

INSPECTION REPORT

TOLLBAR BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE

New Waltham, Grimsby

LEA area: North East Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 118091

Headteacher: Mr D Hampson

Lead inspector: Mr I Thompson

Dates of inspection: 1-5 March 2004

Inspection number: 259137

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	2093
School address:	Station Road New Waltham Grimsby
Postcode:	DN36 4RZ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Bond
Date of previous inspection:	22/9/97

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Tollbar Business and Enterprise College is a much larger than average, 11-19 mixed comprehensive school serving a suburban area of Grimsby that includes some areas of considerable social and economic deprivation. More parents wish to send their children to the college than there are places available. There are 2093 students on roll, 297 of whom are in the sixth form. The college's sixth form provision is enhanced through partnership with the local FE college and other schools. Below average proportions of students join or leave the college at other than the usual times. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of students are white; very few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Six students are at an early stage of learning English. The college has four students who are in public care. The college's data show that students' standards when they join the college are below average. The proportion of students on the college's register of special educational needs is about average. The proportion with statements of special educational needs, most of which refer to emotional and behavioural difficulties or moderate learning difficulties, is below average.

As part of its responsibilities for business and enterprise, the college has initiated or led a number of local initiatives aimed at raising standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12271	I Thompson	Lead inspector	
9724	B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector	
19913	R Garrett	Team inspector	English
8341	W Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics
31255	D Williamson	Team inspector	Science; Chemistry
15051	L Kauffman	Team inspector	Design and technology
32211	B Geoghegan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
3793	J Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
30427	F Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History
22849	R Catlow	Team inspector	Geography
11258	I Rushforth	Team inspector	Art and design
29351	L Pearson	Team inspector	Music
30800	B Colley	Team inspector	Physical education; special educational needs
20716	R Grogan	Team inspector	Citizenship; religious education
21855	D Carty	Team inspector	Business education
19229	S Morton	Team inspector	Post 16 English; English as an additional language
2141	J Oxley	Team inspector	Post 16 physical education
18462	B Jones	Team inspector	Psychology
30749	H Boyle	Team inspector	Post 16 art and design; sociology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The college provides a good standard of education. The headteacher provides inspirational direction and the college has many strengths. It fulfils its wider responsibilities as a business and enterprise college very well. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average but well below average in comparison with similar colleges. Students achieve well as they move through the college. The college provides good value for money.

The college's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average.
- The college is well led and managed, but middle managers' roles and responsibilities are not sufficiently well defined in relation to monitoring the application of policies and classroom standards.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The college provides a good climate for learning in an enterprise based environment.
- The business and enterprise based curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities to meet the needs of students of all abilities.
- Students' behaviour is good in response to the college's high expectations for their conduct.
- The support and guidance provided for students are very good.
- Students benefit from the college's very good links with the community and business and in the sixth form from very good links with other schools and a college.
- Some aspects of the timetable and the organisation of the college day affect standards.
- The library does not support students' learning well enough.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards are much as they were. Teaching is better with a higher proportion that is very good. Provision for students with special educational needs has improved considerably. The curriculum offers a much wider range of opportunities. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is much improved. Accommodation and the provision of resources, particularly for information and communication technology (ICT), have been improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	B	B	E
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	B	A	A	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.

Standards are average at the end of Year 9 and this represents good achievement in relation to students' standards when they joined the college. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average, representing good achievement in Years 10 and 11 in relation to students' standards at the end of Year 9. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well below average. This comparison does not do the school full justice because it does not take account of the differences in the college's curriculum. Nevertheless, overall standards were affected by unusually low results in science. Students reach above average standards in the sixth form and achieve well in relation to their earlier learning.

