

INSPECTION REPORT

SEAFORD HEAD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Seaford

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114589

Headteacher: Mr R Precey

Lead inspector: Mr T Feast

Dates of inspection: 19th – 29th January 2004

Inspection number: 259231

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 18 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1348
College address:	Arundel Road Seaford East Sussex
Postcode:	BN25 4LX
Telephone number:	01323 891623
Fax number:	01323 492576
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Case
Date of previous inspection:	10 th November 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

Seaford Head Community College is a large, mixed, comprehensive college for students aged 11 to 18. The attainment of the students on entry to the college in Year 7 is above the national average. The percentage of students who are eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with that found nationally and, overall, this is the case for family circumstances. The number of students with mother tongues not believed to be English is low. The percentage of students identified by the college as having special educational needs is below the national average. The percentage of students provided with statements of special educational needs by the local education authority, including those in the special unit for students with dyslexia, is broadly in line with the national average. In addition to the students in the special unit, the range of needs of others is from those with emotional and behavioural difficulties to those with specific learning difficulties. There are no students who have been identified by the college as coming from traveller families, and the number of refugees and asylum seekers is very low. There is a small number of students looked after in public care. The number of students transferring to and from the college other than at the planned time of admission in September is low. The college is based on three sites. The turnover of teaching staff over the last two years has been high and the recruitment to some posts has been difficult, particularly in modern foreign languages.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3650	Mr T Feast	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
9446	Ms H Griffiths	Lay inspector	
15268	Mr J English	Team inspector	Mathematics
17530	Ms M Cureton	Team inspector	English
1249	Mr J Edge	Team inspector	Science
18032	Ms I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
11258	Mr I Rushforth	Team inspector	Art and design Photography in the sixth form
2183	Dr P J Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology
17732	Mr D Martin	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
15576	Mr D Nebesnuick	Team inspector	History
1995	Dr K Seager	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
8360	Mr F Peacock	Team inspector	Music
15724	Ms M Thompson	Team inspector	Physical education
20719	Ms A Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education
31507	Ms H Gerhard	Team inspector	English in the sixth form Health and social care in the sixth form
12890	Mr T Jardine	Team inspector	Biology in the sixth form
21765	Mrs P Potheary	Team inspector	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Seaford Head is an unsatisfactory college and provides unsatisfactory value for money. The headteacher and leadership team have not been successful in establishing an ethos of high standards, good behaviour or good attendance. The learning communities, established by the college, have not yet been successful in delivering these priorities. The college's partnership with parents is unsatisfactory.

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the headteacher and leadership team are unsatisfactory.
- The quality of the teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
- The behaviour of the students is unsatisfactory.
- The college's partnership with parents is unsatisfactory.
- Financial management is good.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.

The college was last inspected in November 1997. Since then, the improvement has been unsatisfactory overall. The learning centres on both sites have improved. There has been little impact on reducing the inequality of attainment between boys and girls or on improving more independent learning by students. Appropriate provision has still not been made in religious education in Years 10 and 11 or in modern foreign languages in Year 7. Since the last inspection, the overall rise in standards has not kept pace with that found nationally. Behaviour is not as good, and attendance is only just returning to the level reported at the last inspection. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has increased. Provision for students with special educational needs has improved satisfactorily. The partnership with parents is no longer good and the college no longer gives good value for money.

In accordance with Section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector agrees, that special measures are required in relation to the college.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance			All schools		Similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	C	C	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	B	B	D	n/a

By the end of Year 11, students attain standards broadly in line with those nationally. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were in line with the national average and above those of similar schools. The students' achievement was broadly similar to that nationally. The percentage of students who gained five or more passes at grades A*-C improved. Girls' results were higher than the boys'. In work seen during the inspection, there was considerable variation between subjects. In science and English, attainment was well above that expected nationally and, in mathematics, it was above. In geography, history and music, attainment was above that expected nationally. In art and design, modern foreign languages and physical education, it was in line with national expectations and in information and communication technology (ICT), it was below. The college did not meet all the targets it was set for its GCSE results in 2003. The overall trend in results in the last five years has been below the national trend. By the end of Year 9, students attain levels broadly in line with the national expectations. In work seen during the inspection, there were considerable variations

between subjects. Attainment in English was above that expected nationally, in mathematics it was in line and in science it was below. In physical education, it was well above, and in modern foreign languages, geography, history, art and design and music, it was in line with that expected nationally. Currently, however, students' achievement is unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in science, mathematics, ICT and German and this is linked to the level of unsatisfactory teaching and students' unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes. The results in the National Curriculum tests for students aged 14 in Year 9 in 2003 were in line with those nationally but the trend over the last five years in the results has been below the national trend. Girls' results were higher than boys'.

The quality of students' personal development is unsatisfactory overall. Opportunities for students' moral and social development are satisfactory, for their spiritual and cultural development they are unsatisfactory. Students' behaviour and attitudes are unsatisfactory. Their attendance has improved since September 2003 and is now close to that found nationally.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the college is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning across Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. Students' learning in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not always manage students' behaviour in class effectively and this hinders students' achievement. There is inconsistent planning to meet the varying needs of students in lessons, especially for higher achievers. There is much inconsistency between and within departments in the quality of homework, assessment of students' work and guidance given to students on how to improve.

The curriculum overall is unsatisfactory as requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11, citizenship in Years 7 to 9 and modern foreign languages in Year 7 are not met. The students' entitlement to ICT in Year 11 is not met. The requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met. The college's provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The college's provision for students with special educational needs is good. The partnership with parents is unsatisfactory overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher and leadership group provide unsatisfactory leadership and management. Governance is unsatisfactory but improving. There is a lack of a positive ethos in the college in relation to standards, behaviour, attitudes and the quality of teaching.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

In the parents' meeting and in the responses to the questionnaires, a significant number of parents indicated serious concerns about many aspects of the college's provision, including the standard of behaviour of students and the incidence of bullying, the poor communication between the college and parents and the college's leadership and management. Students were more positive about the college but many did not think students behave well and indicated that there was bullying in college.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the college should do are:

- improve the college's leadership and management at senior levels;
- reduce the incidence of unsatisfactory, poor and very poor teaching in Years 7 to 11;
- improve the quality of students' behaviour in and out of lessons;
- restore the good quality of the partnership with parents.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- in providing for a daily act of collective worship for all students;
- for religious education, citizenship, ICT and modern foreign languages;
- in reporting annually to parents students' attainment and progress in all subjects;
- in including details of the college's complaints procedure in the college prospectus.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students. There is open access into the sixth form but the numbers returning to the sixth form are going down. Some students from the special unit for dyslexia stay on into the sixth form. Most students are successful in reaching their higher education or employment goals. The ethos is satisfactory and students relate well to their teachers and to each other. Their achievement is good. Teaching is good. The leadership and management of the sixth form are unsatisfactory. There are a good range of extra-curricular and enhancement activities available for students to take up. The students are following appropriate courses. The college has widened the curriculum opportunities available to students and has plans for further links with local colleges. However, some courses have insufficient numbers to be viable. The sixth form is not cost effective overall and does not provide value for money. It is currently subsidised by the main college budget. Its improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Good teaching is leading to good achievement for many students.
- The procedures for monitoring and evaluating student attendance and progress lack rigour.
- There are good, supportive relationships between students and teachers.
- There is open access into the sixth form.
- Some courses have insufficient numbers to be viable.
- The sixth form fails to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
- The provision of advice to students on careers and higher and further education opportunities is unsatisfactory.
- The sixth form does not comply with statutory requirements in respect of providing a daily act of collective worship.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected. The focus subjects were English, mathematics, biology, health and social care, geography, information and communication technology, music and photography.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English is satisfactory. Standards are in line with course requirements and satisfactory teaching is leading to satisfactory learning. In French by Year 13, standards are above average and teaching is good.
Mathematics	Provision is good. Standards are above the national average at AS- and A- level and students' achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good.
Science	Biology was the focus subject. Provision in biology is very good. Standards are well above the national average for A-level and above average for AS-level. Students' achievement is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.
Information and communication technology	Provision is satisfactory. Results at A-level are below the national average but results at AS-level are above the national average and this was reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Good teaching is leading to good coursework and good understanding of theory. Students' achievement is good. One lesson was sampled in intermediate GNVQ where teaching was satisfactory. There is a very low number of students on the course.

Humanities	<p>Geography was the focus subject. Provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good. Standards are in line with course requirements and the achievement of students is good.</p> <p>Religious education was sampled. There was only one student in the A-level lesson observed who was involved in active learning on Buddhist meditation. The teaching and learning and achievement were good.</p> <p>In history, one Year 13 lesson was observed. Students learnt very well because of very good teacher planning and organisation. The teacher support given to the students' research activities was excellent and, as a result, the quality of student debate was high.</p>
Visual and performing arts and media	<p>Provision in music is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Standards are above the course expectation at A-level. The achievement of students is good.</p> <p>Provision in photography is satisfactory. Standards are in line with course requirements. Good teaching is leading to good learning. Students' achievement is good.</p>
Health and social care	<p>Provision is good. Teaching is good. Attitudes to learning are very positive. Achievement is good and standards are above average.</p>

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students indicated that they did not receive sufficient careers guidance and this was confirmed by the head of sixth form. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating student attendance and progress lack rigour.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership is unsatisfactory. There is a commitment to an open sixth form but no strategy on how to tackle the reduction in student numbers and non-viable teaching groups. Management is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision and there is a lack of drive to raise the achievement of students. There has been no progress in improving registration of sixth-form attendance so the college knows who exactly is in college at all times.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are satisfied with the provision in the sixth form. They feel they were well informed about the courses on offer, although this information was not always sufficiently tailored to their individual needs. They appreciate the support they receive from their teachers and believe their work is assessed helpfully. They consider that they are treated as young adults and that their views are listened to and acted on. They value the good teaching they receive and enjoy being involved in the life of the college. They appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities and the opportunities to find out about further and higher education but would welcome improved careers advice.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

By the end of Year 11, students attain standards broadly in line with those found nationally and above those of similar schools. Their achievement by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory overall. Current achievement in Year 10 is unsatisfactory. Girls' standards are higher than the boys'.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The trend in the students' average point scores in their GCSE examinations is below the national trend over the last five years.
- The college did not meet its GCSE targets for 2003 by a significant margin.
- Current attainment in science in Year 9 is below that expected nationally.
- Students' current achievement in Year 10 is unsatisfactory.
- Current achievement in Year 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Students with special educational needs progress well.

Commentary

1. The students' attainment on entry to Seaford Head in Year 7 is above that found nationally. By the end of Year 11, students attain standards in line with those found nationally. In work seen during the inspection, there was considerable variation between subjects. In science and English, attainment was well above that expected nationally and, in mathematics, it was above. In geography, history and music, attainment was above that expected nationally. In art and design, modern foreign languages and physical education, it was in line with national expectations and, in ICT, it was below. There was insufficient evidence to judge the level of attainment overall in religious education and citizenship. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average for the average point score per student. The percentage of students who attained five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C was above the national average but in line with similar schools nationally. The percentage of students who attained at least one GCSE at grades A*-C was well above the national average and well above average of similar schools nationally. The college did not meet its GCSE targets for 2003 by a significant margin. The trend in the college's average point score per student is below the national trend over the last five years. Overall, girls attain higher standards than boys in their GCSE examinations. The achievement of students in Year 11 in 2003 was in line with that nationally. Current achievement in Years 10 and 11 varies. In Year 10, it is unsatisfactory and, in Year 11, it is good. Students with English as an additional language attain standards in line with their fellow students and their achievement is good. Almost all students with special educational needs make good progress, the exceptions being a very few students with severe behavioural difficulties whose attitudes and behaviour stand in the way of their making satisfactory progress. Students who are in public care make good progress.
2. By the end of Year 9, students attain levels broadly in line with the national expectations. In work seen during the inspection, there were considerable variations between subjects. Attainment in English was above that expected nationally, in mathematics it was in line and in science it was below. In physical education, it was well above and, in modern foreign languages, geography, history, art and design and music, it was in line with that expected nationally. In ICT, it was below national expectations. In religious education, it was above that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the results were in line with those nationally. The science results were better than the results in mathematics and English when compared with the national results. The trend in the college's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects is below the national trend over the last five

years. Overall, girls attain higher standards than boys in their national tests at the end of Year 9. The achievement of students in Year 9 in 2003 was well above that nationally. The current achievement of students in Year 9 is unsatisfactory overall. It is currently unsatisfactory in science, mathematics, ICT and German and this is linked to unsatisfactory teaching and the students' unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. Overall, the results reflect the position where there has not been a relentless and consistent focus since the last inspection by the college's leadership on raising standards and improving students' achievement and the learning communities have not yet demonstrated their capacity to remedy this.

