development plan, form the basis of staff training to which the college is strongly committed.

3. The college works hard to emphasise and fulfil its status as a technology college. For example, electronic notice boards enable information to be displayed in the college's three main buildings simultaneously. Other systems using technology are in place to support the smooth running of the college. For example, the computerisation of the college's attendance checking procedures leads to great savings in time and effort and is appropriate to the widely spread college campus. It has had the additional bonus of ensuring that there is a networked computer in every classroom. College staff and sixth-form students regularly use e-mail to pass information and parents are increasingly to use this method to communicate with the college. Plans are being developed to allow students to have limited access to personal assessment information.

4. The members of the governing body have a firm commitment to acting as 'a critical friend' to the college. Relationships between the leadership of the school and the governing body are very good. Governors bring a valuable range of talents and experience to bear on the management of the school. Because communication with the senior management team of the college is so good, this ensures that they are well informed about all aspects of college life. Training of governors is very good. As a result of this and the time and effort that they are able to commit to the college, governors are able to work closely with individual departments and provide strong support to middle managers. This enables monitoring of individual subjects to be very thorough. The roles and responsibilities of governors are clearly defined. Governors are closely involved in financial monitoring of the college and in planning allocation of finances in the future, in accordance with the college development plan. However, they are not restricted in their responsibilities; a series of open meetings encourages governors to think about the long-term strategy for the college's future. Governors have a good grasp of principles of best value. They have been fully involved in the debate conducted on the future plans for the sale of land and subsequent financing of the building of a new sixth form block. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the college. However, they have not ensured that the students at the college regularly take part in a daily act of collective worship.

5. Day-to-day management of the college is generally very efficient. However, the allocation of time in appropriate rooms for ICT is not well balanced. While the rooms have a very high usage rate, subjects like English, mathematics and science have too few opportunities to use the ICT suites; this has the effect of weakening the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Teaching is very good. Teachers work consistently to ensure that students achieve very well and reach their full potential.

6. Teaching is very good overall and there is strong consistency throughout the three key stages of the college. Of the lessons seen 9 percent were excellent and 36 percent very good. Only 17 percent of lessons were less than good and one percent of lessons seen was unsatisfactory. The most consistent element in teaching is the focus that teachers maintain on learning. They have a very good knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum, GCSE and other examinations, and apply this consistently in lessons. Teachers plan lessons very carefully and so are able to deploy appropriate resources, leading to stimulating lessons. Their planning also enables the correct degree of support to be given to each student. This means that more able students are generally effectively challenged, while those in need of extra help receive it. Thus, teaching is inclusive. Teachers promote equality of opportunity in practical ways. For example they sit boys and girls together. This has the additional effect of encouraging girls to speak who may otherwise sit quietly while boys may tend to dominate. In an excellent Year 9 French lesson, on the use of numbers, the teacher had prepared thoroughly for this group of lower attaining students. Individuals were invited to choose their own task to suit their aptitudes. The atmosphere of trust, encouragement and warm relationships meant that all selected an activity which would give them an appropriate degree of challenge. The teacher gave unobtrusive support, subtly checking students' progress. The lesson strongly promoted students' active involvement and their efforts were excellent. The regular checks made on learning in many lessons mean that students are relaxed about the regular assessment undertaken; this is good preparation for public examinations.

7. Lessons usually proceed at a good pace because teachers plan a series of short, interesting activities which maintain students' interest. The preparation of lessons is efficient, so that activities can be started with a minimum of fuss. Students are well managed so they have few opportunities to waste time. Most lessons start with quick questions to check and reinforce earlier learning. Teachers question at all stages of lessons; this effective continuous assessment enables teachers to adjust the emphasis of lessons as they go along. In a very good Year 11 geography lesson on the causes of rainfall, the teacher's simple, clear introduction, using brief clips from a video and associated questions on paper, made an excellent start. The teacher's subsequent oral questioning had an urgency which was communicated to students and gained a very good response, with increasingly analytical answers. The confidence of the teacher helped the students to realise that there would be no criticism, real or implied, if they ventured a wrong answer. Relationships with the teacher and between students were very good, encouraging them to work in pairs and independently, when requested. Lesson aims were clearly displayed and students were continually reminded of them; they all achieved very well in the lesson.

8. Teachers of English and mathematics have good knowledge of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. They use their growing expertise in the promotion of literacy and numeracy in their lessons to influence their teaching of older students. Reading for pleasure is promoted in English lessons and in tutor periods. Teachers of all subjects are careful to incorporate opportunities to further students' literacy and numeracy skills whenever possible. References to literacy and numeracy are commonplace in subjects as diverse as design and

technology, art, geography and music. Overall, this consistent emphasis has a very beneficial effect on students' achievement in these areas. A very good Year 11 history lesson on the American west in the nineteenth century was typical. To settle students while the register was taken and as an introduction to the topic, the teacher told them to read a brief passage from a text. Perceptive questioning on what they had read about relationships between native Americans and white settlers developed students' understanding. At the same time, through gentle prompting, the teacher encouraged students to use the correct vocabulary when they phrased their answers. So students gained a clear understanding of words like treaty, reservation and betrayal. Teaching had a gently inquisitorial style, encouraging thoughtful and insightful responses from students. As a result of this consistent emphasis on using the correct language, students were able to develop and explain lucidly their historical conclusions in the closing minutes of the lesson. Students with special educational needs are very well taught. All teachers know each student's specific learning needs, allowing the work students do and the support they receive to be closely tailored to the individual.

9. Students achieve very well at all stages in the college; this is due to the consistent strengths in teaching and the very good behaviour and relationships. In Years 7 to 9, students make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding and so gain well above average results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. With continuing strengths in teaching and attitudes, these standards are consolidated, enabling students to gain well above average GCSE results across the full range of subjects at the end of Year 11. The maintenance of these very high standards in the more challenging AS and A-level examinations indicates continuing very good achievement in the sixth form. Again the very good teaching and constructive relationships are the most significant factors in achieving very high standards.

The college has very good assessment procedures and is using the results of these assessments to set clear targets for students and raise understanding and expectations of what they can achieve.

10. The college has a thorough policy for assessment and a senior manager is responsible for this area. The principles of assessment are clearly stated and actively promoted throughout the college. The methods that can be used to gather evidence and the tutors' role are clearly described and there is helpful guidance on how to analyse the data gathered. In practice, this means that students' achievements are comprehensively and regularly assessed across all elements of the college curriculum. There is strong consistency between departmental assessment practices. As an example of good practice, the theatre studies department keeps comprehensive records of students, including graphs, to show the progress of students' assessed work. The head of department uses this information to set challenging targets for the teachers and students; the success of this is exemplified by the high standards achieved in the subject.

11. Staff benefit from clear guidance on using assessment information. This includes advice on calculating the value the college has added to students' attainment over time and how to set appropriate targets for both departmental performance and for individual students. Information on individuals' progress is used effectively by form tutors in their personal interviews with students where targets are set and reviewed. This has a powerfully motivating influence on most students. Teachers are confident in their use of assessment. For example, a standard procedure which predicts students' future grades is analysed by design and technology teachers; where they feel the targets are insufficiently challenging they will set their own targets for individual students, based on their own departmental assessments. This practice is followed by a number of other departments.

12. Students are regularly reminded of their current standards of work, usually in relation to National Curriculum Levels or GCSE and other examination criteria. Teachers build on this knowledge to set clear and practical targets for improvement. They remind students of their goals in lessons, showing high expectations of their performance. GCSE students generally know their predicted grades and what they should do to improve on them. The home/college contact book is sensibly used to record targets and progress. Students thus feel closely involved in their own learning.

13. Assessment of work is especially good for students with special educational needs. These students' progress is regularly assessed. The results are recorded electronically on a central filing system and, being readily accessible to staff across the college, are helpful in tracking each individual's development. The data for individuals can be called up to inform their reviews. It is also used to set simple yet relevant individual targets, which are widely disseminated to teachers, so that they are able to address the targets identified fully in individual education plans. The comprehensive nature of these processes is remarkable, given that the special educational needs co-ordinator had only been in post for five weeks at the time of the inspection and had inherited a system which was unreliable and of limited help to teachers.

Most subjects are very well led and managed.

14. The leadership and management of subjects are very good and, in some cases, excellent. New appointments of staff to lead subject departments have had a positive effect on the college's capacity for improvement. Subject leaders regularly meet their line managers and feel well supported. Effective monitoring and support given to these middle managers, promote good consistency in the way subjects and areas are run. Given the geography of this widely-spread college, this is commendable. One example of commonality of practice is in the assessment procedures mentioned above. However, this extends to other areas, such as the implementation of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and in the consistent strengths of teaching in all subjects.

15. In this very large college, the numbers of teachers in subject departments can be very high. In the largest departments, English, mathematics and science, leadership has many strengths. One of the most significant is the knowledge the head of department has of the staff who teach the subject. Generally, as in the geography and design and technology departments, teachers form close-knit and cohesive teams. This enables the day-to-day management of departments to be very effective. Departmental documentation, such as handbooks and schemes of work are usually thorough, practical and useful documents. Heads of department offer appropriate in-service training opportunities to their staff and ensure that the outcomes of such courses are beneficial to the department. Less strong management is occasionally evident. For example, ICT resources are not efficiently allocated because no-one has taken a broad view of its development across the curriculum.

16. Subject leaders monitor teaching and learning within their areas very well. They monitor examination results perceptively and act on them to ensure improvements. Heads of department, in common with all teachers, maintain a strong focus on students' needs. They are regularly available at the end of lessons and at the end of the day to help students and answer their questions. In this, they work hard to establish a positive ethos for each subject. Subject leaders receive strong support from governors. Each subject has a link governor who works to develop an understanding of the relevant strengths and areas for development. Governors regularly visit their department, meet with staff and sometimes sit

in on lessons. Their support is appreciated by subject leaders. Findings from these links are reported to the governing body and regularly discussed.

Relationships between students and between staff and students are very good and make a significant contribution to the quality of students' learning. Behaviour is very good.

17. Teachers treat students as mature young adults and have high expectations of them. This philosophy encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and most respond favourably. Students say that they like their teachers and respect them because, whatever the subject, they can always get support when they require it. Year 11 students commented that the college is a close community, despite its size. Students are encouraged to work together in all lessons, frequently in mixed gender groups. Boys and girls mix well and relate warmly to one another, as do students of different ethnic groups. Thus, it quickly becomes second nature to help one another in their learning activities. This is encouraged by teachers, who use pair-work as an integral feature of many lessons. Sixth form students feel a part of the wider college community, take on many responsibilities and set a good example for younger students.

18. Behaviour is generally very good. In the cold and windy weather of the inspection period, pupils had to walk considerable distances while exposed to the elements. Behaviour outside was almost all good and the atmosphere peaceable and harmonious. Supervision is good but unobtrusive. At the end of the day the large number of students, over 2000, leave the site in a quiet and orderly fashion. Students respect their environment and the college is commendably free of litter or graffiti.