Students' personal qualities, including their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Students have good attitudes in the main college; students' attitudes in the sixth form are very good. Behaviour throughout the college is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The college provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement. Curricular opportunities are more than usually broad and the college provides very good opportunities for enrichment as a result of its specialist business and enterprise college status. Provision for ICT to support learning is exceptionally good. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good; support for learning outside the college day is very good. The college makes very good arrangements for students' care and guidance. Very well analysed assessment data are used well to promote students' progress. The college makes very good use of opportunities in the community and links with business to support learning. Achievement is affected by the unsatisfactory quality of accommodation in design and technology, science and music.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides exceptionally clear, inspirational educational direction for the college's improvement and leads by example. The result is that the college constantly seeks to improve performance. Governors provide very good support for the work of the college and hold it rigorously to account. The college is run as an efficient business for the benefit of its students. Financial management is very good. Statutory requirements are met with the exception of provision of religious education in the sixth form. Although the quality of middle management is generally good, the monitoring and support of teaching at departmental level are not always rigorous enough. The college puts considerable effort into self-evaluation and a very good start has been made but the process requires refining to ensure accuracy and consistency of judgements about the quality of performance across the college.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

Parents and students express a high level of satisfaction with the work of the college. Parents believe that it is a good college in which their children do well. They do not feel well informed about progress. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Reports do not give clear enough information as to how to improve. Students believe the college to be good. They feel that they are well taught and expected to work hard. Inspectors agree with these views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the college should do to improve are:

- Improve the consistency of middle managers' understanding and interpretation of their role in
 - monitoring classroom standards
 - sharing good practice and supporting teaching.
- Review the structure and scheduling of the college day.
- Improve the library provision.
- Improve the accuracy and consistency of self-evaluation.

For the sixth form

- Improve the quality of library provision to support independent learning and research. and to meet statutory requirements:
- provide religious education in the sixth form.

THE SIXTH FORM AT TOLLBAR BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good. It is cost-effective because standards are above average overall, students are achieving well overall and its costs are balanced by its income. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are very effective in developing the sixth form partnership and ensuring that students' individual needs are met.
- Teaching is good and students achieve well. Very good relationships exist between teachers and students. Assessment arrangements contribute well to students' achievement.
- The quality of support, advice and guidance is very good.
- Links with other educational institutions are very good.
- Students very much appreciate what the sixth form provides, and their attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Library provision does not adequately support students' independent learning.

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.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	English - good. Standards are average. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. They lack opportunities to broaden their experience of English outside the classroom. French - satisfactory. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. Standards are average. Some students reach high grades. Speaking skills are underdeveloped.
Mathematics	Mathematics - good. Standards are above average. The subject is very well led and managed. Teaching is good and students achieve well. Attitudes and relationships are very good.
Science	Chemistry - very good. Teaching and learning are very good, and result in very good achievement and attainment that is well above the average standard. Relationships between staff and students are very good. Technical support contributes significantly to effective learning.
Information and communication technology	ICT - good. Standards are above average. Teaching is good and students achieve well, benefiting from teachers' expertise. Very good leadership has brought significant improvement since the last inspection.
Humanities	History - good. Standards are average and students are achieving well. Good teaching, high expectations and good relationships give students confidence in expressing opinions and making judgements. Psychology – good. Standards are broadly average. Teaching is good and students achieve well. Effective assessment and very good resources support students' learning well. More emphasis should be given to study skills. Sociology - good. This is an improving department. A-level results are encouraging. Good teaching provides good explanation and confident delivery of subject knowledge leading to good progress in the classroom. Standards are above average.

Visual and performing arts and media	Art and design - good. Teaching provides particularly good explanation and confident delivery of subject knowledge. Students have strong relationships with their teachers and this has a positive impact on their achievement. Standards are above average.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical education - very good. Standards are well above average in Year 13 because teaching is very good and students are achieving very well. Leadership and management are very good,
Business	Business education – good. Teaching and learning are good. Students achieve well to reach average standards. Very effective use is made of ICT to support students' learning.