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

Standards in:	College results	National results
English	32.9 (35.8)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	35.5 (35.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	34.6 (34.3)	33.6 (33.3)

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

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

	College results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	56 (49)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (90)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	36.0 (34.7)	34.6 (34.7)

There were 215 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in GCE A/AS-level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	College results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	88.0 (92.2)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	23.1 (29.3)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per student	216.6 (254.5)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 82 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth Form

- The examination results in 2003 were below the national average and below those of the college in the previous two years. There was a significant fall in the percentage of grades at the highest A and B grades. Standards seen during the inspection varied considerably. They were broadly in line with course expectations in English, above in mathematics, geography, music technology, health and social care and ICT, and well above in biology. They were in line in music and photography. The current achievement of students is good.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are **unsatisfactory** in Years 7 to 9 and **satisfactory** in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. Their attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. Students' moral and social development is **satisfactory**. Their spiritual and cultural development is **unsatisfactory**.

These developments represent a decline from the last inspection and have a negative impact on the achievement of students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The current level of attendance represents an improvement on the unsatisfactory levels in previous years.
- A significant minority of students is restless and disruptive in lessons and distracts others from their learning.
- The college's systems of behaviour management are not consistently applied.
- Relationships are satisfactory between adults and students and among students.
- Students do not have a strong sense of community and many do not support one another.
- Students' appreciation of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom is too limited.
- Collective worship does not comply with statutory requirements.

Commentary

4. Attendance and punctuality are now satisfactory in Years 7 to 11, although there is some lateness to lessons within the day because of the split site. The current level of attendance represents an improvement on the unsatisfactory levels in previous years. The college has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance, with the good support of the education welfare service, and to support a number of students with attendance problems. The number of exclusions is high, but beginning to fall.
5. Behaviour is unsatisfactory overall in lessons, assemblies and around the college. Some students behave very well but, in Years 7 to 9, in particular, there are often instances of disruptive and rude behaviour, especially among boys. Behaviour at break and lunch times and between lessons is often disorderly. Students are satisfactorily supported by the tutor system, although tutor times are not always used productively. Students understand the difference between right and wrong.
6. Although the college sets appropriate standards for students' behaviour, its systems of behaviour management are not consistently applied. Procedures for monitoring incidences of inappropriate behaviour through the 'on call' system are beginning to take effect in Years 7 to 9, but are not yet satisfactory overall. Half the parents who responded to the questionnaire had concerns about behaviour and more than half said their children had been bullied or harassed. Students do not feel that behaviour is good and a high proportion felt that bullying was a problem. In discussions, students in Year 7 felt that bullying was not taken seriously by the college. Older students felt that much of the bullying occurred in Years 7 to 9, where most was verbal abuse. Some favourable comments included tributes to teachers' helpfulness and the support of their tutor groups, although some Year 10 students regretted that they had to change tutors when they moved from the lower to the upper school site. One student commented that he wished that 'those who did not want to work could be separated from those who did'.
7. Most students feel safe and secure in college. When teachers have high expectations of them, students are often thoughtful, helpful and understand the importance of personal responsibility. Most are open, confident and friendly to visitors. Many have a strong commitment to their work, and their concentration and perseverance are very good. However, all too often, groups of students disrupt lessons by rude and inappropriate behaviour. Many students are eager to contribute to discussions and work well both independently and co-operatively. In some subject areas, such as physical education and music, students are strongly self-disciplined and able to assess their own and others' work very well. Relationships are satisfactory overall; they are beginning to be fostered by the ASC (Advisory Students Committee) buddy system, which is still in the early stages, and Year 7 students do not yet feel well supported by older ones. Generally, adults offer students consistent examples of courtesy and fairness.

8. Most students are proud of their college, as shown by the indignation expressed by members of the college council at criticism of the college in the local press. Students are eager to take up the many opportunities for responsibility offered by the college and to participate in the many activities, clubs and residential trips. Their social and moral development and sense of community are further promoted through the new learning communities in the lower school, the college council, tutor groups, assemblies and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. However, many do not understand the importance of living in a community, as shown by the amount of litter on the playground and the widespread flouting of college uniform rules. Students value the chance to make their views known, but do not feel that they are always listened to. Students are encouraged to think of others by raising money for charities.
9. Students have some understanding of their own and other cultures and religions through religious education, the expressive arts subjects, links with a school in Poland, theatre and concert trips and the well-established foreign exchanges programme. However, opportunities for them to learn about other cultures within the United Kingdom are limited. Spiritual development is further hindered by the fact that most assemblies do not include an act of worship. Most students are, however, sensitive to the values and beliefs of others, as shown in a Year 11 PSHE lesson where students debated a number of difficult ethical questions with some maturity.
10. The college has a staged behaviour management system to cope with difficult behaviour of students. If the college pastoral system has failed to improve matters for those identified by the process, these students are placed on 'school action plus' and an alternative education plan devised for them. A wide range of strategies to modify their behaviour is available to the assistant special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), who teaches the students how to interact socially and to control their anger. Teaching and learning within this provision are good. There is careful planning so that students' progress is not compromised in other subjects. Provision for those withdrawn from French, however, is currently inadequate.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
College data	6.9
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
College data	1.5
National data	1.1

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

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

Exclusions in the last college year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1045	141	0
3	0	0
18	0	0
3	0	0
3	3	0
2	0	0

Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	9	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	244	35	0

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

Sixth Form

11. Systems for registering attendance continue to be unsatisfactory in the sixth form, as they were at the last inspection. Members of the sixth form have little input into supporting the development of the ethos in the lower school. Overall, their attendance, attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE

The quality of education provided by the college is unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning is **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. The care, guidance and support for students are **satisfactory**. Links with parents are **unsatisfactory**. Links with the community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and students' learning is unsatisfactory. The quality of assessment of students' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inconsistent use of behaviour management strategies by teachers is unsatisfactory, which leads to too much inappropriate behaviour by students.
- The inconsistent planning for the differing needs of students in lessons is unsatisfactory, which means that students' achievement is variable.
- There is a lack of consistency in adopting nationally recommended teaching and learning strategies.
- The setting of homework and marking are inconsistent and this is unsatisfactory.
- There is much good and very good teaching done by effective professionals.
- The teaching of students with special educational needs is consistently good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 183 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (0.6%)	33 (18%)	81 (44.3%)	46 (25.1%)	15 (8.2%)	4 (2.2%)	3 (1.6%)

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

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in both Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Students' learning is inconsistent and is unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is not as high as that reported at the last inspection and students' standards have not kept pace with improvements nationally as a result.
13. Too many lessons are disturbed by inappropriate and sometimes poor or very poor behaviour of some students. Many teachers employ behaviour management strategies well but these strategies are not consistently used, and in a significant proportion of lessons, teachers' attempts to manage the students are ineffective. This misbehaviour has an adverse impact on the learning of others in the class and sometimes on neighbouring classes. Teachers do not consistently plan to meet the differing needs of students in their classes. In the best lessons, such as in music, they are able to do so effectively and students respond positively. In other classes, such as in modern foreign languages, this is not the case and students' progress is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of consistency in adopting teaching strategies along the lines of those advocated in the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and some staff do not have a repertoire of successful strategies to fall back on when there are problems in lessons. Homework is not consistently set across subjects and work is not consistently marked, giving students good guidance on how to improve. Parents indicated that they would like to know that homework would be set when it is indicated on the timetable and that it would be marked. Scrutiny of students' books and their planners indicates a lack of consistency across subjects and different year groups, especially in Years 7 to 9. A number of parents expressed concerns about the high level of staff turnover and the high use of temporary staff. A significant amount of the unsatisfactory teaching was observed in lessons of inexperienced or temporary staff. When the inspectors carried out pursuits for the day of individual students in Years 7 to 9, the level of unsatisfactory teaching was high.
14. There were many examples of good and very good teaching. This was particularly the case in English, geography, music and physical education, in design and technology and history in Years 10 and 11, and in examination classes in religious education. There is insufficient use of this expertise to support other teachers, especially those who are unqualified and those appointed on a temporary basis. The reduction in the number of departmental meetings and the impact of split site accommodation has made this type of support more difficult to achieve.
15. Teaching for students with special educational needs is consistently good. It is very good in the externally accredited 'Youth Challenge' course in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their students well, manage them effectively and use their good specialist knowledge to help them to learn. Review periods are built into all alternative education plans with the result that assessment is good.

Sixth Form

16. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good and this helps the current students to learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in the best lessons, such as in biology, they challenge the students to produce work of a high quality. The teachers in history and religious education were observed using methods which support well the development of students' capabilities to carry out their own investigations. Teachers' comments following assessments show students how to improve and give them a realistic indication of their present standards. The use of assessment is good.

The curriculum

The college provides a curriculum which does not satisfactorily meet the students' needs throughout their time in college. Religious education does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The provision of ICT for students in Year 11 does not meet requirements. Requirements are not met for citizenship in Years 7 to 9, or for

modern foreign languages in Year 7. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The provision for students with special educational needs is good, including the students in the special unit.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for students with special educational needs and for English as an additional language is good.
- Statutory requirements for students in religious education, citizenship, modern foreign languages and ICT are not met.
- The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum is inconsistent.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Difficulties in staff retention and recruitment have adversely affected the learning of students in a number of subjects.
- The deployment of some resources such as textbooks and ICT equipment has a negative impact on students' attainment.

Commentary

17. Students in Years 7 to 9 have access to a broad and relevant curriculum. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language are provided for well. Some students in Year 7 do not take a modern foreign language. The requirements for citizenship are not met in Years 7 to 9.
18. Students in Years 10 and 11 have access to a broad and relevant curriculum. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language are provided for well. The provision for students in ICT in Year 11 does not meet requirements, nor does it for religious education in Years 10 and 11. The college does not comply with the requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
19. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum is not closely monitored by senior staff. Subjects have identified opportunities in their schemes of work to include them but practice is inconsistent. This has contributed to students not making the same improvements in attainment as has been seen nationally.
20. Provision for students with special educational needs is good. The college works well, in conjunction with the Youth Service, to provide a range of courses to meet the students' needs and to keep them in education. Externally accredited 'Youth Challenge' lessons in Years 10 and 11 are highly effective in helping students to learn a range of subjects and skills in a practical way. Potentially gifted or talented students are identified and provided with additional learning opportunities. Alternative education courses are provided for a range of students, either in the college or in alternative settings. These include students with poor attendance and students suffering from ill-health. Additional literacy lessons are a successful feature of this provision. These include tuition in the social use of language. Arrangements for disruptive students to work at the back of classes taught by experienced staff are often unsatisfactory as these arrangements can disrupt the class these students have been sent to.
21. Extra-curricular opportunities are very good and very well attended in physical education and music. Teachers provide additional sessions to support students preparing for external examinations, although attendance is sometimes small. The curriculum is enriched by visits abroad, theatre trips, lectures and through large scale college productions. Many students benefit from helping in local primary schools or in the college's learning centres.
22. Staffing is satisfactory in the main college overall. Most staff are appropriately qualified. Problems of recruitment have resulted in using temporary and non-specialist staff. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, mathematics and science, learning has suffered. Teaching and non-teaching staff have participated in an appropriate range of courses. Heads of

department support new staff but there has been a large turnover in heads of department in the last two years. This turnover of managers and the split site make such support more difficult.

23. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and this does have an unsatisfactory impact on standards. Several rooms are cramped. Many are shared across teachers and subjects, so that equipment and resources have to be moved from room to room. This movement takes its toll on teachers and resources and erodes learning time. Accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory. Many rooms are in poor repair and unsightly, with litter and chewing gum ground into carpets. Displays vary from good to 'tired'. Staff and students leave lessons ten minutes early if they change sites other than at breaks; this erodes learning time. The college organises staff cover for these minutes but learning in this time is less effective, and often stops.
24. Whilst resources are satisfactory overall, the use of the resources has a negative impact in a number of areas. In many subjects, textbooks cannot be taken home and this hinders the quality of homework. The number of computers has increased significantly since the last inspection, but they are not effectively grouped, are often unreliable and computer rooms are heavily booked. This has an unsatisfactory impact of the teaching of ICT across the curriculum and contributes to attainment in ICT being below that expected nationally. The provision in the learning centres has improved and students use these well in and out of lessons.
25. Satisfactory improvement since the last inspection includes increased time for history, geography and modern foreign languages. Learning resource centres have improved significantly under the guidance of a qualified librarian who has catalogued and culled the stock and introduced initiatives to promote reading and research. The college has not implemented requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 or the collective act of worship – both key issues of the last inspection report.

Sixth Form

26. The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the needs of sixth-form students. There is a good range of academic and vocational courses on offer to suit students of differing abilities. This range is increased through links with a local college. There is a good match of the number of staff and their expertise to the courses offered. Students are offered a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Students have open access to the sixth form and almost all choices are accommodated. Very small numbers of students on some courses limit the quality of discussion and make the courses expensive to provide. The dropout rate is high in health and social care. The requirements for the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not met.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for students' care and welfare is **satisfactory**, but the quality of the accommodation for physical education is **unsatisfactory** and there are some health and safety issues in design and technology. The provision of support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring of students' achievement, is **satisfactory**. The involvement of students through seeking and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- Adults provide students in public care with good levels of support.
- The induction arrangements for students in Year 7 are good.
- The college has satisfactory systems to monitor students' academic standards and progress and these are used well in some subjects to provide students with advice and guidance in Years 7 to 11.
- Teaching assistants provide expert help to students with special educational needs.

Commentary

27. The college has good health and safety procedures in place. Governors, staff and the conscientious health and safety co-ordinator make regular risk assessments and checks of equipment. Arrangements for dealing with students' medical conditions are thorough and a good number of staff have had first-aid training. Both sites have suffered from vandalism and the playground is often strewn with litter after break and lunch times. Safety practice is good in science and very good in physical education; however, the indoor spaces are small, and raised surfaces on the outdoor pitches can be dangerous for students moving quickly, and pose a safety threat. There are health and safety issues in design and technology relating to the use of power machines and hand tools.
28. The deputy headteachers on both sites have recently been trained in child protection. They give good support through training to all staff, and concerns are shared through weekly bulletins. Learning support staff are also trained in child protection. A member of the learning support unit gives good support to students in public care. Feedback from social services is generally good.
29. The college has good induction arrangements for new students. These include visits to all five feeder primary schools by senior staff and some Year 8 students. Year 6 pupils visit the college for taster days and more vulnerable pupils come to the college for extra visits. Meetings at the college take place for all parents and students, at which new students are introduced to members of Year 9. Arrangements for tutor groups are effectively organised. Students in Year 7 felt welcomed into the college and settled in quickly. Arrangements for tutor groups are efficiently organised. Transition for students from one site to another is less effective, as some students in Year 10 said they had never been given a chance to familiarise themselves with the new classrooms.
30. Most staff have good relationships with most students and the tutor system provides good opportunities for students to develop trusting relationships with adults. However, in their questionnaires, nearly a fifth of students said that they did not have an adult who knew them well. Students are well supported by the Youth Service and its counselling service. All students carry out work experience in a well-organised programme in Year 10.
31. Academic assessment is used well to inform targets in some subject areas, but it is not consistently applied. It is good in English, art and design, physical education and science. The PSHE programme makes a good contribution to students' personal development and this is monitored well through annual reports. The Connexions service offers a good level of support to students in Years 9 and 11.
32. The college has effective procedures for seeking students' views, through the tutor representatives on year councils and the whole college council. Students have discussed such issues as the use of tutor time and recycling. Some students did not feel that their views had a positive impact on college life.
33. Care for the two wheelchair users in the college is of a high standard. The college carries out physiotherapy programmes for them which are provided by health professionals. Speech therapy and occupational therapy are further strong features of the provision for students who need them.
34. The college provides specialist mentors for those at risk of failure or exclusion. The college has very good links with outside agencies which supply specialist careers advice, and help with work experience placements. It also takes full advantage of assistance, both professional and voluntary, from the local community.
35. The range of ten teaching assistants provides the expert help which allows students with special educational needs to experience all the teaching and learning activities the college has

to offer. Physically disabled students who cannot enjoy the college's physical education curriculum are helped to undertake exercise programmes to improve their stamina and upper body strength. This has a positive impact on their self-esteem.

Sixth Form

36. Students generally enjoy being in the sixth form. In the questionnaires and interviews, they said that their teachers and tutors provide good academic and personal support, although nearly a fifth said that there was not an adult in college who knew them well. The procedures for registering attendance are not effective in ensuring that the whereabouts of all students are known and this creates a health and safety issue.
37. The induction arrangements are good. Students were critical of the quality of the careers advice given and this was confirmed by the head of sixth form, although no strategies for improving this were provided.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **unsatisfactory** overall. Links with carers of students in public care and parents of students with special educational needs are good. Links with the community and with other schools are **satisfactory**. This represents a deterioration since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents are critical of the college's provision.
- Information supplied to parents is unsatisfactory.
- The college does not seek to involve all parents in its work.
- The college has good links with its feeder primary schools.
- Links with the local community are satisfactory.
- The Adult Education and Youth Education Services support the college very well.
- Partnership with parents of students with special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

38. In a low return to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting, parents expressed considerable dissatisfaction with nearly all areas of the college, especially in the areas of leadership and management, bullying and in the behaviour of students. Substantial minorities did not feel comfortable about approaching the college with concerns, were dissatisfied with the information provided and did not feel that the college sought their views or explained how they could help their children. The findings of the inspection generally support parents' views.
39. The information supplied to parents is unsatisfactory. The prospectus is attractively presented and clearly lays out for parents the nature and ethos of the college. However, it is out of date and does not include statutory information about complaints. The governors' annual report to parents contains all important information. No curriculum guides are offered to year groups except the sixth form. Annual reports do not comply with statutory requirements, since ICT is not reported in Year 11. They are also difficult to understand; attainment levels are given, which do not match National Curriculum levels. Not all subjects include standards or targets. Information provided to parents of students with special educational needs through their annual reviews is better and good overall, although the students' annual reports have the same failings as those of their peers.
40. The college does not regularly seek parents' views, although a group of parents has been invited to discuss the development of the Learning Communities programme and a recent survey was conducted by Year 8 students on the transition arrangements from primary schools. Responses to the questionnaire show that parents do not feel strongly involved in the

college's life. Homework planners are not used consistently as a means of communication between home and college. Parents value the consultation meetings with teachers, where targets are discussed, and attendance at these is good. Complaints are not always handled effectively. Some parents provide good support for music productions and for physical education. The Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA) is very supportive of the college and raises very good sums of money each year to support the college's work.

41. The college has developed satisfactory links with the local community, through its Work Experience programme. Good links have been established with the wider community through exchanges with schools in France and Poland. The Adult Education and Youth Education Services support the college very well through a variety of initiatives, such as the peer trainers and the drop-in counselling service. Good links have been established with local primary schools and with the local college of further education for students who are supported through an alternative provision. Good arrangements are in place for the exchange of information with primary schools.
42. The partnership with parents of students with special educational needs is very good and regarded as central to the work of the department. All parents attend annual reviews. Links are very good. The college has advance notice when students with special educational needs enter the college in Year 7 and makes appropriate arrangements. There are strong links with health professionals, and the college is further assisted by care available to the community.

Sixth Form

43. There are satisfactory links with the other sixth-form providers and this is being used to extend the range of provision for the students. Links with the community are satisfactory, for example sixth-form volunteers help with adults with learning disabilities who come to classes in the college. There are some contacts with local businesses to support sixth-form vocational courses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher and senior leadership group provide unsatisfactory leadership and management. They lack a clear view of how to raise standards and improve behaviour and have not used the action plan and support offered by the local education authority to tackle these issues. Heads of department provide **satisfactory** leadership. The college does not work as a team to consistently apply policies. Governance is **unsatisfactory**, but improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership by the headteacher and senior leadership group is unsatisfactory. There is no relentless drive to improve standards and achievement.
- There is insufficient consistency across the work of the college as a whole.
- Financial management is good.
- Leadership and management of the provision for students with special educational needs are very good.
- The governing body has been slow to pursue some issues from the last report and the college has not made the improvement it should have done.

Commentary

44. The headteacher is failing to provide a clear direction of where the college is going and how it is to reach its goals. This has resulted in standards failing to keep abreast of national trends, and a general malaise pervades the college. The senior leadership team is failing to manage the challenging circumstances the college faces and low morale and disaffection have crept in.

The management structure is very top heavy and lines of accountability are not always clear. Policies are not consistently applied and their review and evaluation have been insufficiently robust in setting targets to change the situation. There is an urgent need to focus relentlessly on raising achievement and improving the behaviour and attitudes of students.

45. There is some very good leadership and management by heads of department but there has been much change over the last two years and leadership and management are currently satisfactory overall. Heads of department are often working very much in isolation. The split site and turbulence in the staffing make their task very challenging and there is insufficient support from senior staff to help them ensure consistency across the work of the college. There is a tension between the role of heads of learning communities and heads of department in delivering the improvements necessary and this is hindering improvement overall. Financial management in the college is good.
46. Leadership for students with special educational needs is very good and management a particular strength. Departmental documentation is of a very high standard. Students' individual education plans are very good and fully inform teaching and learning activities undertaken by students with special educational needs, including work-related programmes and vocational courses when they are 14. The college's leadership and management have been successful in securing an institution where all are valued.
47. Governors have failed to ensure that the college fulfils all its statutory duties. It still does not provide a daily act of collective worship, nor provide religious education in accordance with the requirements of the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus for students in Years 10, 11 and 13. Disapplication procedures for students are not met for those not taking a modern foreign language in Year 7. All students in Year 11 do not have their entitlement to ICT and the provision for students in ICT is not mapped sufficiently across subjects in the college. Students in Years 7 to 9 are not receiving their entitlement to citizenship.
48. The governing body is committed to its work and has recently strengthened its membership to enable it to hold the college more to account. Governors have found it difficult to become fully informed about the college but are now analysing its strengths and weaknesses and what is needed to take it forward. They are strengthening the clerking of their committees in order that they will be in a better position to steer the college more effectively. The governing body did not diligently address the issues from the last report and some of these are outstanding with the result that the college has not made the improvements it should have done when compared to national trends.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,827,018	Balance from previous year	549
Total expenditure	4,804,773	Balance carried forward to the next	22,786
Expenditure per student	3,437		

Sixth Form

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The numbers returning to the sixth form are going down.
- Many courses have insufficient numbers to be viable.
- Management has been unsuccessful in resolving the issues of inconsistency in respect of monitoring student achievement and attendance.
- The governing body has failed to provide religious education for all students and a daily act of worship.