19. No unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in lessons and in many cases it was very good or excellent. The degree of willing co-operation with teachers displayed by students of all levels of aptitude is highly beneficial to learning. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson on quadratic equations, the strength of relationships and excellent attitudes to learning were manifested by the dogged determination shown by students in trying – and succeeding – to live up to the teacher's challenging expectations. Very good attitudes and behaviour are a positive incentive to learning. Students listen to their teachers and each other with strong concentration. Typically, in an excellent Year 8 English lesson on 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'; the willingness of students to help each other in a secure supportive environment was a significant element in the very good learning that took place. The incursion of a wasp into the classroom had minimal effect on their calm concentration, a clear indication of the very positive ethos in the lesson.

20. The college provides good opportunities to develop responsibility and these are well taken by students. Two students serve on the governing body. The college council is an effective body, which is involved in making decisions about the college. Students also act as form representatives and help with running clubs and activities after college. Students report very little bullying and express confidence in the college to deal with such issues, should they arise. The strong support that the college gives to students is appreciated, particularly by students in Year 7 as they settle in. The consistent positive reinforcement of positive attitudes by all staff, including non-teachers, builds a positive ethos and greatly encourages pupils' very good attitudes, values and personal development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Reports to parents, while meeting statutory requirements, do not consistently provide clear information and guidance on students' progress or what they should do to improve.

21. The college sends regular annual reports home. These are weighty documents and include an outline of courses that have been followed, a check-list recording the quality of effort and homework, an indication of the student's current attainment level and a comment from the teacher. Interim reports are sent home about halfway through the college year. They consist of a large number of ticks in columns and thus grade effort and homework and indicate the student's National Curriculum level or equivalent. Similar documents are sent home to parents of sixth form students.

22. Interim reports are simple documents and can be prepared and dispatched relatively easily. However, the way they show information does not communicate information sufficiently clearly to parents. Without guidance, the simple reporting of National Curriculum levels conveys very little about what students can and cannot do. The reports do not consistently explain what students should do to improve and contain no written comments.

23. Full reports include the simple information included in interim reports. Additional information about predicted examination grades or National Curriculum levels includes jargon, the meaning of which would be obscure to most parents. The comments from subject teachers are inconsistent. In some cases, there is more information about what has been studied, to supplement the course details shown at the top of each subject report. Other comments tend to be descriptive and focus on effort, behaviour and relationships. On some subject reports there are comments on progress during the course and what individual students can do and what they should do next, but this is inconsistent. Comments from tutors are often perceptive and very encouraging of students' efforts. Overall, the reports generally lack clarity and simple, readily understandable guidance on the students' future targets and what they should do to attain them.

24. The college accepts that there is inconsistency in reports, exacerbated by frequent changes of staff. At the time of the inspection the reports and the overall reporting process were both under review by the college.

Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory in that multi-cultural understanding is not developed or celebrated sufficiently.

25. Collingwood College has very few students from ethnic minorities. It is situated in an area which is predominantly white. However areas with large ethnic minorities are within a relatively short distance. The college currently makes insufficient provision to prepare students to live and work in multi-ethnic communities.

26. While themes relating to other races and cultures are mentioned in subjects like geography and religious education the college does not systematically plan to raise students' awareness of these areas. Related issues are referred to only briefly in the

personal, social and health education programme and they are rarely built on in assemblies. Overall, students' experiences are insufficiently consolidated and extended across the curriculum. The college has not checked by means of a curriculum audit which subjects cover multi-cultural matters so is unaware of what is taught to whom or when. There is a notable lack of displays relating to this area and little evidence of the awareness of festivals and other aspects of different cultures.

27. Students have few opportunities to make visits to places of significance in the lives of other ethnic groups, such as mosques and Hindu temples. Students contribute to charities which seek to support the very poor in less economically developed countries and this affords some opportunities for them to develop their understanding of other cultures and races. However, the college does not do enough to point out the danger of automatically stereotyping ethnic minorities as being deprived. Planning for awareness of other cultures concentrates largely on the college's development of religious education and citizenship. Whilst these are very useful initiatives, their planning does not show how awareness of other cultures can be integrated into the whole curriculum on an everyday basis. Staff are not yet practised in identifying appropriate opportunities to mention cultural or ethnic issues or to include them in their lesson planning. Some good examples of developing multi-cultural understanding can be seen. For example, sixth form media studies students examine the contrasts and tensions between 'Asian' and 'English' cultures by visiting multi-ethnic areas of London.

The library is too small, has too few books and is insufficiently promoted to meet the needs of all students.

28. At the time of the last inspection, the provision of both fiction and non-fiction books in the library was judged poor. While the number of books has improved, it is still considerably below average for a college of this size. Whereas some subjects, like art, have a good range of modern books which are well used by students, a number of others have too few books, a number of which are out-of-date. The English and mathematics departments, for example feel that there are insufficient texts in the library to support their 'A' level courses. In most subject areas, too many old books remain on the shelves. While fiction books are attractively presented in the library, non-fiction works are laid out in catalogue order with little guidance to students on how to find them. This tends to discourage personal research, making it difficult and unrewarding.

29. Some subjects are keen to promote the use of the library. The English and history departments have taken initiatives to encourage library usage through visits and setting projects which entail considerable research. The administration of the library is satisfactory, but its leadership tends to be too passive. For example, the college does too little actively to promote use of the library amongst all of its students. There are very few special events or activities to raise awareness of what the library can provide or to encourage reading for pleasure. The library staff do not sufficiently analyse the information they hold on what books have been borrowed and so tend to be insensitive to changes in demand.

30. The accommodation for the library is much too small for the size of college, particularly one that has such a large sixth form. Although the existing floor space is attractively laid out, the area for books to be shelved is too small. This difficulty is regarded by library staff as a limitation to the type of initiatives which might encourage more students to use it.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. Collingwood College is an effective and efficient institution which encourages and enables its students to achieve very well. The areas for improvement should be seen in the context of the college's many very real strengths. However, they are elements in the college's provision for its students where reforms are needed to maintain the current rate of improvement. They are:

- (1) To develop reports which are clear and give unambiguous targets to students the college should:
 - Consult with parents, students and teachers on improving communication in reports,
 - Develop a format of report which indicates standards of attainment without using educational jargon,
 - Incorporate clear targets in reports, indicating what students should do to improve their standards. (paragraphs 20 to 23)

- (2) To improve students' awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity, the college should:
 - Review its curriculum and resources and make improvements to ensure that they reflect the cultural diversity of our country. Use the reviewing process to raise staff awareness of these issues.
 - Monitor teaching and learning throughout the college to ensure that there are regular opportunities for students to develop an understanding of other cultures and groups.
 - Arrange trips to places of ethnic and cultural diversity to improve students' awareness of these areas. (paragraphs 24 to 26)

- (3) To improve the library the college should:
 - Increase the size of the library so that it is able to accommodate the much-needed increase in its stock of books and other publications.
 - Remove out-of-date books.
 - Use a variety of ways to encourage students' use of the library. (paragraphs 27 to 29)
 - Those responsible for sixth form subjects should meet library staff and indicate what resources are required to support students in the courses they are following. The library should implement a scheme to meet these needs as soon as possible. (paragraph 60)

Sixth form

- (1) To improve governors' involvement in this distinctive area of the college a named governor should be appointed with responsibility for the sixth form. This governor would be expected to work closely with the sixth form management team and to report to and liaise with the full governing body. (paragraph 55)

(2) Religious education should be taught as an integral part of the post-16 curriculum with a clear scheme of work and regular lessons. (paragraph 45)

(3) Clearly indicate to students what the college contracts to do for them in finding places in higher and further education and in employment. (paragraphs 45 and 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	48
	Sixth form	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		88

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	6	16	17	9	0	0	0
Percentage	12	35	36	17	0	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	5	27	27	11	1	0	0
Percentage	7	38	38	16	1	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 for Years 7 – 11 as each lesson represents more than two percentage points and in the sixth form, where each lesson represents more than one percentage point

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1670	383
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	64	4

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	19	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	139	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	53

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
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Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	45
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	52

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	172	179	351

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	140	142	139
	Girls	162	148	141
	Total	302	290	280
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	86 (85)	83 (86)	80 (77)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	53 (63)	62 (65)	44 (46)
	National	31 (28)	43(42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	141	151	131
	Girls	160	150	144
	Total	301	301	275
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	86 (80)	86 (85)	78 (83)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (38)	59 (63)	42 (45)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	175	150	325

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	99	169	171
	Girls	109	144	148
	Total	208	313	319
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	64 (61)	96 (96)	96 (97)
	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	School	48
	National	39

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	College	0	N/a
	National		N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	81	86	167
	Average point score per candidate	13.7	18.8	16.2
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (17.1)	17.7 (18)	17.4 (17.6)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	77	81	158	103	98	201
	Average point score per candidate	14.5	19.2	16.9	13.7	18.8	16.2
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	16.9	18	17.5

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	College	0	N/a
	National		N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1917	160	9
1		
55	1	
3	1	
0		
2		
0	2	
16	1	

Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	8		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3		
Black or Black British – African	3		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4		
Chinese	9		
Any other ethnic group	22		
No ethnic group recorded	16		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	117.84
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	31
Total aggregate hours worked per week	817.1

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	21.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	6,232,922
Total expenditure	6,152,413
Expenditure per pupil	2,941
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,293
Balance carried forward to next year	61,586

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	52.14
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	70.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.18
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	2050
Number of questionnaires returned	902

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	58	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	54	4	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	59	13	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	63	15	3	1
The teaching is good.	15	68	7	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	52	19	3	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	48	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	19	53	19	3	6
The school is well led and managed.	27	59	6	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	57	6	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	54	10	1	6

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

32. The college's A-level results in 2001, based on average points score, were broadly in line with the national average for maintained schools and above average when compared with all providers of sixth form education. There was some variation between subjects. In 2001, results were very high in economics and well above average in business studies, English literature and language, geography, German, graphical application, sociology, art and design and leisure and tourism. Results were above average in chemistry, design and technology, mathematics, physics and vocational business studies. Results were close to national averages in communication studies, computer studies, French and vocational health and social care. They were below average in sports studies and well below average in biology and history. The students' average point score in 2001 was generally similar to those of 2000 and 1999. Results in 2002 show a clear improvement in students' average points score but there are, as yet, no national averages for comparison.

33. The value added in the sixth form to students' attainment at GCSE two years earlier, was good in 2001. Students enter the sixth form with overall standards which are well above the national average; they generally maintain or improve on these high standards. Given the greater demands of the courses at this level, this continuation of very high standards indicates that students' achievement in the sixth form is very good.

34. In the subjects being inspected, the standards demonstrated by students currently in Years 12 and 13, are well above average in English literature, mathematics, geography, economics and theatre studies. They are above average in psychology, design and technology, history, ICT, French, music and media studies. Standards are broadly in line with averages in biology, physical education and health and social care. There were no subjects where students' standards were below average. Very few sixth form students speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs. In the case of both groups, the learning of these few pupils in lessons is very good. As a result, their achievement over time is very good, and they fulfil their potential.

35. Lessons were sampled in seven other courses running in the sixth form. The standards being demonstrated were at least in line with those expected for the age of the students. Standards were above the expected level in combined English language and literature, German, chemistry, physics and sociology. In German, very good A-level results have been gained and students are fluent conversational speakers. Students work well in practical elements of the chemistry course. Generally, standards are average in leisure and recreation where students show good aptitudes in using ICT, and in music technology.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

36. Students have very good attitudes towards the college, are highly motivated and committed to doing well in their studies. All the students spoken with during the inspection felt they had made the right choice in joining the sixth form and were enthusiastic about the subjects they had chosen to study. During their time in the sixth form, they develop very good independent study skills.

37. Relationships between students are very good. They collaborate very well and help each other in all elements of their studies. Relationships between teachers and students are

also very good. Students respond positively to the teaching and greatly value the support that their subject teachers provide.

38. Students' personal development is very good. They are a central part of the college community and help in the main part of the college. They take on many responsibilities within the college and carry them out diligently. For example, they mentor pupils in Year 8 and become prefects. As part of the sixth form graduation certificate they undertake community service. In addition, a number of students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

39. Teaching, overall, in the sixth form is very good. The quality of teaching shows great consistency between subjects. For example almost all teachers regularly emphasise and promote the development of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and computer literacy in lessons. Teaching seeks to develop students' literacy skills by incorporating into lessons good and accurate use of the vocabulary which is specific to the subject.

40. Teachers have a very good grasp of their subjects. This enables them to explain clearly new ideas and concepts and gives them the confidence to deal effectively with any ideas or questions from the students. Teachers have a very good understanding of the requirements of examinations and regularly remind students what they need to know and understand in order to achieve success at the end of their courses. They commonly use examination criteria as a way to focus and develop learning. This is a major strength in the teaching where relationships are also very positive and students consequently develop good learning skills. Teachers challenge students throughout lessons; they have high expectations of what they can do and students respond very well. For example, students participate well in discussions, drawing out ideas or developing understanding of new material.

41. Teaching is very well planned. In particular, teachers are very careful to have the appropriate resources organised before lessons start; in some subjects technicians are deployed to ensure learning is not interrupted. Overall the pace of both teaching and learning is very good. Students are taught specific learning skills in a number of subjects, for example history, media studies, French and science. A very good Year 13 theatre studies lesson illustrates many of these strengths. Students were working on devised work, stimulated by the very good range of props and masks which had been laid out before the lesson started. The teacher was clearly knowledgeable but interventions were unobtrusive, subtly challenging the students' ideas and encouraging them to develop their ideas further. The teachers high expectations were very clear throughout, students responded by working at great pace, showing very good creative and intellectual effort.

42. Teaching is also an important contributing factor in developing students' personal skills. Many lessons require students to listen carefully to each other, to respond to what they hear and to organise and convey their own thoughts and understanding. They work very well in assessing one another's work; they are supportive in this, encouraging, rarely criticising their peers. The way in which students' work is assessed overall is very supportive of their learning. Reviews of work use examination criteria, are very focused but also encourage students to reflect on how and what they have learned. A very good Year 13 geography lesson, reviewing coursework in progress, involved the students in practical evaluation of their work both as individuals and in small groups. The teacher's interventions involved challenging questions and high expectations. For example, students were assessing their own and one another's work to the examination criteria for the higher band only, because it

is at this level that they are expected to work. Students are frequently given the opportunity for individual tutorials with teachers and they find this very helpful. Overall, students show good knowledge of their own learning. For example, Year 13 students know their predicted A-level grades and what they need to do to improve on them.

43. Students are capable, independent learners. These skills are developed by the tasks which students are given, for example researching a topic from text books, current magazines or newspapers, or the Internet, and presenting the outcomes of their research to their group. Student planners are carefully used to record homework and other assignments. Relationships are very good and this enables students to contribute to lessons or seek assistance, without fear of ridicule. Students are encouraged to use their ICT skills to good effect. The word processing of material is common and Powerpoint is often used when making presentations to the class. Students use the Internet to seek information, either by direction from their teachers or because they recognise its potential.

44. Within lessons, students show a love of learning. They enjoy their subjects and the teaching they receive. They respond by working hard and participating fully in lessons. They put a lot of effort into their work. This is generally well marked and further helps students know how well they are succeeding and what they need to do to improve further. In a good French lesson, Year 12 students worked exceptionally well in pairs, they were very strongly focused in their discussion of relationships and were able to relate their opinions to their understanding of the extract from a Camus text, which they read in the lesson.

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

45. Overall, curricular opportunities at the college are very good. The curriculum provides very well for students' needs through a broad range of examination courses and enrichment activities. There is a very good, wide choice of GCE A level, AS level and vocational courses, which matches the needs, capabilities and aspirations of all students. The range of courses available provides very good access to technical subjects, art and science. Careful thought is given to the use of study time as an integral part of students' overall programmes of work. Students are given good advice about selecting their sixth form courses and this leads to well-balanced programmes, which make good use of their time. They have regular support and monitoring of their progress throughout both years and, as a result, appropriate adjustments are made to programmes. These enable students to achieve to their full potential.

46. The curriculum is well organised to meet the college's rationale for its sixth form. Planning is systematic and thorough and includes suitable programmes for enabling students to improve their key skills. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of extra activities, which strongly contribute to students' personal development. Students volunteer for activities such as supporting students in the lower school or in other schools. They can take part in schemes such as Young Enterprise, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, or take a sports leadership award. Many opportunities exist to take part in very successful musical and drama activities but opportunities for engaging in sporting activities are more limited. A good programme for the development of students' personal, social and health education is in place. This includes inputs from senior people in the community and enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the contribution they and others can and do make to the community. Careers information and support for those intending to go to university is good. However, some students say that there is less support for others and they would like more direct advice. The college is using the Surrey Graduation certificate

very effectively to encourage students to coordinate their academic success and other aspects of personal development and achievement.

47. The college's provision for students' personal development is satisfactory. The PACE (personal and careers education) programme provides very well for students' moral and social development. The college invites speakers to give presentations on such issues as "religion, morality and the armed forces". Students' personal development is also strengthened by the very good opportunities to take responsibility, for example mentoring younger students. They have recently produced the sixth form review.

48. The provision of time for religious education is limited and does not meet requirements. Religious education is taught irregularly and so there is no continuity of learning. Students' spiritual development is not sufficiently planned for and is unsatisfactory. Only three sessions a year are allocated specifically for religious studies and assemblies do not meet the statutory requirements for collective worship. The "thought for the day" is used effectively in some tutor periods to provoke reflection and the discussion of moral issues. Across different subjects, some opportunities for developing spirituality do occur. For example, in history students are invited to try to understand the emotions and feelings of convicts chained in ships on their way to Australia. There are satisfactory opportunities for students' cultural development. The college runs music and drama clubs with an ambitious school production put on yearly. Other cultural opportunities occur within subjects such as art and music. Some examples of provision for multicultural education were seen in specific subjects, for example media studies. However as the PACE programme does not provide enough opportunities for students to learn about different cultures, not all students receive adequate information to prepare them for living in a multi-cultural society. The college has not audited its schemes of work to identify opportunities to introduce multi-cultural issues. Teachers do not show sufficient awareness of many of the issues relating to multiculturalism. Whereas, in many schools and colleges, frequent opportunities are taken to refer to differences and similarities between various cultures, the incorporation of such issues into teaching was rarely observed at Collingwood.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

49. The quality of assessment is very good. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students well, making very good use of a comprehensive database of their previous and current achievements. They use this thoughtfully to help check the progress students are making, and to estimate accurately the standards they could reasonably achieve. Students are then helped to know and understand what action they should take in order to do better. Here, they benefit from regular, detailed, personal discussions with their subject teachers and tutors, informed by carefully recorded data outlining attainment, effort made, and deadlines to reach. At the same time, they receive challenging targets to aim for, in order to reach their maximum academic potential. Subject teachers mark work well in most subjects, so that students know how well they are doing, and what they need to do in order to improve.

50. Good assessment procedures are in place in science, English, mathematics, art, physical education and economics and history. In all these cases, information is gathered meticulously and put to use well, so that students are drawn into an understanding of their own progress and potential attainment at each stage of the school year. In a few subjects, where marking does not come up to the generally very high standards of the rest, it could be

improved by giving greater emphasis to students' reflection on the teachers' comments and making sure that they are given more precise guidance on how to improve.

Advice, support and guidance

51. The College provides good advice for students about the subjects they should study on entering the sixth form and about their options when they leave college. Efficient systems are in place to ensure that students new to the sixth form settle in well and have chosen subjects they will succeed in.

52. Preparation for entry to the sixth form is very well organised. In Year 11, the college provides students with information about what is available in the sixth form. In addition, there is information about other local institutions, with prospectuses available for students to read. Teachers ensure that students know what the course requirements are. They are available after the GCSE results come out to advise those students whose grades do not match the courses they have chosen. There are good opportunities for students and their parents to understand what will be required of them through preliminary work and meetings after their examinations at the age of sixteen. The low numbers of students who drop out of the sixth form indicates that this support is very effective.

53. A comprehensive programme of careers education and support for university applications is provided in the sixth form. Students who are intending to find work after they leave school receive support from the Surrey Careers Service. The school also supports those intending to go into higher education. Students can move freely between these groups if their intentions change. Tutors also help students with their personal statement for the university application form during tutor time. Some students felt that they did not get good support in this area and they are not sufficiently clear about what the school provides. Although there is a good planner that contains a student/school contract, it does not clearly state the provision for personal support that students can expect from the college.

54. Students get very good support and guidance from their subject teachers. Students recognise this support and are grateful for it. They also feel they could talk to their subject teachers or a member of senior management if they had a personal problem. They are less likely to confide in a form tutor, although Year 12 students have only been with their tutors for a few weeks. In contrast, parents feel that they are insufficiently informed about how their children are progressing. The inspection team concurs with this because annual reports do not consistently give parents a sufficiently clear picture of students' progress or specific advice on how they can improve their work.

55. Students receive good academic support on moving into the sixth form with some subjects offering link courses during the summer holiday. However, the induction into the sixth form itself is minimal with only a brief preliminary visit planned for those in Year 11 who are to continue at the college.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

56. Leadership of the sixth form is good, overall. The work of the sixth form is effectively managed by the assistant principal, post-16. He is well supported by two heads of year and a team of experienced sixth form tutors. Staffing, financing and resourcing of the sixth form are undertaken by the respective heads of department, but provision is not properly co-ordinated to ensure consistency across subject areas. Governors have clearly defined and well understood roles and responsibilities

and a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. However, they have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met for religious education and collective worship and, in this respect, they do not fulfil all their statutory obligations. Governors are assigned to subject departments but there is no single governor attached to the sixth form.

57. The college has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses and it has a commitment to self-evaluation and review. After a recent review of the sixth form a post-16 working party has been established to consider issues such as teaching styles, target setting and performance reviews. The college has a thorough and practicable development plan which incorporates a strategic plan to 2005. The three-year plan is very full and actively anticipates developments such as citizenship, vocational examinations and the 14-19 curriculum. The plan is supported by individual subject plans, which are completed to the same format, although the sixth form development plan is rather brief.

58. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes and best value principles are applied to the college's financial affairs. Funding is used effectively although the college spends more on its sixth form provision than its income for the number of students justifies. The provision of a broad and inclusive curriculum has been expensive, although the college has been successful in reducing these costs over the past three years.