Commentary

49. The numbers returning to the sixth form are going down due to the competition from nearby colleges and there is no strategy to address this drift. Many of the wide range of courses on offer are not financially viable to operate and the main college is subsidising the sixth-form budget.
50. The procedures for monitoring student attendance and progress are inconsistent and advice on careers and higher and further education opportunities from within the college does not meet students' expectations. The sixth-form management is aware of these concerns but has not taken appropriate steps to remedy them.
51. The governors have failed to provide religious education for all students in Years 12 and 13. They have also failed to provide a daily act of worship.

THE SPECIAL FACILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Provision in the special facility for students with specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) is good. The special facility caters for up to four students in each year group, and provides three full-time specialist teachers and three part-time teaching assistants. Students are supported in most of their lessons and receive specialist basic skills lessons each week.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, and often very well, particularly gaining the confidence to learn.
- The quality of specialist teaching in the special facility is very good.
- The quality of teaching in mainstream lessons for students with dyslexia is good overall.
- The guidance and support of dyslexic students throughout the college are very good.
- Links between the special facility and the college's special educational needs provision are not efficient in supporting the increasingly complex needs of the dyslexic students.
- There is insufficient systematic monitoring of the quality of mainstream lessons to review and develop teaching and learning strategies further.

Commentary

52. Students achieve well and make good progress overall compared to their own previous performance. They all achieve several GCSEs and other qualifications. The majority go on to good employment or further education. The biggest gain for the students is in their self-confidence, where they learn how to work with their difficulties in reading and writing and achieve skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects. Several students show high-level understanding of quite complex subjects, for example in one science lesson, despite only basic initial knowledge, a Year 8 student quickly grasped the role of carbon dioxide and the use of

sugar for energy. In addition, some of the students achieve very well in areas of special interest such as music and sport.

53. The quality of teaching by the specialist teachers is very good and enables students to gradually improve their basic skills of reading, writing and some mathematics. Specialist teachers act as key workers, getting to know the students very well so that they can guide and support some very good individual progress. In mainstream classes, where the special facility students spend most of their time, the quality of provision varies according to the quality of the teaching. This ranges from very good to occasionally unsatisfactory but is good overall. The main strength in mainstream lessons is the well-adapted nature of the lessons and the very good level of support. The few weaknesses involve a lack of planning for the best way of involving the students, relying too heavily on written materials with limited expectations of what could be understood using other methods. For example, there is a lack of laptops to support those who would benefit and this effects presentation of work in particular.
54. The overall management of the special facility is good. Staff are skilled and committed to achieving the very best that is possible for the students and the facility is well organised and well run. Parents and students are particularly satisfied with the success of the provision. Despite good cost effectiveness, compared to other specialist schools, there is some inefficiency because organisation of the special facility and other students with special educational needs is duplicated within the college. The needs of the dyslexic students are changing, becoming more complex, and this makes it more difficult to tackle them. The college already plans to maximise the benefits of both services through a more unified approach to all students with additional educational needs. The work of individual students is carefully monitored and ensures the overall good achievements made, but there is insufficient analysis of which mainstream teaching methods help these students achieve well, and there are wide variations in the quality of teaching for special facility students. This is recognised and there is planning for improved mainstream staff development.

WORK PLACE PROVISION

55. The college identifies students who are in danger of exclusion at the end of Year 9 and places them on an 'inclusion register'. They are offered an alternative curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Parents are fully consulted. Most of these students are found work experience for one day per week for periods ranging from three to six months with local employers in the Brighton-Lewes-Eastbourne area and with the RAF. The work experience includes carpentry, building, electrical fitting, hairdressing, motor vehicle maintenance and plumbing. The scheme has been successful and has reduced the number of exclusions.
56. Each year, up to ten of the students on the 'inclusion register' are provided with places on vocational courses under the Government's Increased Flexibility Programme. The courses are run by the Sussex Down and Plumpton Agriculture Colleges as part of the Tertiary Experience Programme (TerTex). Students in Years 10 and 11 are currently taking National Vocational Qualifications at Level 1 in agriculture, horse care, performing engineering operations and food preparation and cooking. They are also taking the building craft occupational award at Level 1, a pre-apprenticeship programme and a foundation certificate in sport and leisure studies. These awards enable students to progress directly into further education, training or employment. In 2002, the first year of the programme, three students discontinued these courses and returned to the college-based programme. None of these awards have yet been finally examined but progress reports indicate that most students in Year 11 remaining on the programme will be successful at the end of the academic year 2004.
57. All students in Year 10 undertake one week of work experience with local employers during the summer term. Prior to work experience, students are provided with a course of nine lessons on the objectives of work experience, health and safety at work, applying for a vacancy, the world of work and presenting yourself and situations which might arise at work. These lessons form part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programmes. One in

four students obtains their own work placements. During the work experience, most students are visited by their tutors. Students undertake two days of debriefing. The debriefings provide a self-evaluation of the work they have done. The self-evaluation and reports from tutors and employers form part of each student's record of achievement. Students are seen to mature as a result of their work experience and find it valuable.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good achievement by Year 9 in response to consistently good teaching.
- There is not enough curriculum time in Year 11 for students to do justice to both examinations.
- There is good achievement overall in Years 10 and 11.
- The poor attitudes of some boys do not allow them to make enough progress in English literature in Year 11.
- The subject is well managed.
- Provision for the development of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

58. In the national tests in Year 9, students' performance was broadly in line with the national average in 2003, with girls doing much better than boys. Standards seen in the inspection were higher than these results suggest. Students make good achievement by Year 9 in response to consistently good teaching. They develop effective skills of oral collaboration, which helps them to learn, and their confidence improves as they present group findings to the class. Well-taught drama lessons further help their speaking and listening skills. Good, specific instruction helps students to skim read effectively, look for a view point and read rapidly for specific purposes. In one lesson, they quickly read and understood both sides of the animal testing debate and formulated their own opinions. Well-taught skills of annotation help students in the close reading of text necessary for successful literary criticism. Students identify a range of writing techniques and use them effectively in their writing. Boys and girls made equally good progress in the lessons seen.
59. GCSE results in English in 2003 were significantly above the national average. Girls did significantly better than boys, who, however, comfortably reached the national average for boys. In English literature, standards dropped below the national average. Boys' performance was particularly low. Since the last inspection, results have varied widely from year to year due, in part, to difficult staffing conditions which have now stabilised. Only this year has an additional hour's teaching been negotiated, and this is already having a positive effect on achievement, particularly in Year 10. Time available to the subject in Year 11, however, is still too low for students to do full justice to both examinations, although almost all students are achieving well in English in Years 10 and 11. Students listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They make good oral contributions to lessons and readily engage in discussion. They have good skills of oral collaboration and presentation. They are taught to take effective notes. In their study of 'An Inspector Calls', students showed they understood the play in ways beyond the literal as they analysed the text and organised essays using an extensive and vigorous vocabulary.
60. Teachers are in command of the subject, which they present clearly and enthusiastically. They plan their lessons well to include students with special educational needs. Skilful questioning allows students to take part in the lessons orally. Lessons start crisply and plenary sessions are used well to consolidate knowledge. Students are responsive and show themselves capable of sustaining concentration. They willingly engage with the tasks set. In one lesson in Year 11 on war poetry, a small number of boys were disinclined to work in the lesson. Despite

the provision of interesting material, they lost interest and made constant minor interruptions. These boys did not make the same good progress as the rest. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.

61. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The head of department manages her teachers well. The imbalance between girls' and boys' performance has been tackled by a well-considered range of strategies which have not yet proved permanently effective. Monitoring of teaching, learning and the delivery of the National Curriculum are significant management strengths.
62. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment. Pre-twentieth century literature and knowledge about language are now curriculum strengths. There is still no systematic planning for the use of ICT, although statutory requirements are met. Standards in English and English literature have not, however, improved consistently and the volatile results described in the last report persist.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Provision for the development of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, although technical vocabulary and keywords are consistently promoted well.
64. Students are usually capable of reading the learning materials put before them in lessons, and most read information texts without difficulty. College library initiatives support well students' reading for pleasure.
65. Achievement in writing is improved by the use of guidance frames in subjects such as science, geography and history, but extended writing is weak in a range of subjects.
66. There has been very recent, whole-college professional development of subject-specific writing requirements, responsibility for which now resides with departments. Although improvements to provision are being discussed, they have not yet been implemented. Lack of a senior manager with oversight of these particular developments can only be seen as a serious weakness.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**. It is better in French than in German.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieved less well in languages than they did in their other GCSE subjects in 2003.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall.
- Unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour in some lessons adversely affects students' achievement.
- Marking is inconsistent; much gives insufficient indication of the quality of the work and how to improve.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory.
- Numbers taking the subjects are unsatisfactory and regulations are not met for those not taking a language in Year 7.

Commentary

67. GCSE examination results in 2003 were a little above the national average in French, but significantly below in German. Girls outperformed boys in both languages but, in French, boys succeeded better than boys nationally. In both languages, students performed less well and, in German, significantly less well, than in most of their other subjects.

68. Standards observed in Years 9 and 11 in French are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Higher attaining students speak and write with quite good accuracy and structures. Achievement is satisfactory where staffing has been stable and where French is spoken frequently. It is good in a minority of lessons as a result of good teaching. In these classes, students speak and write the language confidently and from memory at an appropriate level. Standards are below or well below average in German and achievement is unsatisfactory. Some exercise books show work of higher standards produced last term. Unsatisfactory achievement in French and German is linked to staff instability and unsatisfactory teaching. Girls achieve better than boys. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs achieve in line with those in their set but, overall, students' achievement is not good enough.
69. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, overall. They were good or very good in over a quarter of lessons observed, but unsatisfactory or poor in about a third of lessons, mostly those taught by temporary staff. Most teachers are good linguists. Where teaching and learning are good, the pace is slick, teachers and students use the foreign language extensively, activities are varied and challenging and new vocabulary and structures are practised well so that students can use them from memory. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning are often a result of using too much English so that students rely on translations and new work is insufficiently practised. Other causes are: the teachers' inadequate subject knowledge; unclear explanations; slow pace; tasks that are too easy or weak class control.
70. Students' attitudes and participation are satisfactory or good when the activities are interesting. Students are bored where the work is too easy. In one lesson, unpleasant rudeness of a few girls prevented learning of the whole class for more than half the lesson.
71. Marking is inconsistent and much gives insufficient indication of the quality of the work. The departmental scheme is rarely used. The careful marking indicates errors and shows students how to improve. Many books have cursory, infrequent marking, consisting largely of ticks. Errors are not always indicated. Such marking is unsatisfactory for revision. In Years 7 to 9, teachers rely heavily on National Curriculum levels associated with textbook exercises without considering whether the work meets the criteria for the level.
72. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department, a good role model, supports teachers and examination students very well and organises exchange trips and visits to enhance students' learning. Departmental performance is evaluated. Sound documentation guides staff. Dealing with staffing problems over the last two years has reduced time available for monitoring.
73. Both French and German are taught in Years 7 to 9. A few students learn Spanish. Only about ten students continue with two languages in Years 10 and 11; a poor return for the curriculum time given. A few students in Year 7 learn minimal or no foreign language and the necessary procedures to exempt them have not been taken. Below the sixth form, students use little ICT.
74. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. GCSE French results and departmental documentation have improved, but German remains a serious concern

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' results in the national tests at age 14 have not kept pace with the improvement nationally over the last five years.
- Current achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.