59. Teachers in the sixth form offer a mix of experience and qualifications which is appropriate to the subjects taught. The professional development of staff is a strength of the college and all sixth form staff have undertaken training for the new AS and A2 examinations. External links, such as those between media studies staff and the British Film Institute, provide additional professional development opportunities. The college enjoys strong links with teacher training providers and its commitment to staff is reflected in the retention of Investor in People status.

60. Accommodation in the sixth form is unsatisfactory especially in science, art and design and technology which suffer from scattered rooms and inefficient use of resources. Small sixth form classrooms are not suited to the larger class sizes and physical education lessons are slow to start because of travelling distances for the students. However, plans are at an advanced stage to fund a new sixth form centre with new facilities for art, music and drama as well as a sports centre and the refurbishment of the science laboratories.

Resources

61. The resources available to subjects are good. All subjects have sufficient resources to deliver the curriculum. The provision of ICT is a strength not only within the subject itself but also in modern foreign languages and design and technology. However the provision of ICT is insufficient in mathematics and biology. Some subjects, such as art and health and social care find, at times, it is difficult to book the room to permit the whole-class use of computers. The resources within the library are unsatisfactory and are particularly lacking in English, mathematics and design and technology. This makes it more difficult for students to become effective, independent learners.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	5	80	62	0	15	1.2	1.51
Music	1	100	85	0	29	3	2.41
French	1	100	77	0	13	1	1.65

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	58	95	87	51	43	6.14	5.8
Chemistry	16	100	90	44	43	6.5	5.9
Biology	17	76	88	12	34	3.29	5.25
Physics	17	100	88	41	40	6.35	5.67
Design and technology	8	88	91	38	30	6.25	5.38
Graphical applications	12	100	88	50	22	7	4.74
Home economics	3	100	83	0	28	4.67	4.73
Business studies	45	76	88	12	34	3.29	5.25
Economics	10	100	89	70	36	8.2	5.52
Computer studies	37	86	86	14	23	4	4.62
Sports/PE studies	21	100	92	14	25	4.48	5.09
Art and design	15	100	96	80	46	8.67	6.57
Music	5	100	93	40	35	6.4	5.74
Geography	18	100	92	67	38	7.56	5.74
History	23	78	88	9	35	3.83	5.45
Sociology	10	100	86	70	35	7.2	5.32
English literature	17	100	95	53	37	7.18	5.91
English language	9	100	92	33	30	6.22	5.28
French	13	92	89	38	38	5.69	5.59
German	7	100	91	86	40	8	5.91
Communication Studies	75	92	93	41	31	5.71	5.53
Art and design VQ	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	15.43	12.24

Business VQ	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.00	10.45
Health and social care VQ	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.00	10.79
Leisure and tourism VQ	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.00	10.06

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

62. The focus was on mathematics and biology, but chemistry and physics were also sampled. In chemistry, results are above average. In the lesson seen, teaching was good. Good planning and resourcing enabled good group and practical work on the reaction of halogenic elements. Relationships between students and the teacher were a strength. In physics, results are also above average. In the lesson seen, teaching was very good: the teacher's subject knowledge on dark matter and background radiation was enthusiastically shared with students who were achieving above average standards in a pleasant and supportive learning environment. There is a strong and appropriate focus on the requirements of the examination.

Mathematics

Overall the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Strengths

- Above average A-level results and higher standards in the current Year 13.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning.
- The very effective leadership and management of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Provide more ICT opportunities to enrich and extend the mathematics curriculum.

63. Standards in the mathematics A-level examination in 2001 were above national averages with 95 per cent of the students achieving a pass grade and 51 per cent achieving the higher A and B grades. The unconfirmed results in 2002 show a further improvement with all students achieving a pass grade and 63 per cent achieving the higher grades. The 'A' level results have fluctuated over the past four years in line with the abilities of students on entry. Girls perform better than boys and students perform as well in mathematics as they do in their other subjects. In relation to their prior performance at GCSE, achievement in mathematics is good.

64. Standards in Year 13 are well above expectations. Students can factorise quadratic equations and find general terms of arithmetic and geometric series. However, mental arithmetic skills are not so secure so that Year 12 students had problems cancelling fractions and identifying strategies to multiply by fourteen. Students solve trigonometric equations and make use of these to resolve forces in mechanics as well as working on force and momentum. In statistics, they identify regression lines using the method of least squares and calculate the product moment correlation coefficient. Higher attaining students, following the further mathematics course, can solve challenging second order differential equations with confidence and calculate motion in both vertical and horizontal circles.

65. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and lessons get off to a prompt start so that curriculum time is maximised. Lesson planning is thorough and teachers make very good use of questioning to check understanding and decide when to move the lesson on.

Teachers enjoy excellent relationships with their students and this very good rapport allows students to develop confidence and competence in their work. In a small minority of lessons, teachers give insufficient attention to the spread of ability in the class and teacher talk dominates so that students become inactive participants in their own learning. Teachers have a very good awareness of the individual strengths and weaknesses of their students. Marking is regular with useful comments and exemplar solutions offered to students to support their work. Regular assessments are centrally recorded and allow students to be tracked and supported. Suitable targets are set and these are recorded in students' planners although not shared in the reporting process so that sixth form reports are rather brief and not subject specific.

66. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Students show interest and enthusiasm in their work and enjoy good-humoured relationships with their teachers. Relationships with one another are positive and productive. Students complete work to a very high standard although some work remains unfinished so that opportunities for further learning are sometimes lost.

67. The provision for literacy in the sixth form is good and the department makes good use of technical vocabulary as well as ensuring that student work is well organised and suitably presented. The provision for ICT is satisfactory and the department makes good use of graphical calculators but there is less evidence of ICT being used to enrich and extend the curriculum. The provision for numeracy is good but inconsistent across the curriculum. Number work is developed well in economics to calculate supply and demand costs which are then graphed to analyse break even points. Algebraic skills are used in ICT for creating formulae in spreadsheets and in science for substituting in formulas. Measuring skills are used well in design and technology while physical education students have a good understanding of fulcrums and levers to identify movement in the human body. Graphs and bar charts are employed effectively in PE for recording reaction times and performance.

68. The leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are very good. The department is led with a clear vision and educational direction for mathematics post-16. The head of department has a very good awareness of the strengths of the department as a result of monitoring and analysis of assessment data and external examination results. She engenders a strong team spirit among a hard working and dedicated team of well-qualified teachers. The department has responded well to recent curriculum changes and there is a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good and this is matched by students' learning and supported by their positive attitudes and behaviour. The use of ICT to support the curriculum in the sixth form is not as strong as reported in the last report but the department is aware of the need to improve provision. The department is well placed to continue to improve and to continue to raise standards.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- New departmental leadership is very committed to improvement.
- The teaching is good using a wide range of resources and teaching styles. The well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers have very good subject knowledge
- Teachers and students who work together in a cooperative manner through very good relationships

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT needs to be enhanced further, to support learning.
- Support needs to be targeted more specifically to lower attaining students.

69. In 2001 the GCE A-level and AS results were below or well below the national average but they improved significantly in 2002. Both results show a variation over the past five years. The department has detailed information of each individual student, which clearly demonstrates that the majority of students reach their target grades and in many cases exceed them. This is particularly true of students obtaining the higher grades at A-level. Attainment at AS level is lower than at A-level and this is due, in part, to the previous relatively low attainment of students at GCSE. Overall, achievement in Year 12 is satisfactory with the higher attaining students achieving better than the lower attaining students. The students in Year 13 achieve well, based on their GCSE and AS results.

70. Standards of work seen are broadly in line with the national expectations. Students in Year 12 had just started their course but appreciated the support they are receiving in the transition from GCSE. They showed a good understanding of the structure and function of enzymes and were able to perform practical activities in a mature manner, taking great care. These students were able to perform the associated calculations using their numeracy skills and computers. Their written notes and assessments were performed in a careful manner and most showed a pride in their work. Year 13 pupils also showed a range in the standard of their work but were, overall, close to the expected national average. Students were achieving a standard of work close to or above their expected grades. These pupils were able to describe the role of fungi as pathogens and research the structure and function of a wide range of hormones. The students were able to work independently on personal research being able to interrogate various sources of information.

71. Teaching is good, overall and is linked effectively to a good assessment process. The students are taught by well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers who demonstrate good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and resourced. This gives them pace and a structure that maintains the interest and involvement of all students. Lessons observed incorporated several activities that enabled students to work independently or as a group. Students were able to answer the questions asked of them and were confident to enter into detailed discussions. Assessments and homework for Year 13 students are marked in detail, with many constructive comments that help the students improve. Relationships between the teachers and students as well as between the students themselves are very good, especially in Year 13. This gives rise to a very pleasant working atmosphere. Teachers are supportive of all the students and ensure that they all understand the work covered by asking well-structured specific questions throughout lessons. In discussions, students appreciated the support and guidance given by the teachers and the fact that the teachers were prepared to help and assist outside lessons.

72. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. This responsibility is now shared between two members of staff. This management structure has just been introduced after many changes over the past four years. The staff involved are determined to make this arrangement work. They have, since September, put in a great deal of effort to co-ordinate and review all aspects of the subject. The department is aware of the need to maintain the assessment of student progress, especially the lower attaining ones, so that suitable support can be given to students who start to fall below their potential grade. The department are also aware of the need to incorporate techniques that will support the learning such as extending the use of relevant computer software and examination techniques. There has been satisfactory progress made since the last inspection and there is now a good capacity for success in the future.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

73. The full range of design and food technology courses was inspected.

Design and technology

Overall, the provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- High quality coursework from some students, especially in food technology, graphics and textiles.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and usually plan lessons well.

Areas for improvement

- Students following the resistant materials course need to ensure that their design research is more closely matched to their chosen topic and that they develop a greater range of initial design ideas
- There are insufficient textbooks to support design research for resistant materials and graphics, and some computers need upgrading to run modern software. The amount of technician support for resistant materials is inadequate.
- The teaching space normally used for resistant materials teaching is inadequate and does not provide a suitable learning environment.

74. For the subject as a whole, attainment in the examinations held in 2001 was above average. Almost all students who were entered for A-level gained grades A-E. This is slightly better than the national average. Students entered for the graphics course attained higher results than for the other aspects of the subject. For the AS level course in 2001, three quarters of those entered gained grades A - E. The unsubstantiated results for 2002 show an improvement in both A-level and AS results with all entered gaining grades A-E. Progress over time is good and all aspects of the subject show a general improvement in the attainment of students. The vast majority of students attain results which at least match their ability and achieve well with no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

75. Standards of work seen varied. Overall, there is very good work in food technology, textiles and graphics. Some work of an excellent standard was seen in textiles. The work in resistant materials is satisfactory overall, although some individual students do produce good quality work. In a Year 12 food technology lesson, students worked hard on practical tasks which aimed to develop their understanding of protein. Through their written responses to questions, it was clear that they had understood the knowledge which supported the task. In resistant materials some students do not carry out sufficient research into existing products closely related to their chosen area of study. They tend not to develop fully their outline ideas and in consequence it is difficult to see the progression from initial ideas to final product. Students use ICT very effectively in food technology and graphics where the standard of their coursework is frequently above average. The use of computer aided designing and making is limited.

76. The standard of teaching is satisfactory with some variations. It was good in about half the lessons seen and satisfactory in most of the remainder. Where the teaching was good, teachers had planned for a range of relevant tasks and the lessons proceeded at a good pace, which gave time for students to apply what they have been told. Learning was good as a result of effective teaching, as was seen in a Year 12 graphics lesson, where students were beginning to develop an understanding of auxiliary projection as a result of working through carefully graded tasks of increasing complexity. All teaching groups contained students in both Years 12 and 13. Whilst this makes for economic use of staff time it does, in effect, mean that two separate lessons happen at the same time in the same room. The current small numbers mean that this is not a significant problem, but at times it hampers students from making smooth progress. Each specialist area is taught by two teachers. This arrangement makes good use of the subject strengths of the staff, and allows more staff to contribute to teaching the sixth form. However, whilst there is good co-ordination between the teachers involved, this arrangement, and the two-week timetable cycle used, can sometimes lead to slow progress through the various modules.

77. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. The head of department has made some good progress since his appointment and improved many aspects of department organisation. The work which students produce is monitored closely, although more effective use could be made of the data which the school has. The department has maintained the good position mentioned in the last report and there has been effective consolidation of working practices. Accommodation for the subject is satisfactory, but it is dispersed across the site which makes efficient use difficult. Some sixth form teaching in food technology takes place out of specialist rooms, which means that teaching resources have to be moved. Much of the teaching for resistant materials takes place in a circulation area in the main technology block. This leads to excessive noise and interruptions and is not conducive to good teaching and learning. Present arrangements inhibit students' learning and their interest in the subject. Sixth form students do not have their own design studio to allow them to pursue their work during private study times. Resources for learning in the department are good although some computers are outdated and will not run modern software or provide Internet access. There is a shortage of books in resistant materials and graphics that students can use to learn about the work of professional designers and which will promote design thinking. The stock of library books to support the subject is also inadequate. Technician support is inadequate, given the nature of the subject and the number of teaching rooms used. Consequently, sixth form work is inhibited due to the pressures on technician staff to support work in other years. Since the last inspection there has been little increase in the overall number of students in the sixth form who follow a course in design and technology, and the relatively small number does not reflect the nature of a technology college. However, standards have risen and improvement overall is good.

BUSINESS

78. The full range of business studies and economics courses was inspected.

Business studies

Overall, the quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- The college provides a good range of courses which meet students' different needs.
- Results in business studies are well above average.
- Students are very committed to their studies and prepared to work hard.
- Staff have expertise and great enthusiasm for their subjects which helps students to achieve well.

Areas for improvement:

- The links with businesses are limited.

79. A-level business studies results in 2001 were well above the national average with all candidates gaining at least a pass grade, and over half the candidates gaining either A or B grades. The 2002 A2 results were similarly good. In general the girls achieved higher grades than the boys. In recent years, the results show that students taking business studies achieve very well and have done significantly better in this subject than they have in other subjects.

80. From the work seen in lessons and in the students' files, it was clear that standards on the AS/A2 business courses were well above average. In Year 13, students are building on their good AS level results to analyse a case study in depth and justify their conclusions in a well argued essay or presentation. Year 13 students discussing location planning understood the concepts involved and were able to advance good reasons for locating a business in the UK. The higher attainers were posing good questions for class discussion, for example on the advantages and disadvantages of in-house or external distribution systems. In Year 12, the students were only six weeks into the course, but were able to

show, through a group presentation, that they have gained a good understanding of key principles of marketing. They also demonstrated impressive ICT skills. Overall, students' achievement is good.

81. The teaching is good. Teachers have good expertise which helps all students to learn and to make rapid progress in acquiring detailed knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of business. Students learn well because they are presented with well-planned, interesting and realistic case-studies. In the lessons seen the expectations were high and students were encouraged to be analytical and questioning. Relationships between staff and students are very good and the teachers clearly knew the students' strengths and weaknesses well. They were able to target questions effectively. Key skills are fully integrated into the business studies courses and staff give students many opportunities to develop and use their ICT, literacy and numeracy skills and to learn to make effective presentations. The displays about significant business issues and of technical vocabulary in the teaching rooms are useful resources for students. Students have very positive attitudes and a strong work ethic.

82. The management of the department is good, with good potential for further improvement. The head of department has a clear view of how the department can develop. It is very well staffed, teachers share expertise and ideas and the joint planning of work is a significant strength. Accommodation for business studies is adequate; though the rooms are relatively small, they are well equipped and well used. The department is well resourced in terms of books, professional periodicals and ICT. The recent acquisition of an interactive whiteboard has further improved the use of and access to ICT. The curriculum gives students considerable choice and students spoken to were clear about the demands of the course and their reasons for choosing AS/A2 rather than the vocational courses. The college has a number of business links; some AS/A2 students undertake work experience and the department also runs the Young Enterprise scheme. However, staff are very much aware that extending business links would significantly improve the provision in business studies. It would give students more opportunities to experience the world of business at first hand and to develop their knowledge and understanding still further. With improving results and facilities there has been good improvement in this area since the last inspection.

Economics

Overall, the quality of provision in economics is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very high attainment in GCE examinations.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very good.
- Very good teaching based on very relevant subject knowledge leads to focused support for students.

Areas for improvement.

- Ensure the library resources are updated to provide students with opportunities for wider reading.

83. Results for A-level in 2001 were very high compared with national averages. The standards achieved in the 2002 A and A/S level examinations were also very high but there are currently no national average figures. Overall, in the light of these students' prior attainment, recent results represent very good achievement.

84. The work of students in Year 12 is above national expectations. Early into their course, they successfully apply their knowledge of factors affecting supply and demand in a market economy to new case studies presented by the teacher. Higher attaining students were quick to recognise the complexity of real life examples, for example that factors affecting

demand also sometimes affect supply. A good foundation is being laid here. Standards of work of current students in Year 13 are well above national expectations. Year 13 students are building on their achievements of last year's AS study. In one lesson, small groups prepared and confidently delivered presentations on mergers, monopoly and unfair competition. They readily explained the main issues judged significant by the Competition Commission for their chosen case studies, researched through the world-wide web. They gave robust responses when questioned by their peers, confirming the strength of their previous learning.

85. Teaching is very good, and students learn very well as a result. Confident subject and syllabus knowledge and detailed planning result in structured and varied learning activities to allow for good learning outcomes. Students are recommended pertinent web-sites to extend their reading. Students with English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make progress in line with their peers. Students' attitudes and their relationships with staff are very good and make a positive contribution to their learning.

86. The department is very well managed. The quality of teaching and learning is a direct result of very good subject knowledge, and a commitment to using effective methods to develop students' interest and enthusiasm. Detailed understanding of the demands of the examination syllabuses can be seen in the constructive advice provided in the assessment of students' work. Good use is made of journal and broadsheet articles, as well as standard text books and useful internet websites. Support for students would be enhanced by additional library resources to promote further and independent learning. Since the last inspection, the high standards have been sustained and this represents very good progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

87. The full range of ICT courses was inspected, including the CISCO Networking course.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

Overall, provision for information and communication technology in the sixth form is **good**.

Strengths

- Above average standards of attainment are reached by current students and they achieve well.
- Teaching is good with strengths in planning and assessment.
- Individual support and assessment informs students and enables them to improve their work.

Areas for improvement

- Some lessons do not include activities which challenge students sufficiently.

88. In 2001, overall standards in the A-level examinations were in line with the national average and in 2002 results improved significantly with a high proportion of students gaining higher grades and almost all gaining a pass. However, results for the ICT course were considerably better than those for computer studies. In 2002, results for AS level, in both computer studies and ICT were very good with a high proportion of both boys and girls gaining A to C grades and a very high proportion of A to E grades. In comparison with other subjects, students taking the ICT course do better than those taking computer studies. The attainment of male and female students is broadly similar.

89. Standards of work seen in lessons and course work are above expectations. Students taking computer studies develop good understanding of computer systems and how they work. They study different computer programming techniques and are able to apply this knowledge in creating and analysing programmes. Students taking the ICT course develop good levels of knowledge and understanding of a variety of computer software packages. They develop skills quickly and are confident in applying knowledge and skills in solving problems. For example, they use Power point,

to create a slide presentation and multi-media software to make an animated presentation. Students are recruited with a wide range of prior attainment but all make good progress and overall, achievement is good. Higher attaining students and those with high levels of interest in use of computers often make very good progress and their achievement is very good. Standards being achieved in the networking courses are very encouraging with good development of knowledge and skills and very positive engagement in the course by all students.

90. Teaching is good overall, but this includes some satisfactory and some excellent teaching. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this well in planning and delivery of very effective lessons. As a result, students are able to develop good levels of skills, knowledge and understanding and work hard in following well-structured activities or applying their knowledge and skills in more individual and creative work. In the best lessons, time is used very well and students are required to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning, for example, when they plan their individual multi media presentations or select specific features of the computer programme to use in their own work. However, when students are not given sufficiently challenging learning activities, their participation, concentration and pace of working can be limited. Teachers have a very positive working relationship with the students and students are enthusiastic about their work. As a result, students receive a lot of individual support and guidance in carrying out set tasks and this, together with regular testing and good marking, is very helpful in enabling them to improve their work.

91. Leadership and management of information and communication technology in the sixth form are good. Teachers work very well as a team and use their considerable expertise very effectively to plan and deliver high quality programmes of work. The range of computing courses available is very good and meets the needs of students well. Students have very good access to computers and improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

92. The focus was on sports science, but the AVCE course in leisure and recreation was also sampled. Results were broadly in line with national averages, though the proportion of distinctions was below average and boys did significantly less well than girls. The lesson seen was well planned. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and provided good support for students, who made satisfactory progress. Good use was made of ICT.

SPORTS STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision in sports studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good with a variety of teaching methods resulting in effective learning.
- Good organisation of specialist teachers.
- Good student attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Marking does not focus sufficiently on enabling students to improve and achieve their predicted grades.
- Teaching points are not always sufficiently consolidated.

93. In the last three years A-level results have been below the national average. In 2001, the proportion of students gaining an A or B grade was below the national average, but those students gaining an A to E grade were above the national average. In 2002, results showed an improvement. Students achieve satisfactorily when compared with their

attainment on entry to the course. In both 2001 and 2002, female students did better than male students.

94. Students currently in Years 12 and 13 are producing work which is in line with expectations. Students achieve satisfactorily. Students in Year 12 are developing an understanding of safety issues in assessing the risks involved in different activities. Safety is particularly appropriate at this early point in their course. Students in Year 13 are able to link theory and practice and relate this to a good understanding of interaction in different activities. For example, in two Year 13 lessons various theoretical principles were tested by active physical interpretation. Students understand the diverse influences on sport which may affect performance, for example culture, stress and drugs. The quality of students' work varies. Most students have a good command of technical language. A minority of students are less accurate with spelling, paragraphing and presentation and some do not order their work well for revision.