- Higher attaining students achieve well, but many middle and lower attaining students, especially in Years 7 to 9, do not achieve as much as they should.
- Most students have a good attitude to work, but a significant minority in Years 7 to 9 have a poor attitude.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
- The department does not make sufficient use of principles and strategies introduced by the National Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Commentary

75. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average by the end of Year 9, and are above average by the end of Year 11. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the average point score was in line with the national average, but was well above the average for schools whose students attained similar levels in the tests at the end of the corresponding Year 6. Over the past five years, the average point score of students in the national tests has remained broadly static, while the national average has improved; at the start of this period, attainment was above average. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the proportion of students gaining a grade A*-C was 61 per cent, which is above the national average and is an improvement on the results in the previous year. The proportion of students gaining a grade A*-G was 98 per cent, which was also above the national average. The boys performed particularly well this year in comparison with national norms.
76. The achievement of the students up to Year 9 is unsatisfactory and, in Years 10 and 11, is satisfactory. Many students have a sensible attitude to learning which helps to create a good learning atmosphere in most lessons. However, there is a significant minority in Years 7 to 9 who create problems for the teachers and other students through disruptive behaviour and refusal to work properly. Higher attaining students achieve better than middle or lower attaining because, in general, they are more engaged with the work, and the style of teaching is better suited to their needs. Many students in lower and middle attaining groups underachieve because they do not understand the work, their misconceptions are not effectively identified and corrected, and it is in some of these classes that there is poor behaviour. Standards of presentation of work in exercise books vary widely, with too many students failing to organise them in a way that supports learning; work is left unfinished, untidiness leads to errors and too much work is left unmarked. The students with special educational needs achieve better than their peers in some cases, due to smaller classes and the additional personal support from their teachers and from learning support assistants.
77. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, although it is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The amount the students learn in lessons is closely related to this. In one third of the lessons observed, teaching was good, in one third it was satisfactory and in one third it was unsatisfactory or poor. Most of the unsatisfactory or poor lessons are in Years 7 to 9. Many of the teachers are competent mathematicians, with considerable experience teaching in this college. However, the college has been unable to fill several posts with mathematics specialists. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, the teachers have established a good working atmosphere in the classroom, so that students follow the teachers' explanations and instructions carefully, and work conscientiously on individual exercises and homework. The teachers give clear presentations of the key processes, although they often do not concentrate enough on ensuring that the students understand the underlying principles. Teaching in the department has not yet incorporated effectively enough some of the advances made in the profession over the last few years, particularly the techniques and principles introduced by the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. In too many lessons, mathematics is taught as an exercise in answering textbook questions, and rarely as a problem-solving activity. There are insufficient strategies for the teacher to check that all the students understand the explanations of the work and so, in many lessons, students' misconceptions are not corrected quickly enough. Where lessons are unsatisfactory or poor, in addition to the weaknesses already mentioned, this is caused by poor subject knowledge, which results in the teacher being unable to pitch the

difficulty of the work correctly or to identify some of the students' mistakes, or by poor management of the behaviour of the students.

78. Students cover all areas of the curriculum. There is, however, insufficient development of numeracy in mathematics lessons, and ICT is not consistently used to support teaching and learning. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department has only been in post since the beginning of the year but, through a programme of observation of lessons, has begun to develop a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the department, and is introducing some good ideas for a system of assessment to assist teachers in tracking the students' progress. However, she is not given sufficient time to provide support where there are areas of weakness in the teaching.
79. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen. The quality of teaching has not kept pace with national expectations, and there are significant groups of students who are underachieving. The department no longer has the stable staffing it enjoyed at the time of the last inspection, which has been a major factor in the changes in the students' achievement in Years 7 to 9.

Mathematics across the curriculum

80. Standards of numeracy are in line with the standards in mathematics. Higher and middle-attaining students know their multiplication tables well and can make simple calculations in their heads, but many of them resort to calculators too quickly, and hence lack flexibility in choosing ways of working out answers to more challenging problems. This limits their ability to get to grips with the real conceptual issues in the topics they are studying. There is insufficient focus on improving numeracy in mathematics lessons, both because the department does not yet use the starter effectively for this purpose, but also because students are rarely asked to estimate or check answers or to use other techniques to help develop their mental dexterity.
81. The college has yet to establish a clear policy for teaching numeracy across the curriculum and, although a start has been made raising awareness in departments across the curriculum, there has been no impact in raising standards. Applications of mathematics are found in many subjects, and most students have adequate levels of skill to support their studies across the curriculum. Graph work, in particular, is found in science and geography, aspects of number in music and modern foreign languages, and shape and space in art and design.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of science courses in Years 10 and 11 help to cater for the needs of all students.
- National Curriculum test and GCSE results in recent years have been above the national average.
- Current achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Sensible steps are underway to improve the current unsatisfactory achievement during Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

82. Standards in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations have been above the national average. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above national averages and better than results in English and mathematics. Results in science at the end of Year 9 have been above national outcomes for several years. GCSE results, overall, taken at the end of Year 11, were

well above national averages in 2003. These results were significantly better than the above average science results of the previous two years. A further strength is that students attain well overall and very well in all the courses offered to Years 10 and 11. The very broad range of courses for these years is a real strength because it brings success to the majority, and to those keen to do extra and harder science, and to those who do not cope well with even basic science. Current standards are mixed. Standards in Years 10 and 11 maintain the previous high standards, for all abilities of student. Current standards for Years 7, 8 and 9 are broadly in line with national expectations. This is lower than in previous years and reflects their current achievement.

83. Achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory. Currently, both teaching and learning are too often unsatisfactory for these years. Too often, the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of students impair achievement for all. Some teachers do not resolve students' lack of respect and attention well enough. The other issue is, in these unsatisfactory lessons, that attainment is too low. Students do not have a chance to think about the harder concepts, the Level 6 and 7 work, which should be part of the achievement during these years. In some classes, students currently are not even making sufficient progress in gaining basic knowledge of National Curriculum science. In contrast, during Years 7, 8 and 9, other students receive good and very good lessons in which standards are above national expectations and achievement is good and very good. For them, topics are covered in detail and students understand science thoroughly, even the harder concepts.
84. Achievements and standards for the current Years 10 and 11 remain very good. The extent of improvement in knowledge and understanding over the two years up to 2003 GCSE was excellent. Current teaching and learning are both very good. Students' work is very detailed and very well organised. The marking and other guidance from teachers are thorough and helpful. In lessons, students are required to tackle hard concepts. Many do so willingly and even the unwilling are firmly directed so that the harder work is understood. A key strength is the teachers' subject knowledge. The teachers meet the needs of all students. The most ambitious and knowledgeable students attain the very highest grades. The few students with major difficulties about science are given plenty of interesting and meaningful tasks so that they learn well.
85. The current attainment, compared to that reported in the previous inspection, is lower now for Years 7, 8 and 9 and better for Years 10 and 11. The provision of ICT remains unsatisfactory. The current teaching and its impact on learning is now satisfactory overall for Years 7 to 11, varying from poor to excellent, compared to the mix of satisfactory and good reported in 1997.
86. Overall, leadership is good. Many of the staff associated with the previous high standards are still teaching and managing science, such as for Years 10 and 11. Very recently, the science staff changed student groupings for Years 7, 8 and 9 so that every class is now a mix of the full ability range. Staff already have good sets of lesson plans, used with success in recent years. These are being sensibly adapted to the new situation. Investment is in place to start to improve provision of ICT. Current resources for other aspects of science, such as book stocks, have been improved, though not yet sufficiently. Staff new to the college are monitored and guided to give scope for further improvement. Assessment procedures are thorough and used well, including good and very good preparation for tests and examinations. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations and National Curriculum assessments in 2003 were well below average, especially the boys'.

- Attainment seen during the inspection is improving.
- Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11, with some good teaching in GCSE courses.
- Unreliability of equipment in the lower school hinders students' learning.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes in some lower school classes slow the pace of learning.
- The college does not meet statutory requirements for the subject in Year 11.
- Provision for the leadership and management of ICT across the curriculum is poor.
- The department under its new leadership understands the problems and is taking action to improve teaching and learning.

Commentary

87. GCSE results and Year 9 teacher assessments in 2003 are well below the national average. Boys' results are considerably lower than girls'. Achievement in Years 9 and 11 is unsatisfactory in that grades are well below those of the same students in their other subjects. Standards in work and lessons seen in the lower school have improved over the past year, with better understanding helping higher attaining students to apply skills independently. Almost all students use basic procedures, with lower attainers and students with special educational needs having to be closely guided in their application. GCSE students now have better understanding of the principles underpinning the subject, and so have improved coursework in the present Years 10 and 11.
88. Teaching is satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11, with some good teaching in GCSE courses. Teachers all have good subject knowledge. In Years 7 and 8, they plan well to help students to use independent judgement, firmly based on understanding of procedures and applications. Year 8 students, learning to apply the use of spreadsheets for modelling, review their previous experience from Year 7 before moving on to apply it to more complex problems. Teachers' time is diverted from student support in the lower school by the need to manage inattention and often poor behaviour. In part, this is the result of noisy conditions and unreliable equipment in a room with poor overview of computer screens. The system is much more reliable in the upper school where classroom layout allows teachers to see more of students' activities. Teachers give clear guidance to Years 10 and 11 students about examination requirements. They help them to work independently while supporting individual needs. By improving the students' analytical and evaluative skills, they have raised the quality of coursework. Although some Year 11 students resent this new rigour, the majority are willing to review their initial coursework to improve their grades. Teachers assess work thoroughly throughout the college, giving clear messages to individuals about how to improve, and asking students to evaluate their own performance.
89. Leadership and management are both good in the discrete ICT course. The head of department has analysed accurately the causes of previous failure and has acted whenever it is in her power to do so. Good communication leads to consistency in teaching materials and methods. The head of department has led colleagues in changing the focus of teaching to match national objectives. ICT lessons for all in Year 10 have moved the college towards compliance with statutory requirements, although half of Year 11 still has no entitlement to ICT. Teachers help Year 11 students who wish to take ICT as an extra GCSE by giving time after college for lessons, with resulting good standards in this class. The college has made no provision for the leadership or management of ICT across the curriculum, and so this is poor.
90. Results since the last inspection have declined and so, at present, improvement must be seen as unsatisfactory, with recent changes still having to prove their impact. There have been considerable improvements in the quantity of available equipment and in the quality of that in the upper school. However, some departments are unable to book network rooms for all classes in a year group, with the result that students do not reinforce or use their ICT capability to the full.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, with insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Where students use ICT at all ages, they are able to apply it to their learning, especially wordprocessing and using the Internet. Although there is some use by some teachers in almost all subjects, and good coverage in design and technology, there is no whole-college co-ordination to check whether subject requirements are being met for all students. As a result, it is impossible to plan for development of ICT experience across subjects or between the discrete course and use in other subjects. There has been good improvement in equipment since the last inspection. However, some departments are unable to book network rooms for all classes in a year group, with the result that students do not reinforce or use their ICT capability to the full. This has still left some departments, for example geography, modern foreign languages, religious education and science, claiming that lack of access to reliable equipment prevents them from giving full entitlement to all of their classes and this hinders students' achievement, for example in some of the investigational aspects of science. ICT is used well in physical education and music. Activities in design and technology and science cover the areas of the National Curriculum requirements for ICT that are not covered in the discrete course.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in GCSE lessons.
- The provision of fieldwork for students in each of Years 7 to 11 helps develop their enquiry skills.
- The quality of accommodation for geography remains poor and has a negative impact on standards.
- The leadership of geography is good.