95. Teaching of sports science is good. Teachers, in Year 13 in particular, have good subject knowledge. The most effective lessons have sound planning and organisation; this gives good pace to lessons, which results in effective learning. Most lessons include a variety of teaching methods that reinforce learning as well as offering opportunities for independent learning. Teaching is often linked to familiar situations so that students readily relate this to their learning. For example, in a Year 13 lesson on physiological processes using chemical and mechanical energy, the teacher stimulated understanding and learning by relating the instigation of body movement to starting a car engine. This was particularly effective with low attaining students in the group who quickly established body response to the equivalent of the ignition of fuel in a combustion chamber. Teachers establish good focus and students learn well in answering carefully constructed questions. Effective use is made of graphs and tables for recording, for example fitness scores. Teachers emphasise the understanding of key words and are aware that lack of comprehension of one word, for example, in a homework title, interferes with the quality of work a student is able to produce. Marking and assessment are linked to target setting. This enables teachers to identify under achieving students but this is not closely related to A-level grading and so does not inform individual students enough about their progress and how to improve. Learning is good when high attaining students are able to apply good links with prior learning. For example, students' good knowledge of diet is related and discussed well in debating athletes' needs in the speed of assimilation and absorption of various nutrients to give explosive energy. Teaching and learning are not as effective when students' understanding is not checked or reinforced or when students' difficulties with the complexities of theoretical principles are not realised. For example, some Year 13 students, with a weaker knowledge of science, do not fully understand work done on the physics and principles of mechanics in movement.

96. Students generally have a responsible attitude to their classwork. They have confidence in their teachers' knowledge. Good relationships enable teachers to tease out contributions from all students so that all are therefore included. Teachers make themselves available to assist students with their work. Students are prepared to assist one another and work well together, for example, in making improvements to, and suggestions for, group work.

97. Management of the department is satisfactory. The department is experiencing more stable management following significant changes in management over two years. Day-to-day management is good. Accommodation, resources and the library provide satisfactory facilities. Staffing is good and teachers are organised to work to their strengths. Careful analysis of examination results for improvement has led to more accountability in teaching areas; teachers are now responsible for specific A-level topic areas. There is determination, and commitment, to achieve and maintain high standards. This aim is supported by the

teachers' team approach to decision-making. Teachers' systems ensure that there is adequate coverage of the syllabus and they provide students with a complete list of topics so that students are aware of the areas for learning. New department initiatives, for example specialist teachers teaching to their strengths on A-level courses and the preparation of a departmental handbook, provide a sound basis for improvement. Results are better than at the time of the previous report and this is good improvement.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

98. The full range of courses was inspected.

Health and Social care.

Overall, provision in health and social care is **good**.

Strengths

- The curriculum is enriched by visiting speakers and this deepens students' learning.
- Teaching is good and has a positive effect on attainment.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to raise attainment in both options.

99. Results for 2001 in both the intermediate and advanced courses were broadly in line with the national average. Changes in the way national comparative data have been kept do not allow for trend comparisons from 1999. The number of boys taking these options is small and therefore no judgement can be reached about their comparative performance, though recruitment arrangements are appropriate and inclusive.

100. In the work seen, standards are in line with previous results and achievement is at least satisfactory, considering students' prior attainment. Students can analyse in some detail many of the critical debates in care, for example the impact on families of critically disabled children. In extended writing, students of middle and higher attainment write fluently but note taking skills have weaknesses and this acts as a barrier to learning for lower attaining students, particularly in Year 12. Generally, knowledge and understanding of the modules within both intermediate and advanced courses are good. Students' oral and debating skills are at least satisfactory in Intermediate studies and usually good on the AVCE course.

101. Attitudes to the subject are good. Students enjoy their study and appreciate the wide range of placements provided. They are able to talk at length about their experiences and a number have made provisional vocational and career choices based on their work. The majority of students consider they are supported well in their studies.

102. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well-planned and set appropriate expectations. Teacher knowledge is strong and there is a well founded appreciation of external accreditation requirements. There are useful learning guides which support the study of individual modules. Lessons include an appropriate emphasis on students' development as independent learners. Activities are varied and a good balance between theoretical and applied perspectives is achieved. Similarly, students work in a balanced fashion combining individual study and research with group exercises and discussion. This pattern serves to extend and deepen students' understanding, for example in work undertaken on health promotion and the take-up of medical advice.

103. Leadership and management are good. Schemes of work are well developed. Curriculum enrichment is good with carefully considered inputs from external speakers.

Reports and feedback to students are regular and students know what to do to improve. Accommodation and resources are adequate but some teaching spaces are cramped, even for the relatively small teaching groups which currently exist and these limit the range of activities within lessons.

104. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Access to ICT is now improved although there is no direct access to colour printers, which limits recording of course presentations. Arrangements to ensure that students progress from Intermediate to the advanced options are appropriate. The match of staff to the curriculum has been strengthened. The department has a good capacity to improve further.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

105. The focus was on art and design (A-level and AVCE), A-level music, media studies and theatre studies. In addition, A level music technology was sampled. In the lesson seen, students achieved well. They used computers confidently for composing and arranging music. Teaching was good. The teacher's carefully directed advice enabled the students both to refine their musical skills and develop further their ability to use computers for mixing, sequencing and notating their music.

Art and Design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning is very good overall and much of it excellent.
- High standards are achieved and very good results in examinations.
- Students show positive attitudes to learning and the ability to work individually and as part of a team;.
- The quality of research and students' oral presentations.

Areas for improvement

- The strategies for involving male students in dialogue and sharing of ideas.

106. Results in 2001 showed A-level students attaining well above the national average. This was an improvement on the previous years. Results for the vocational course were broadly average. The results in 2002, as yet unconfirmed, were lower than the 2001 results although half of the grades awarded were C or higher. The male students did particularly well. Overall students did better than their GCSE results indicated.

107. Standards of work of current students on the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) are above average. As in previous years most enter the course with broadly average GCSE results. Year 13 students achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Changes to the planning of the course and a more rigorous approach to monitoring and assessment have effectively helped to raise standards. In a video that

showed students making presentations to the rest of the group most students were articulate, spoke convincingly about their decision-making and demonstrated that they were able to respond enthusiastically to a challenge and take initiative. For example several had worked in or visited design studios to get a better perspective on how designers work, what their relationship is with the client and how products are marketed and manufactured. They had sought out opportunities and acted on their findings. The course provides very effective planned opportunities for students to develop key learning skills and Year 13 students are in the process of building a portfolio of evidence for the examination and a level 4 qualification. Students use computers a lot in their work and their skills are used imaginatively and creatively - for text and manipulating images. Some students have designed their own home page and one has put her work on the Internet and invites 'visitors' to the site to comment on it. Students make informed judgements on their own and others' designs.

108. Prior to joining the course, Year 12 students have attained above average results in one or other of the art and design examinations and overall broadly average results in their other GCSE examinations. Given this broadly average profile students are achieving very well and considerably better than might be expected at this early stage of the course. Their work shows intellectual rigour and thoughtful approaches to criticism and analytical investigation. Most have very good attitudes and are able to work independently and in groups - they cope well and manage their time effectively. An example was seen in one lesson where students who had been working in groups made a brief presentation to the class about how they had arrived at their final design for the college calendar. They were able to show how they had set about the market research, trialled some designs and recorded their findings. In particular the female students were very confident and had very good communication skills. The teacher made excellently timed interventions, asked probing questions and, in so doing, consolidated the learning very effectively.

109. Students are very happy with what the course provides and feel well informed and prepared for the next stage of their learning. They are very grateful for the help of subject teachers, initially in giving advice and help in choosing appropriate courses in the college and later in preparing portfolios and interviews for university. Year 13 students recognised the benefits gained from the key skills qualification; Year 12 students were less convinced.

110. Teaching is very good overall and some of the teaching is excellent. The strengths of the teaching in the course are in the excellent subject knowledge and specialist skills that result in students' very good learning. These qualities are replicated across the department. The team of staff is used very effectively to maximise students' achievements in a range of disciplines. The excellent marking and assessment of work and the high quality tutoring and feedback students receive, gives them a very clear idea of how they are progressing and where improvements are necessary. Teachers make effective use of questioning - to involve students in informal dialogue, encourage them to share ideas and to check understanding. However, in contrast to the more formal presentations, male students tend to be less willing to share ideas and participate in this dialogue than females who are more confident and prepared to suggest answers that may turn out to be wrong.

111. Leadership of the course is excellent. The course is very effectively managed, units are very well planned, data is thoroughly interrogated and findings are acted upon. The department development plan has identified important areas for improvement, including the monitoring of teaching. The quality of teaching provides a very secure basis for demonstrating good practice. Students are disadvantaged by not having access to a general-purpose studio where they can work in their own time. The lack of these facilities limits the scale of their artwork, the amount of experimentation they undertake and, importantly, reduces the opportunity to work alongside other students on arts courses. The planned new buildings look likely to resolve this problem.

112. Since the last report, which had many positive features, a number of improvements have been made. Standards are rising, the course units are better planned and resourced and some valuable links have been made with design studios and other professional agencies. There has been good progress since the last report.

Music

Overall, the provision for music is **good**.

Strengths

- Students are keen practical musicians and respond well to the good teaching.
- Teachers' carefully targeted help for individual students promotes effective learning.
- The varied curriculum enables students to develop their individual strengths and provides very good opportunities for using computers.
- Music is energetically led and plans for its future development are appropriate.

Areas for improvement

- Revision of written work after it has been marked to provide a more substantial basis for future learning.
- Resources of books and recorded music to enable students to develop their research skills more fully.

113. Numbers taking A-level music are small. Results in 2001 were above the national average. Students regularly gain the higher grades at AS and A-level and all have passed in the past two years.

114. Students preparing for AS and A-level are accomplished practical musicians for whom the study of academic music is an extension of a practical hobby, to which they are all keenly committed. They regularly relate what they learn in lessons to the music they have sung or played. This enhances their progress and enables them to achieve well. Current standards in Year 13 are above expectations. The students understand the conventions of harmonising chorales in the style of Bach, although the pace at which they complete the exercises is slow. Their skill in using computers for harmonising and composing is very well developed. The wide range of music they are familiar with as practising musicians helps them to analyse in depth music they hear and study. Students' very good grasp of technical language in a Year 12 lesson enabled them easily to identify examples of augmentation and inversion, when analysing Taverner's 'The Lamb'. They also demonstrated good sight reading skills. Written work was painstakingly done, accurate and very well presented.

115. Teaching is good overall and often very good. Teachers are accomplished practical musicians and use their skills well for demonstration. Planning is thorough and carefully linked both to examination requirements and to students' musical strengths and interests. Teachers have high expectations of students, and rigorously challenge them to think for themselves. Careful questioning effectively consolidates students' knowledge. The small numbers of students permit much individual attention to be given, which enables them to learn efficiently and at a suitable individual pace. Students sustain their effort very well through lessons and are confident when working independently. They receive constructive feedback on work in progress. All work is carefully marked but, where there are omissions in written work that are not remedied after marking, essays and analyses provide a less thorough basis for revision than is needed.

116. The head of music, who has been in post for less than a year, organises the subject very well on a day-to-day basis, and, through her teaching and commitment, provides a very good role model for other teachers. A realistic and appropriate plan for developing the

subject is already being implemented. At present, monitoring of teaching is not carried out and there are insufficient opportunities for the best practice in teaching to be shared amongst the department. The overall standard of management is good. The curriculum is varied and interesting, covering a wide range of musical styles so that students' individual interests are catered for. Very good opportunities are provided for students to use ICT, but resources of printed music, text books and CDs are inadequate for students' research needs. The varied choirs and instrumental ensembles and the wide-ranging programme of musical events throughout the year provide students with valuable experience in performing and very good opportunities for their social and cultural development.

117. The standards and range of provision, and in particular the use of computers, have improved since the last inspection, and the overall improvement since then is good. The department has very good potential for further development.

Media studies

The quality of provision in media studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- The subject is new, popular and attracting an increasing number of students.
- Students make good use of technology equipment with the help of excellent technical support.
- Leadership and management of the subject are excellent; clear educational direction is supported by meticulous administration.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching rooms are too small and restrict group activities. Space for storing resources is unsatisfactory.

118. 2001 was the first year A-level and AS media studies were examined at the college. A-level results were in line with national averages and AS results were above average. In 2002, the second year of the examination, results were slightly higher at A-level. Grades ranged from A to E. However, AS results in 2002 improved significantly with two thirds gaining the top two grades. The results indicate satisfactory achievement at A-level and good achievement at AS, since some students start the course with average or lower attainment at GCSE. Female students taking the subject outnumber males and they attain higher grades. Since the course started, the number of students taking media studies has increased considerably. Whereas previously students left the college to study the subject at other institutions, this provision has improved retention rates into the 6th form. In the current 6th form, media studies represents the second largest subject.

119. Current standards are above average and improving. The work of the current Year 13 students reflects the good AS results gained last year. Students are articulate and prepare well for their presentations to the class. They know the important concepts within media studies and, in using them to analyse texts and visual material, students show an increasing awareness of cultural and political contexts. More complex ideas are fully grasped only by the higher attainers. They display a sharper and more critical understanding which they apply when evaluating their own work. Lower and average attaining students struggle with vocabulary and writing. Students who experience difficulties with literacy, particularly male students, improve because of the emphasis on accurate note taking, structured writing and regular reading of different types of text. All students use appropriate techniques for investigation and research. With good teacher guidance, they learn quickly and make full use of the good information technology resources available in the college. Students demonstrate an enthusiasm particularly for practical film production work. The very good

support they receive from the experienced technical staff results in short films of a high quality. For some students, this is their best work.

120. Students' attitudes are very good. Students are highly motivated and approach their class and homework seriously, though some lower attaining students find the demands of advanced study very challenging. The emphasis on group work, where students feel supported by others, clearly enables the lower attainers to make progress. Relationships and personal development are excellent. All students enjoy the course topics which draw on cultural and moral issues important to them.

121. The quality of teaching is very good and there are many strengths. Teachers know the students well, evident in the caring personal guidance offered and the high quality marking which identifies strengths and targets for improvement in students' work. Students speak highly of the support they receive in one-to-one tutorials in which their teacher monitors their files and guides their independent studies. The emphasis by teachers on accurate, well organised note taking and writing enables the higher attaining students to develop a style that is mature and personal and the lower attaining students to improve their basic communication skills. Teachers are giving serious attention to raising male students' achievement by modifying their organisation and activities. The quality of ongoing assessment is excellent. Teachers keep a record of students' progress from GCSE to AS and A-level, and use the data effectively to provide the appropriate individual challenge to students of different abilities. This constant tracking ensures students do not fall behind and underpins the very good retention rates. The schemes of work offer very good opportunities for students to engage with spiritual, moral and cultural issues. In studying 'film noir', for example, students discuss and reflect on the emotional and spiritual motivation of characters. In work on advertising and marketing, students have a strong voice on manipulation, on the representation of women, parenthood, violence and love. The complexities of the current cultural clashes over 'Asian' and 'English' cultures are explored in work that takes the groups to multi-ethnic areas of London.

122. Staffing is currently stable, but high staff turnover over the last two years has had an impact on the continuity of work and learning of some groups. Resources for practical work are very good. The technical support staff, who organise further training sessions in the evening, provide an excellent service. Classroom accommodation is no longer adequate for the larger size of groups and activities are limited by storage facilities which are scattered in different buildings on the college site. Leadership and management of the department are excellent. All paperwork is meticulous. The subject handbook is an excellent document for students and teaching staff, with sections giving an overview of the course, advice on study skills, book lists, essential subject vocabulary and useful web sites to explore. Examination results and examination board comments are closely analysed in order to improve the teaching. There is a strong commitment to the growth of the subject. Since the last inspection, the successful introduction of media studies has been a considerable asset to the college.

Theatre studies

The quality of provision in drama and theatre studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards of work are well above average. Students are accomplished and confident in performance, aided by excellent attitudes and a strong desire to do well.
- Teaching is very good; teachers convey enthusiasm and have very good knowledge of the subject.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good; they offer good community links and an enrichment of experience for the students.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation for teaching is used for other activities and this restricts what students and teachers can do. There is a shortage of space for administration and storage.

123. Results in A-level over the past five years have been consistently well above average, though national comparisons are of limited value because numbers are small. In 2001, five of the eight students gained a top grade at A-level. The results of AS examinations have also been high. In 2001, ten of the twelve students attained an A or B grade. There are usually more female than male students but there is no significant difference in their results. For students who take a range of subjects, drama frequently represents their highest mark. It is one of the higher attaining subjects in the sixth form.

124. The standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average. This endorses the consistently high attainment in examinations and confirms that strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained. A particular strength is the confidence students display in planning and evaluating practical work. The more articulate students have very good conceptual understanding, supported by wide reading and research. All students demonstrate a very good knowledge of drama techniques. This enables them to convey subtle and abstract ideas effectively in performance and take the occasional risk. Year 13 used masks, tableaux, soliloquy and physical theatre in their interpretation of the 'Seven Deadly Sins' and their work, even at an early stage, showed confidence and flair. They quickly develop a trust in each other when negotiating ideas and this develops team building skills and excellent relationships. The higher attaining students help to raise the standards reached by others through their very good collaboration. Achievement for all students is very good; this is particularly the case for those students who have not taken drama at GCSE.

125. Students' attitudes are excellent. Year 13 students work with maturity and self-assurance but both Years 12 and 13 are highly motivated to learn and improve. They seek and respect guidance, with the result that they are self-critical and learn quickly. The combination of high expectations and mutual support is a major factor in their success. There is an interest by some students in Year 13 to continue their theatre studies at university.

126. Teaching is very good, with some excellent features. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is contagious and inspires students in and beyond the classroom. Lesson objectives are well defined so students know what they are aiming for and work at a fast pace. The teacher's wide appreciation of the subject, experience in examination requirements and very good knowledge of the students, underpins the appropriate praise and challenge given to each individual. Regular monitoring and discussion of progress gives students a clear idea of how well they are doing and a focus on what they must do to improve. This leads to students' excellent creative effort and rapid advances in knowledge, skills and understanding.

127. Courses are well-planned and careful attention paid to analysis of the examination results in tracking students and adapting work. Very good technical assistance supports the teaching and promotes a sophisticated use of equipment and good training in its use for the students. Themes of lessons and plays studied draw effectively on matters important to the students, particularly issues that are sensitive and deal with feelings. In work such as this, the department makes a strong contribution to the spiritual provision in the college and in its style of lessons and activities, a very good contribution to the moral and social provision. A wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities enriches the taught curriculum and is a good link with parents and the local community. The ambitious annual production involves a

large number of staff, technical support and the invaluable work of the site manager. It offers an opportunity for sixth form students to work with younger pupils in the college. Theatrical contacts widen the expertise available to a small department and are used to good effect in engaging students in professional drama and theatre. Students make good use of the many opportunities to visit the theatre and discuss their ideas with theatre directors and other professionals.

128. There is one purpose built drama studio, but the dual use of other rooms and the lack of space for group work restrict activities that can be undertaken. Accommodation for administration and storage of texts, props and costumes is very limited. This has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection, but the college plans to include better drama facilities within its new buildings. Although the department has only one full time member of staff, it is very well led with strong commitment and energy and has a clear educational direction. It is to the credit of this leadership that drama has such a considerable and positive impact on the creative life of the college. The subject has made good improvements since the last inspection.

HUMANITIES

129. The focus was on geography, history and psychology, but sociology was also sampled. Results in sociology were well above average in 2001, though female students outnumbered male students by nine to one and only female students achieved the highest grades A and B. In 2002, a better overall balance of male students and female students was achieved in the A and AS level courses, though results were not as high. In the lesson seen, the teacher was well prepared to enable the topic area of family and industrialisation to be covered effectively. Groups were well selected and students worked with enthusiasm at the expected level for the course. Relationships were notably good. It was not possible to sample the religious studies programme during the inspection.

Geography

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good and strongly promotes students learning and their very good achievement.
- The curriculum is very thoroughly planned and delivered to meet the requirements of the A-level examination.
- Very good leadership and management ensure a strong consistency between teachers.

Areas for improvement.

- The selection of texts in the library is inadequate to support students' independent reading

130. Results for A-level examinations in 2001 were well above the national average. However, results in the 2002 examinations fell and are likely to be in line with national expectations. The standards achieved in the 2002 A/S level examination were well above national expectations. Overall, the standards attained by students have risen steadily in the last five years. There are no significant differences between the attainment of male and female students.

131. Current standards in Year 12 are above national expectations. Towards the end of the first half-term of the course, one group of Year 12 students showed a good knowledge of marine erosion. Standards of work of students in Year 13 are well above national expectations. They demonstrate very good knowledge of underdevelopment and can apply

this when evaluating geographical models. Students show very good literacy skills. They can scan text swiftly and accurately and their verbal reports back were coherent and concise. Students show considerable confidence in their own powers of analysis and bring in a wide range of geographical knowledge to support their arguments. Analysis of students' work shows that they achieve very high standards in their research with assured use of ICT, where appropriate. Overall, their achievement is very good.

132. Overall, teaching is very good, and so students learn very well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are confident practitioners. They plan lessons with great care. The combination of these factors means that teaching is always purposeful with a strong focus on meeting the needs of examination requirements. Lessons have an urgent pace and teachers have high expectations of their pupils. The enthusiastic teaching communicates well with pupils and they learn very well. Because teaching is planned and monitored so well, there is a consistent 'house style', which students benefit from. Field-work is undertaken and is very valuable in building deeper geographical understanding. Marking is friendly, helpful and consistent and gives guidance to students on how to improve. Lessons are frequently characterised by very good resources, which are used well to promote learning. Students greatly enjoy geography and value the teaching and support they receive. They say that teachers are readily available for consultation, when they need help. They work very well in small groups and pairs, supporting one another's learning. This is especially evident when they sensitively review and mark each others' work.

133. The department is very well led and managed. Departmental planning is very thorough and helps ensure consistency amongst geography staff, who work very closely together. Monitoring of marking and teaching also ensures that standards of provision remain high. Assessment of students' developing attainment is very good and helps in setting targets for students. Resources are generally good, but the library provision is not adequate to promote independent learning and wider reading. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements.

History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Very good relationships with students
- Very good subject knowledge and assessment practice supports students' learning
- Improved student achievement in 2002 GCE examinations

Areas for improvement.