Commentary

92. At GCSE in 2003, the percentage of students gaining grades A*-C was well above the national average. It was also above students' results in other subjects in the college. Standards in the current Years 10 and 11 are also above the national average. This represents very good achievement for students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. Students show an increasing knowledge and understanding of geographical terminology. All can describe geographical patterns, such as the development of cities, and higher attaining students can explain how sustainable individual cities are. The relative weakness for all, except the highest attainers, is their failure to back up their answers with accurate detail and to draw sufficiently upon the case studies they have covered. Teachers recognise this and work hard to improve this weakness. Students are well supported in their preparation for the examined decision-making exercise. Geography is a popular option choice at GCSE.
93. Standards in the current Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement for all students, including those with special educational needs. Students of all abilities show increasing confidence in using appropriate geographical terminology when describing processes such as how earthquakes are caused. Their enquiry skills are good and are supported by the planned fieldwork opportunities. Outside their detailed study of places such as Brazil, the students' wider geographical place knowledge is less well developed.
94. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in GCSE lessons. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Teacher questioning is purposeful and students respond positively, answering questions and working with interest. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher structured the work on plate tectonics so that students had to work things out for

themselves. Students responded by working well independently and the result was that they understood some very difficult ideas. At GCSE, students are compiling very good note sets and have a good understanding of examination requirements. Teacher assessment is conscientious, although there are some variations between teaching groups in Years 7 to 9. Students know how well they are doing and are set targets that tell them exactly what they need to do to improve their geography.

95. The leadership of geography is good and management is satisfactory. Responsibility for the subject has been split between two part-time staff since December 2002. The teachers of the department, as a whole, work very hard to make this work and form a very effective team. New resources are being introduced in Years 7 to 9 and teacher assessment judgements are now accurate. The department has made some good improvements since the last inspection, such as the improved standards by the end of Year 9 and the high standards at GCSE. The accommodation for geography has worsened since the last inspection and this is having a negative impact on standards.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above national expectations and achievement is currently good in Year 11.
- Effective teaching in Years 10 and 11 underpins good learning.
- Assessment has improved but does not inform students fully of their progress.
- New learning strategies are beginning to raise boys' achievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Homework is regularly set and marked, however it does not always sufficiently inform students of how to improve.
- The recent change and improvements in the department are well supported by good leadership and management.

Commentary

96. Standards are in line with those expected nationally in Year 9 and above national expectations in Year 11, judging from the work seen and the students' responses in lessons. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. GCSE results in 2003 matched the national average and were a good improvement on recent years. Girls performed better than boys.
97. By Year 9, students develop a broad range of historical skills, including an adequate understanding of chronology. They are also aware of the significance of primary and secondary sources. By Year 11, students develop a good knowledge of the impact of the First World War on the working lives of women. Students analyse the various sources of evidence effectively. Some students use ICT to research material, particularly for their coursework. However, opportunities within some lessons are limited and this has the effect of slowing the development of students' research, analytical and investigative skills. The new schemes of work include additional planned opportunities for ICT research assignments. A new syllabus in Year 10 and a wider range of learning strategies are contributing to a raising of achievement, particularly of the boys.
98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. Teachers usually plan and organise lessons to provide a good learning environment. This is particularly true in Years 10 to 11. Students are keen to learn and they show positive attitudes to their studies. Behaviour is satisfactory in most of the classes. There are good question and answer sessions, however not all students listen carefully enough to the contributions. The analysis of

source material by students is good and a wide variety is used in the lessons. Homework is set regularly and is marked with encouraging comments. However, some students are not given clear enough guidance for improving their work and, as a result, many students do not make an effective link between their marks and the skills needed to improve their learning. Assessment has also improved in recent months. However, there is still a disparity, with only some students receiving clear National Curriculum levels and history targets for improvement.

99. Leadership of the department is good with a clear vision for improvement and development. Management is good because a planned system of monitoring teaching and learning is in place which is supporting the improvement of students' achievement. The accommodation of the lower site is scattered and there is insufficient storage for resources. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, although the rate of change has quickened in the last six months. This is an improving department with effective leadership.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students do not receive their entitlement in this subject in Years 10 and 11.
- Student achievement in Year 9 is satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning in GCSE classes are good.
- The good contribution the subject makes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural and citizenship development.

Commentary

100. In 2003, the GCSE students achieved standards well above those nationally. Standards in Year 9 are above those expected by the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus and show satisfactory achievement in relation to students' attainment on entry. In Year 9, most students can explain the Christian viewpoint on ethical issues. In Years 10 and 11, due to the style of teaching and the time allocated to the subject outside the examination groups, it is not possible to make judgements on the standards or achievement of students who do not take the subject as a GCSE course. All students do not receive their entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11.
101. Achievement in Year 9 is satisfactory. Students respond well to the careful lesson preparation and variety of activities in lessons but, too often, learning is interrupted by poor behaviour of boys. Students benefit from lessons with clear outcomes and enjoy paired and group work that allows them the opportunity to try out ideas before writing. The use of homework is too varied and often involves research on the Internet. Common assignment tasks assess both knowledge and understanding and enable teachers to set targets to raise attainment. Students with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets as the work is matched to their capabilities and they often receive extra help in class. Teaching and learning and achievement in examination classes are good. There is attention to preparing students for the examination, including revision classes, and assessment helps students to know what it is they need to do to improve their work. In core religious education, no work or records were available for scrutiny to make a judgement regarding overall standards and achievement.
102. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in examination classes. When teaching is good, achievement is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan and prepare well. They have a common approach to topics and share best practice. They develop students' self-worth by valuing their efforts and respecting their views. The consideration of spiritual, moral and social issues, such as those surrounding near death experiences and wealth and poverty, provides excellent opportunities to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. Learning about aspects of major world religions

increases cultural awareness. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural and citizenship development of students.

103. Leadership is good. There is a clear direction for the subject and a drive to raise standards. Management is satisfactory but greater rigour is needed in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and taking appropriate action.
104. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory as there is still non-compliance in Years 10 and 11 and now the sixth form does not comply with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement and teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory overall.
- Boys' attainment is significantly poorer than the girls'.
- The comprehensive range of courses in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- The length of practical lessons in Years 10 and 11 is too short.
- Health and safety requirements in resistant materials workshops are not met.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

105. Students' attainment on entry to the college in Year 7 varies considerably and is below the national expectation overall. By the end of Year 9, students' attainment remains below that expected nationally. Girls perform significantly better than the boys. The department's method of assessment overestimates attainment. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress with extra help from teachers and learning assistants. Students with English as an additional language make the same progress as other students. Standards in the lessons seen were below the national average. Students' achievement is satisfactory.
106. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall. Schemes of work are comprehensive. Most lessons are well planned and teachers give good help and advice to students in practical activities. In the best lessons, work is explained and demonstrated well. In less effective lessons, students are not controlled sufficiently and many go off task. In resistant materials practical lessons, breaches in health and safety regulations occur and students are not taught to use power machines and hand tools properly. Students' designing and making skills are not sufficiently developed to enable good progress to be made. Time in lessons is not always used efficiently.
107. Seven out of ten students opt to take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, GCSE results overall were in line with the national average. The girls' GCSE examination results in food technology, graphic products and resistant materials were either above or well above the national average. The boys' results in resistant materials were poor. In 2003, the results in child development were well above the national average. Attainment seen in the lessons in the different subjects was variable but in line with national expectations overall. Students' achievement is good.
108. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is good overall. Students are offered a comprehensive range of courses. In most lessons, topics are introduced effectively, and practical activities are carried out well. As a result, students' attitudes are usually positive. ICT

is not consistently used to present work, research topics or analyse results and the new head of department's monitoring has picked this up as an area for development. The single-period lessons are too short for practical activities, which results in practical lessons being hurried and this has an adverse impact on achievement.

109. The recently appointed head of department provides very effective leadership and manages the department very well. She and her nine colleagues have done much to improve the assessment of students' progress and to improve the accommodation. There has been a high turnover of staff; nevertheless, the match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is good. Changes since the last inspection are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained but the general performance of the boys still remains one of underachievement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results, particularly the boys', were well below the national average in 2003.
- Students' current achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
- Leadership is satisfactory.

Commentary

110. GCSE results in art and design in 2003 are well below average, with 46 per cent success at grades A*-C, with boys attaining significantly less well than the girls. Attainment of the current Year 11 students is in line to improve upon this if they maintain their current progress. Standards of drawing are satisfactory; students use scale and tone competently to record solidity and texture. Colour-handling skills are sometimes high, using oil pastel and other dry media. The most able students use paint confidently to create expressive compositions inspired by their study of other artists, but many are too reliant upon secondary sources as stimulus. Standards of work in three-dimensional materials and sculpture are good, using clay, card construction and plaster. In Year 10, the achievement of all students is satisfactory and sometimes good. They improve their practical skills and use sketchbooks well to record their ideas, research, evaluation and impressive still-life drawings and collage work.
111. In Year 7, students' attainment on entry is generally average and, during the course of the year, an emphasis on the development of practical skills enables them to improve. They are introduced to using sketchbooks for a variety of purposes. In Year 8, students improve their skills in observational drawing and pattern through the study of natural objects. They are able to create a variety of repetitive designs using printing and computer-aided design. By the end of Year 9, attainment is in line with the national expectation and higher attaining students exceed this. In a project on Cubism, they have investigated portraits and produced a variety of bold, colourful oil pastel portraits and collages and show evidence of evaluating their work. However, throughout Years 7 to 9, there are few opportunities for students to develop their creative skills using the computer and image-manipulation software, and the structure of units of study inhibits students' capacity to work more individually.
112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is generally satisfactory but, in one lesson observed, there was unsatisfactory management of poor behaviour. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is satisfactory although, in one lesson, the lack of engagement by the students in the teacher's efforts to conduct the lesson deemed it unsatisfactory. Although relations between teachers and students are good in most lessons, in Years 7 to 9 the behaviour of

some students restricts learning and achievement in some lessons. In Years 10 and 11, teachers know students well and give helpful feedback on how to improve their GCSE performance. Individual and whole-class verbal feedback is effective and the formal marking of work gives good information on students' strengths and how to improve their standards. Lessons are well planned and resourced by good quality visual reference materials.

113. The leadership of the newly appointed head of department is starting to have an impact upon standards. Common methods and standards of assessment have been agreed and there is a sound departmental improvement plan which appropriately identifies areas of teaching and learning for development.
114. Improvement in art and design since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards have declined significantly in GCSE examinations and in teaching. Standards have risen in the quality of three-dimensional work.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- The achievement of students in Year 11 is good in relation to their prior attainment.
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Extra-curricular activities make a strong contribution to college life.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

115. The teacher assessments for Year 9 in 2003 were in line with the national average for those students aged 14 and inspection evidence agrees with this. The percentage of GCSE examination at grades A*-C were in line with the national average and the percentage of grades A*-G was below that nationally. Because some students were absent from the final paper, this affected the overall results; these are lower than the previous year. Boys did better than girls.
116. By the end of Year 9, standards are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement considering that many students enter Year 7 with underdeveloped musical skills. Year 11 standards are above average and students achieve well compared with their prior attainment. Very good teaching is a key factor in improving the quality of learning. Over 200 students play instruments and students of all abilities have the chance to learn.
117. Good teaching in Years 7 to 9 helps students to do well. The planning, pace and challenge of lessons ensure that students are motivated even though many start from a low level of musical understanding. As the 'music log' is a good information tool for each module of work, this reinforces students' learning. Singing, however, is not done regularly. Very good teaching overall in Years 10 and 11 leads to a positive commitment from students. Because of the high standard of improvisation developed throughout the college, students perform well; jazz sessions involving all students are a feature of some lessons and build up confidence and musical understanding. Students are less secure with the listening module.
118. The department is managed very well and the inspired leadership of the head of department ensures that music has a high profile within the college and local community. The curriculum is very broad and balanced and provides a rich musical diet for students. Assessment is good and supports learning. Workshops by professionals, regular visits to London opera and musicals, the music marathon and the bi-annual concert trip abroad all contribute well to the musical life of the college. Improvement has been maintained since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good** with some **very good** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is very good.
- The achievement of students taking GCSE courses is good.
- Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good overall.
- Extra-curricular provision is good.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- The quality of the accommodation affects the students' attainment of higher level skills.