- Ensure the monitoring procedures result in the spreading of good practice throughout the department.
- Ensure a wider selection of texts in the library to support students' independent reading

134. Results for A-level examinations in 2001 were well below national averages. However, results in the 2002 examinations were broadly in line with school and national expectations. The standards achieved in the 2002 AS level examination were well above national expectations. This uneven trend is partly explained by variations in the prior attainment of those opting for history, and partly by recent changes in staff. Overall, the standards attained by students are broadly in line with expectations based on their prior attainment at age 16, indicating satisfactory achievement over time.

135. Standards in Year 12 were above national expectations at the time of the inspection. Towards the end of the first half-term of the course, one group of Year 12 students was seen confidently giving presentations on different aspects of Russia prior to the 1905

Revolution. Another group was adding steadily to their understanding of the scale and significance of the conflict between Russia and Japan in 1904-5. Higher attaining students were able to sum up concisely and articulately their view of trends contributing to the Tsar's weakening grasp of power in Russia. A solid foundation is being laid here. Standards of work of current students in Year 13 are above national expectations. In one lesson, Year 13 students built on their achievements in last year's AS study, accurately reviewing each others' introductions to an A2 essay. They demonstrated confidence in their own powers of self-evaluation, and a positive relationship with their teacher.

136. Overall, teaching seen through the inspection was good, and students were seen to make good progress in lessons as a result. Some very good teaching came from confident subject and syllabus knowledge, and detailed planning. This allows teachers to structure and vary learning activities to allow for good learning outcomes. On an occasion where teaching was satisfactory, the students had not been sufficiently engaged throughout the lesson, the day's objectives were not fully realised, and therefore they achieved less than they might have. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds and those diagnosed as gifted and talented, made progress similar to their peers. Relationships between teachers and students are warm and constructive.

137. The department is well managed by the new head of department. Teachers' detailed understanding of the demands of the examination syllabuses can be seen in the constructive advice they provide through their assessment of students' work. Resources are generally good, although the library provision is not adequate to promote independent learning and wider reading for all topics. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement.

Psychology

Overall, provision in psychology is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good and has raised attainment for students.
- Attainment is above the national average and a high proportion of students gain the highest grades.
- Leadership and management are excellent.
- Attitudes to learning are very good and students achieve well within both programmes of study.

Areas for development

- Opportunities for learning outside the classroom are limited and this reduces the students' awareness of applied aspects of the subject.
- Resources for students are modest and limit the ability of students to undertake relevant research at school.

138. Results at 'AS' level for 2001 were above the national average in terms of A and B grades. Unconfirmed data for 2002 indicates that results are also likely to be similar. Students of below average prior attainment did particularly well. The performance of candidates in 2002, which will shortly be validated, suggest an improving picture with very high results compared to the national average. These standards represent good achievement when judged against the attainment of students beginning their sixth form studies, which is slightly below the national average.

139. In the work seen, the standards that students achieve are above the national average. Students' evaluation skills develop swiftly within both A and AS options and this is a significant factor in their very good learning. Students develop a good working knowledge of

core studies which inform the main debates within the discipline. Throughout both courses there is very good provision for personal development and students of all levels of ability have a detailed knowledge of ethical issues, for example in relation to Milgram and studies concerning authority and obedience.

140. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and some excellent teaching was observed. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives, for example in a lesson mapping out the principal characteristics of the study of physiology, students were given a sound framework for both identifying the breadth of the subjects and the relative merits of varying approaches to analysing brain function. Excellent learning guides ensure that students of lower ability make progress. The best lessons are animated and characterised by very good pace and variety of activity, which allows opportunity for extensive peer group discussion and review. There are limited opportunities to deepen understanding through revision classes and visits to national conferences. Guidance is good on both career paths in psychology and appropriate courses in higher education, but students are not given sufficient opportunity to experience applied aspects of the discipline, for example within education and clinical fields. The use of e-mail helps maintain close communication between staff and students. Students interviewed felt they were very well supported in their studies and welcomed the fact that staff gave freely of their time outside lessons.

141. Leadership and management are excellent and there is a very clear vision for the development of the subject. Schemes of work are well articulated and learning support materials produced by the department are of the highest quality. Both teachers are specialists who work part time. Careful consideration needs to be given to strengthening staffing arrangements given the large number of students now taking the two courses. Resources are well selected and of good quality and texts are up to date. Funding is however inadequate and cannot support sufficient reference materials or access to journals which are a significant contributor to deepening and broadening student awareness of current debates within the discipline. This is exacerbated by the comparatively large number of students now studying psychology. A significant proportion of students pursue the subject on leaving the college. Psychology was not offered as part of the sixth form programme at the time of the last inspection.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

142. The focus was on English literature and French, but the combined English language and literature course and German were sampled. Results in English language and literature are above average. In the lesson seen, students learned very well as a result of the teacher's very good subject knowledge, planning and use of resources. The variety of methods used promoted reinforcement of students' skills and very good achievement in applying them across texts. In German, results in 2001 were well above the national average, with all seven students gaining grade C and above with most of the group gaining grades A and B. Teaching in the lesson seen was very good: the teacher's excellent personal skills and knowledge were used to provide challenge with support to ensure that students made clear gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. As the lesson progressed, their conversational exchanges became more enterprising. It was not possible to sample the communication studies course on this inspection.

English

Overall, provision in English is **very good**

Strengths

- A-level results are well above expected national averages.
- Very good subject knowledge of teachers, skilfully used to question and prompt students so that their understanding is effectively developed.
- Very good use of time in lessons, ensuring high levels of productivity, challenging teacher demands, and exploiting student interest well

Areas for improvement

- Use of Internet to facilitate research and develop more independent thinking
- The library stock is too small to promote independent research and learning

143. In comparison with the national picture over the last three years, results in English literature have been well above average. In the same period, all students obtained a pass grade, with two in five obtaining higher grades (A and B). Female students' performance at higher grades has consistently surpassed that of male students. Both genders have performed better in the subject than others. Such high standards represent very good achievement.

144. Attainment in lessons seen matches standards evident in examination results, and is well above the national average overall. Again, female students' attainment is better than male students'. At the same time, students at all levels of attainment make rapid progress during the early stages of their first year course. They comprehend reasonably the literal meaning of what they read and readily develop insights into underlying themes and meaning. For example, a group working on Tennessee Williams' 'A Streetcar Named Desire' quickly grasped the main events, themes and characters in the play. They swiftly acquire a discerning critical understanding of its use of symbolism and other techniques to lend resonance to ideas, and to create dramatic tension. They developed this well in response to very well focussed teacher questioning and interrogation, derived from very good subject knowledge. Students in their final year acquire astute insights into a good range of plays, poems and novels. They build up a good understanding of the themes, technical literary terms and historical contexts of the works they study. For example, students working on Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein' dealt wisely with the way in which the author manipulates sympathy for the monster, while the question of the moral responsibility of its creator remains. All students make good use of computers to order their thoughts logically and to present written assignments well so that they communicate clearly to the reader. They access the Internet competently, but could make better use of this to retrieve information and critical viewpoints from a variety of sources so that their facility for questioning and independent enquiry is developed as fully as it could be.

145. Students' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Their approach to work combines diligence with enthusiasm for their studies. They collaborate together extremely effectively in small and whole-class discussions. Here, they are willing to volunteer and share ideas, with an independence of thought and readiness to refer in detail to what they have read. In consequence, there is a very serious working atmosphere in lessons, which underpins directly the good progress they make.

146. Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. A notable feature of lessons is the way in which teachers exploit techniques and methodologies developed in recent national initiatives for younger students, and adapt them successfully in the sixth form. Teachers plan their lessons very well to provide a stimulating variety of activities, which use time productively and always sustain student curiosity and interest. They question and coach students with high expectations, a perceptive awareness of what they can do, and their own very high standards of specialist knowledge of their subject. This is always well judged so that students are supported by having their knowledge confirmed and consolidated, but challenged by being given enough independence to develop the autonomous thinking skills expected at this level. At times, questioning could be used to probe and extend students' knowledge even further at the start of lessons, but opportunities to do this are limited by the relatively large numbers in classes.

147. The quality of leadership and management is very good. Responsible staff in the department have ensured that teachers are well trained, and work well together as a team. Here, the way in which they have shared good classroom methods and ideas, has had a beneficial effect upon the quality of teaching, which has led to improved standards. The attractive, well laid out library offers a good atmosphere for study, but the quantity and range of books are insufficient to promote the expected quality of independent research and study at this level for the numbers of students taking the relevant courses. With improved standards and very good teaching there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

French

Overall, the quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Consistently good teaching.
- Enthusiastic and motivated students who learn well.
- A well-planned curriculum enriched by social, moral and cultural themes.
- Good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring that students are better prepared to enable them to respond confidently to challenging tasks
- Improving consistency in marking in respect of showing students how to improve
- Increasing the library stock of reading material for information and pleasure

148. GCE A level results in 2001 were in line with the national average, both in overall pass rate and in the proportion of students gaining the higher grades, A and B. Students' average points score in French was slightly higher than the college average. Although the number of students sitting the examination in 2002 was smaller, all gained a pass grade, with most gaining grade A. Male students did less well than female students in 2001, but equalled their performance at the highest level in 2002.

149. The standards of work of current students are above average. Year 13 students are predicted to achieve good results. In the lesson seen, they analysed and discussed recorded and written texts on transport with confidence and fluency. Male students, in particular, spoke coherently and at length. Students in Year 12 are at an early stage of their course, but are achieving well. They have progressed significantly beyond the GCSE syllabus. In one lesson seen, they worked competently from challenging recorded and text material on the topic of good citizenship, summarising their findings in short spoken presentations of good quality. In another, they investigated the pros and cons of marriage, using a rich diet of survey data, a recorded debate and an extract from an Albert Camus

novel. They made good progress in developing their knowledge and skills as well as their understanding of an important social and moral issue.

150. Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and resourced to provide students with a rich and varied linguistic and cultural diet. Teachers' personal skills were notably good in the Year 12 lessons seen. Their enthusiasm for the subject and commitment to students' success were apparent in all lessons. There was good teaching of pronunciation and intonation in Year 12, listening tasks were well managed in Years 12 and 13. In Year 13, students were encouraged to use their language skills in combination, for example, in reading and writing as a follow-up to speaking and listening. Teachers are sensitive to students' strengths and weaknesses, but occasionally expose them to more challenging tasks for which they could be better prepared. Assessment and marking are generally good, though could include more routine and explicit guidance as to how students could improve. The good teaching promotes good learning. Students are very enthusiastic and well-motivated and work well both individually and in collaboration. They enrich their knowledge of topics by using the Internet to visit French websites such as *SOS Racisme*. In lessons seen, they made gains in both knowledge and skills and consolidated these gains through focused practice and development work.

151. The subject is well managed. Teachers work as a cohesive team. The curriculum is well planned and students are given a clear overview of the topics and ground to be covered. The French assistant provides intensive tuition in speaking and listening skills, as well as being an authentic and accessible source of social and cultural enrichment. Resources for French are good, though there is insufficient material for general reading for information and pleasure in the library. Target setting is effectively used: students understand the broad goals they are aiming at.

152. A key development target in the subject is increasing recruitment. Success in this is linked to the profile of language study in the whole college curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. With the current committed team of staff and the overall good improvement in languages since the last inspection, there is a good capacity for further development.