Commentary

119. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above national expectations. At the end of Year 11, standards are broadly in line with national averages. In Years 10 and 11, core physical education standards are in line with national expectation.
120. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is satisfactory; students make very good progress and achieve very well during Years 7 to 9. Those who choose to take examination courses in Years 10 and 11 make good progress. There is no obvious difference in respect of participation or achievement between boys and girls. Students with special educational needs are well catered for within accredited courses and achieve well.
121. Teaching and learning are good. All teaching staff have very good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and assessment is moderated. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good; students are taught a varied and challenging curriculum where teachers show innovative approaches to skill development. In core lessons, in Years 10 and 11, teachers provide curriculum opportunities that engage students and encourage independent learning. Throughout examination courses, teaching is almost always good with some very good features. Students work hard and are very productive in all aspects of the coursework requirements.
122. The head of department provides good leadership and is ably supported by lead teachers in management roles. There is a cohesive and effective team that inspires and motivates, and has a positive effect on student learning. The department provides support by the sharing of inspirational teaching where this has been identified. There is good management of a wide programme of extra-curricular activities.
123. The resources made available to the department are managed well. The standard of accommodation on both sites, that has been poorly maintained, is a barrier to raising standards of attainment in this subject and is a barrier to meeting the full range of students with special educational needs. Health and safety procedures within the department are managed well, however, poor maintenance of outside facilities raise safety concerns. The National Curriculum coverage and delivery for Years 7 to 9 for both boys and girls are adequate, but high-level skill development is difficult to deliver because of the accommodation and, in Years 10 and 11, this restricts achievement.
124. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The department has been awarded and has re-applied for Sportsmark, and has introduced JSLA and CSLA schemes within the curriculum. A well-managed system of monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching is in place that helps to identify good practice and supports professional development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The taught course of citizenship in Years 10 and 11 meets requirements.
- The programme of study for citizenship in Years 7 to 9 is not fully covered.
- The system for recording and assessing students' achievement in citizenship in Years 7 to 9 is not yet fully operational.
- There are weaknesses in the system for recording students' achievements in developing their skills of participation and responsible action.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

125. In Years 10 and 11, all students follow a discrete course in citizenship. This has been well planned and resourced to meet National Curriculum requirements. Students have notebooks to record their written work and this gives the subject status in their eyes. Work scrutiny and observations indicate that students are working in line with the national expectations. They are able to discuss issues such as local debates and can evaluate the role of the media in presenting such debates. They demonstrate an increasing knowledge of the legal system.
126. In Years 7 to 9, there is a linked approach to the provision of citizenship through PSHE and other curriculum subjects. The contribution of PSHE is strong throughout as well as including some taught units of explicit citizenship knowledge and understanding. There is a good community unit for Years 7 and 8 planned for in the last half of the summer term. There are plans for contributions to citizenship from other subject areas but, at the moment, these are not effective so that gaps in the coverage are left. Currently, statutory requirements are not met in Years 7 to 9. Similarly, although some assessment information has been recorded for some students, the system is not yet complete. During the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards by the end of Year 9.
127. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. In lessons, students are interested and contribute well to discussion. Skilful teacher preparation of the ground rules for discussion and an insistence on reviewing the facts before discussion takes place are successful in enabling students to make supported arguments. As well as the taught aspects of citizenship, there are good opportunities for students to take part in sporting and artistic activities as well as to take responsibility in college, for example as members of the college council or as mentors for younger students. Currently, there is no systemic mechanism for recording students' achievements in developing their skills of participation and responsible action both in and out of college.
128. Leadership and management of citizenship are unsatisfactory. The subject leader has completed the subject audit and has mapped across the curriculum contributions to citizenship. A system for recording and assessing students' achievement in citizenship in Years 7 to 9 has been set up but is not yet working. Schemes of work and resources for the discrete teaching of citizenship in Years 10 and 11 have been produced. The team teaching this course have received some training and this ensures that in Years 10 and 11 the subject is co-ordinated.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

Level 3 GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Art and design	16	75.0	90.0	25.0	42.7	29.4	39.0
Biology	12	91.7	81.6	0	33.2	26.7	33.2
Business studies	6	100	89.1	33.3	31.7	36.7	35.4
English literature	17	76.5	94.4	0	37.9	19.4	38.9
Geography	5	20.0	88.3	0	36.4	4.0	36.3
History	7	100	91.8	0	37.2	34.3	37.8
Home economics	5	100	74.5	20.0	16.7	34.0	25.6
ICT	5	80.0	78.2	60.0	20.6	40.0	28.5
Mathematics	15	66.7	74.2	46.7	34.3	30.0	31.3
Other social studies	9	100	83.2	22.2	32.5	33.3	33.6
Sports/PE studies	5	60.0	88.2	20.0	27.7	22.0	33.8

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
Art and design	25	88.0	96.1	8.0	48.7	59.2	85.1
Biology	19	100	91.6	42.1	36.3	83.2	74.1
Business studies	12	100	96.4	8.3	32.8	66.7	76.5
Chemistry	6	100	94.0	83.3	45.9	106.7	81.1
English literature	27	100	98.5	14.8	43.7	68.9	84.3
Design and technology	6	100	95.3	66.7	35.5	93.3	76.5
Geography	12	91.7	97.1	16.7	40.5	60.0	80.9
History	7	100	97.1	42.9	41.0	97.1	81.2
Home economics	5	100	97.0	20.0	31.3	76.0	75.7
ICT	7	100	89.1	28.6	22.4	68.6	64.1
Mathematics	11	100	93.3	63.6	52.2	89.1	84.7
Other social studies	5	100	94.3	60.0	38.9	88.0	77.7
Physics	15	100	92.8	53.3	42.8	84.0	78.6
Sociology	14	100	95.4	35.7	39.6	84.3	79.1
Sports/PE studies	13	100	95.4	30.8	29.5	70.8	73.2
Travel and tourism	8	100	88.1	12.5	15.7	80.0	61.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was selected as a focus for the inspection. French was sampled. By Year 13, standards in French are above those nationally and teaching is good.

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have fallen since the last inspection. Current attainment in Year 13 is in line with national expectations.
- Current achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory.
- Leadership is satisfactory.

Commentary

129. Standards have fallen since the last inspection and results have varied considerably since 1998. English literature A-level results in 2002 were well below the national average. A-level results in 2003 show an improvement. Standards observed in lessons and in the scrutiny of work were broadly in line with those expected nationally, with little significant gender difference.
130. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and achievement is satisfactory overall. The students develop sound approaches to the appreciation of literature as seen in their written work and in lessons, and they are able to use literary terms appropriately. Most are developing detailed knowledge and understanding of themes and the narrative structure of texts.
131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned and learning objectives clear and shared with students. Recap sessions, however, are underdeveloped and there are insufficient opportunities for students to review and consolidate learning. In good lessons, students are able to contribute effectively in discussing interpretation of texts, sustaining arguments and justifying opinions. For example, Year 12 students drew on different literary critics' views in considering Ophelia's development and motives in 'Hamlet'. In contrast, however, Year 13 students lacked independent learning skills and were reliant on the teacher's input to ensure key points were noted in preparing for the synoptic paper, understanding the narrator's function in 'Wuthering Heights' and in considering character development in 'Measure for Measure'. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is used to prompt, coach and encourage students to develop approaches to coursework. Good questioning skills are a feature of effective lessons, and individual, targeted questions are used to assess students' previous knowledge and develop their analytical and evaluative skills.
132. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. An experienced head of department leads a small team of qualified and experienced staff. There are regular departmental meetings, moderation of work and monitoring of student achievement. These contribute effectively to good management.
133. Assessment of student work is thorough and consistent and adheres closely to examination criteria. Teacher assessment correlates well with examination performance. Marking provides a grade and most comments are helpful in identifying areas for development. Students are aware of their targets and progress. Relationships are good, students are co-operative and attitudes to learning are positive.
134. Opportunities to participate in theatre trips and attend local lectures and literary events enrich the provision and contribute to students' understanding and cultural awareness. The book stock

in the upper school learning resource centre is inadequate to support independent research but resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall.

135. The lack of development of independent learning skills remains an outstanding issue from the last inspection but improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

136. Students' language and literacy skills are satisfactory but, for some, this level precludes them from reaching the highest grades in their examination.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The students' achievement is good.
- The quality of the teaching is good overall.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

137. Attainment in mathematics in the AS- and A-level courses is above national expectations although, in Year 12, it is not as high as in Year 13. In the national examinations in 2003 at A-level, one third of the students obtained the top grades A and B, and most of the others passed. This was not as good as the previous year, when two-thirds of the students obtained the top grades. However, in the AS-level examination, just under half of the students scored the higher grades, an achievement matched in the previous year, when this result was well above the national average. In the GCSE course, the success in achieving higher grades is in line with national averages
138. The students' achievement is good. In all the classes, they work hard. They have a very good attitude to work, and are motivated to do as well as they can. Many of the students are relatively passive learners, who are more comfortable applying set processes to find solutions, without seeking to understand the underlying issues. As a result, they can often be more successful in the short term, when they have just learned a process, than later, when they have to recall the appropriate one or combine a series of processes. Some of them do not organise their work in a form that will support achievement through good revision materials. In the GCSE course, most students work hard to improve their grades, although a minority do not improve their chances by poor punctuality.
139. The quality of the teaching is good overall and this is currently having a good impact on students' attainment. The teachers are good mathematicians, with a good degree of familiarity with the requirements of the syllabus, and their explanations are clear and precise. They provide the students with a very good model for tackling standard mathematical problems. In the better lessons, processes and solutions are examined to reveal underlying structures and help deepen the students' understanding of the key concepts. There are also opportunities in these lessons for debate which helps the students uncover the underlying principles.
140. Leadership is good. The course is well managed. The students express satisfaction with most elements of the course, and speak well of the support given them by the teachers. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

141. In the sixth form, applied mathematics often enhances studies in a number of areas. In geography and in health and social care, there is extensive use of statistical methods and, in science, numeracy and algebra, methods are generally found to be adequate for work at the required level.

SCIENCE

Biology was selected as the focus for the inspection.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been above average or well above average in recent examinations.
- Most students achieve very well.
- Very good teaching and tutorial support lead to very good learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

142. A-level results in 2001 were well above average and above average in 2002. The 2003 results were particularly good; two-thirds of students got A or B grades and all passed, but no national comparison is yet available. The majority of students achieved better grades than their GCSE results predicted. AS-level results were above average in 2001 and 2002. The 2003 results were less good because the time to teach the course was reduced and some students who had followed the foundation syllabus at GCSE were unable to reach the standard required to pass. Girls' results have been better than boys' due to their more conscientious approach, greater use of tutorial help and wider reading.
143. Current standards are well above average at A-level and above average at AS-level. Such high standards are due to the expert subject knowledge of the teachers who set challenging activities in class. A very good lesson on sexual reproduction in plants required students to identify the parts of flowering plants and then apply their knowledge to different flowers. The standard of students' coursework is particularly high due to the very good teaching of investigative skills and the extensive tutorial help and encouragement given to students to do their best. Students evaluate their results critically to a high standard. Students' files are well organised, showing a high degree of commitment and forming a sound basis for revision.
144. Most students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are achieving very well compared to predictions based on their GCSE results. However, a few AS-level students are achieving less well because they do not realise the increase in the workload required compared with GCSE, in spite of being told several times. Year 13 students made very good progress in a very well-planned lesson that quickly revised what they knew about photosynthetic pigments and then got them to carry out a challenging exercise to separate them that developed the students' critical analysis of data and deepened their understanding of chromatographic techniques.
145. The standard of teaching and learning is very good. Lesson planning, subject expertise, high expectations and challenge and the ability to motivate students are particular strengths. Most students try hard, work productively and complete homework and assessments to a high standard. Assessment is efficiently targeted at aspects which students find difficult such as sources of error in investigations. The students' work is marked well, errors are identified and

misconceptions pointed out. Assessment criteria are shared with students so they know what is being looked for and how to improve.

146. Leadership and management are very good. The head of biology has a clear direction and enjoys very good working relationships with colleagues, who work well as a team. Learning resources are shared and mutual observation of classes occurs so good practice is spread. The department has maintained the high standards noted in the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results in 2003 were below the national average.
- Current standards in Year 13 are improving and above those expected nationally.
- The current achievement of students in Year 13 is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The head of department gives good leadership to other staff, resulting in good teaching of both coursework and theory.
- There is a good range of options to meet needs of different students.

Commentary

147. Standards in Year 13 were below the unvalidated national results in the 2003 A-level examination, with boys' performance well below that of the girls. The results in the Year 12 AS-level course in 2003, however, were above unvalidated national results which is reflected in the good work of these students, now in Year 13, seen during the inspection. Their coursework is well organised, showing that students have a secure grasp of the issues that they identify in their chosen organisations, and that their grasp of systems and software is sufficient for them to devise viable potential solutions. When asked, they can point to ongoing areas for improvement, showing that they understand the importance of every stage of the design process. They work independently, asking for support when they are struggling and they are able to reason towards their own solutions. In theory lessons, they co-operate well with each other, making relevant points that demonstrate good overview of the details of areas that they are studying. Year 12 students seen discussing potential errors in data capture are building well on their standards at GCSE to develop their overall understanding and ability to apply their knowledge.
148. Achievement of the present Year 13 students is good in comparison with their GCSE results. Their present standard of coursework is good in comparison with that of the unit covered in Year 12, in that they show greater understanding that results in greater flair in devising solutions. The work meets the requirements of the examination more securely than that in the past, when it was downgraded.
149. This improvement in standards is the result of good teaching. Teachers have analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the course and of individual students, and have acted to improve the students' understanding. Theory lessons that focus on discussing the students' knowledge gained through personal research succeed in giving students an understanding of implications and links. Teachers improve students' performance by emphasising the relevance of theory lessons to practice in coursework. Lessons are planned to involve all students in research, analysis, group and whole-class discussion so that they all have to contribute and benefit from the development of their own ideas in the light of other views. As a result, students work hard and know that their views have to be supported by evidence from their reading or experience.

150. The department is well led. The head of department has analysed performance and identified realistic avenues for improvement. New members of the department are well supported by good induction and team teaching so that standards of teaching are consistently good.
151. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory in that standards have been maintained at A-level and the level of equipment has improved to meet a wide range of students' learning needs.

GNVQ IT

152. One lesson of GNVQ IT was observed. Teaching was satisfactory. Although numbers are very small and attendance is now poor, the achievement of students in their first module was good, with all candidates attaining distinction level.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

153. Students' ICT capabilities are satisfactory and enable them to research topics and present them appropriately.

HUMANITIES

Geography was selected as a focus for the inspection. History and religious education were sampled. In religious education, in the lesson observed, teaching and learning were good. In the history lesson observed, students learnt very well because of the teacher's very good planning and organisation.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in 2002 were below standards nationally.
- Good teaching is leading to good learning in the current Years 12 and 13.
- Teachers and students share a strong commitment to raising standards at AS-level.
- The leadership and management are good.

Commentary

154. At A-level in 2003, nine of the ten candidates achieved grades A-E, which was in line with their performance in other subjects. This was similar to results in 2002 when 11 out of the 12 candidates achieved grades A-E, with one achieving the highest A grade. This represents good achievement for these students. At AS-level in 2003, 21 of the 28 candidates achieved grades A-E, with one achieving the highest grade. This was an improvement on the disappointing results in 2002, when only eight of the 20 students passed. The department has analysed these results carefully and has identified a number of factors that contributed to them. In particular, changes have been made to AS-level coursework and schemes of work and there is now a strong team of teachers in place after a period of staffing changes. The number of students opting to study geography has significantly increased in the past two years. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of the students' work in the current Years 12 and 13 confirm that the standards they are now attaining are above those expected nationally and that this represents good achievement for all the students.
155. Students are committed to their work, speak with enthusiasm about differing aspects of the course and are clearly enjoying geography. They are aware of what they need to do to improve and work well independently. Students are able to handle data with great confidence and are

developing good geographical skills. They show an increasing ability to explain the geographical patterns that they can identify using appropriate and precise geographical vocabulary.

156. The teaching of geography is good. Strong features of this are good teacher knowledge, planning and questioning. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, the teacher had planned to work with each student individually. The teacher skilfully used questioning to help the students to clarify their thinking about their research on traffic issues in Lewes. This lesson formed part of a well-planned sequence that had enabled the students to collect their own data, taught them how to analyse it and so prepared them to develop their own ideas. The teaching is well informed on both the assessment demands of the syllabus and the learning needs of the students. Relationships between students and teachers are very good, characterised by good humour, which creates an atmosphere where students are willing to take risks. The fieldwork opportunities, such as the visits to The Cevennes and Poland, make a very positive contribution to students' learning, providing them with some unusual case studies to draw upon.

157. The leadership and management of geography are good. The department has worked very hard to put right the problems at AS-level. An appropriate focus is being given to examination requirements and the teaching is underpinned by good planning in the schemes of work for all units.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology was sampled. A-level results in 2003 in product design were well below the national average. Current achievement in Year 13 is satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Music and music technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are consistently close to the national average.
- Teaching is very good, helping students to achieve well.
- Students are highly motivated and show excellent attitudes.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

158. Results were broadly in line with those nationally in 2003 for those students taking the A-level examinations, and below average in the AS-level examinations. Male students are in the majority and generally out-perform female students. Standards in work seen are broadly in line with course expectations for music technology students and above this for those following the music course. All students perform well on rock and orchestral instruments and this adds value to their musical development. The music technology students improve their recognition of live, analogue, digital and sampled sounds and practise assessing different genre as part of their listening and analysing module. Because they have regular use of the recording studio, their sequencing and recording skills improve. The music students use Duke Ellington's work to understand differences in jazz styles. By analysing and evaluating questions from past papers, they also make critical judgements about the use of elements, structures and resources found in baroque, classical and romantic music. Students on both courses regularly play together and reach a high standard of proficiency in their jazz improvisations. Professional workshops by DJs (disc jockeys), film critics and musicians, together with visits to London opera houses and concert halls, widen students' horizons and strengthen their understanding of career possibilities in the music industry.

159. Teaching is very good and lessons are challenging and well planned. Because teachers have very good subject knowledge and complimentary skills, they prepare students very well for both examinations. Classroom organisation and management are extremely effective, considering that space throughout the department is rather cramped. Students' work is regularly assessed to give them a good indication of their present performance and likely grades. Because there is a relaxed and businesslike atmosphere in the lessons, students are highly motivated.
160. The quality of leadership is very good and dedicated to ensuring high standards. Management is strong, and thorough self-evaluation has established the department's strengths and areas for improvement.

Photography

Provision in photography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the national average.
- Students are well motivated and increasingly independent learners and their achievement is good by Year 13.
- There are limitations in knowledge of contemporary art practice by many students.
- The late introduction to camera skills has slowed students' technical knowledge and understanding in photography.
- Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.

Commentary

161. Examination success in A-level photography in 2003 has improved upon the previous year, with 76 per cent awarded grades A-E compared with 63 per cent in 2002. However, this is still below the national average. Girls' attainment is significantly higher than boys'. At AS-level, attainment is broadly in line with the national picture and has improved upon the previous year's results. Recruitment onto the course is healthy and course completion numbers are high.
162. In Year 12, photography students soundly develop their expressive skills in a unit based upon photograms. They are introduced to techniques of photographic experimentation with light and dark room processes alongside an exploration of creative and aesthetic qualities of surface, texture, tone, shape and composition. They quickly extend their skills in visual investigation and research using natural forms, the environment, personal objects and through the study of a range of artists and photographers, recording their responses in their work journals. Those students following both art and design and photography courses are sometimes able to build well upon their experience of both disciplines to imaginative and creative effect, with the best work demonstrating flair in composition and texture, helped by access to digital media outside college. However, because students are only introduced to camera skills in their second unit, they have a limited range of technical expertise and knowledge. A lack of access to image manipulation software in college restricts the creative use of ICT. A scrutiny of student workbooks and discussion of their experiences and knowledge of the subject indicate that most are on line to achieve a satisfactory AS-level grade. In the context of open recruitment onto the course, with relatively low GCSE grades, this indicates satisfactory achievement overall with some students achieving well.
163. Year 13 photography students achieve well and attainment is appropriate for their ability. The most able students produce lively, contextual study boards and carry out in-depth, critical and visual research in well-presented work journals. Technical skills in photographic picture making show competence and often confidence but there is only limited connectivity with their art and design practice which restricts creativity and continuity of work across the two disciplines.

164. Sixth-form photography students are well motivated and work hard. They are increasingly independent learners, supported by teaching which is appropriate in style and is knowledgeable. Teachers' methods foster positive relationships with their students and lessons are relaxed but purposeful. Teacher assessment is informative and diagnostic. Progression into further and higher education is regular and, during the inspection, a number of students were attending interviews for art college places. Opportunities for learning outside college are good and there are regular study visits to galleries and museums and the opportunity to exhibit at a local gallery.
165. The photography curriculum is competently organised and has satisfactory resources with the exception of ICT provision. The subject benefits from sound management and good leadership which should ensure an improvement in standards in the future.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current attainment in lessons is above that expected nationally for the courses.
- Students achieve well.
- Teaching is good and students learn well.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory.
- Good links have been established with the local doctors' practice and health centre.

Commentary

166. It is not possible to give a judgement on the trends in performance owing to the introduction of a new course and the low numbers of students completing the double award in 2003. However, the standards observed in lessons and in the scrutiny of work indicate that current attainment is above that expected nationally for the courses.
167. Very good formative assessment practice gives students constructive written and oral feedback on both the AS-level and GNVQ Intermediate courses and clearly identifies next steps in learning. This enables these students to achieve well. Teachers know the students well and vary tasks to cater for their needs and interests.
168. Teaching is good. Students following both AS-level and GNVQ Intermediate courses are well supported and teachers provide stimulating resources to motivate and develop understanding of concepts. Course and lesson planning is thorough. Students following both courses demonstrated good keyboarding skills. As a result, students are developing good research skills and they confidently analyse and evaluate their findings, as was evident with AS-level students who had devised a questionnaire to investigate the services available at the local health centre and patients' views of them. They are able to use Word and Excel confidently to present their work. Relationships in class are good.
169. GNVQ Intermediate students are coping well with studying three units concurrently and good links have been made between the units. Assignments have been appropriately differentiated. The students are developing confidence and good communication skills as well as acquiring practical knowledge and understanding of first aid. For example, these students made good progress in moving from theory to a practical assessment of their ability to place one another in the recovery position.
170. Leadership and management of this vocational area in the college are satisfactory, with experienced staff contributing effectively to the day-to-day running of courses. There is currently

no action plan to identify priorities for the development of the courses, save the intention to move to BTEC First and National courses.

171. Good links have been established with the local GP and health centre for AS-level students. GNVQ Intermediate students have a limited range of contacts to enrich their studies. The use of visiting speakers, appropriate visits, and links generally with the wider community, remain underdeveloped.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