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 school. 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 receive very good advice, guidance and support. They receive full information and guidance before entering the sixth form, and subsequently have frequent opportunities to review their progress with tutors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. Very effective leadership has secured the development of the sixth form. Numbers have risen. Very effective management ensures that all involved have the same expectations and despite the large numbers there is a strong focus on development of individual students according to need.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students clearly relish sixth form life and the opportunities it provides. Teachers respect their increasing maturity and students appreciate what teachers do for them. They are keen to work and do well. They feel valued and supported throughout their time in the sixth form. They would welcome greater consultation on aspects of sixth form life and their own contribution to it. Inspectors endorse these views.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are average at the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average. Achievement is good in relation to students' standards when they join the school and when they begin their courses in Year 10. Standards in the sixth form are above average and achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students of all levels of attainment achieve well overall. Achievement in English in Years 10 and 11 is particularly good.
- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 11.
- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are rising at a faster rate than nationally.
- Additional provision for students with special educational needs, gifted and talented students and those with English as an additional language promotes good achievement.

Commentary

1. Students enter the school with below average standards overall. In national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were above average when compared to all schools nationally. Boys' results were above average and girls' results well above. In comparison to similar schools, standards were average in English but below average in mathematics and science; overall, results were below average. Standards in the current Year 9 are average. Lesson observations and analysis of work show achievement to be good. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls, students with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.9 (34.9)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	37.3 (36.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	35.6 (34.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 342 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Overall GCSE results were above average for both boys and girls in 2003 – boys by a greater margin – and the gender gap was less than found nationally. However, when taking students' best eight results for comparison, standards were below average. In comparison with similar schools, results were well below average. Consequently, the rate of improvement in the college's results fell below the national trend and the governors' target for students' performance was not met. These comparisons do not do the college full justice because of the modifications that have been made to the curriculum structure; for example, all students study for examinations in business, ICT and religious education. Nevertheless, overall results were badly affected by results in science examinations. The college management acknowledges that their entry policy both for combined science and the separate sciences was over-ambitious and the result of an attempt to widen the choices available to students. Analysis confirms that students did not do as well as they should have done in science. Whereas in the four previous years results in science were very close to those in mathematics, in 2003 they were well below. Girls' worst performance was in the three separate sciences and double award science; double award science, biology and chemistry were among the worst subjects for boys. Steps have been taken to remedy the situation this year and the governors have set a challenging target for improved performance.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	51 (55)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.1 (36.4)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 313 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In work seen during the inspection in Years 7-9, standards are average in most subjects. They are above average in English, mathematics, art and design, French and music. Standards are below average in design and technology because of a relatively low allocation of curriculum time, poor accommodation and inadequate resources. In Years 10 and 11, standards are well above average in English, history and mathematics. They are above average in art and design, geography, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. Standards are average in all other subjects. Achievement is good in all years, reflecting the overall good quality of teaching. There are no significant differences in the achievement of the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
4. Students with special educational needs make good progress and many achieve better overall than other students when their standards on entry to the school are compared with their GCSE results. Such good achievement is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. It is the result of the support students receive in lessons, being taught in small groups in some subjects, for example English and mathematics, and focused support in homework clubs.
5. Students for whom English is an additional language achieve well. There are only 15 students who are not fully proficient in using English, only six of whom are at an early stage of acquiring the language. A particular strength is the quality of the framework of support that promotes both academic and social inclusion. On admission to the school, tests cover not only students' confidence with the language but also their general academic potential to ensure that they are placed in the appropriate groups and so are sufficiently challenged. Where necessary they are withdrawn from mainstream classes for intensive support. This ensures that they do not feel overwhelmed and that they have the basic language skills to cope with school life. Students in the sixth form are given similar support at Grimsby College. Achievement is carefully monitored and support, such as the use of interpreters for National Curriculum tests, enables students to demonstrate their actual level of ability. Overall, results show that despite their initial language difficulties bilingual and near bilingual students achieve as well as others. Provision for these students is good; language levels are not a barrier to achievement and social needs are also taken into account.
6. Gifted and talented students achieve well in most subjects. However, in music planning does not consistently provide appropriate levels of challenge to ensure students are fully stretched. The targeting of more able students is very good in mathematics and good in English, science, languages, ICT and physical education. In these subjects high expectations and good opportunities are helping to raise standards and achievement of high attaining students. A Year 7 fast track group is achieving well because of the focus on accelerated learning.

Sixth form

7. The average points score in A-level and equivalent examinations in 2003 was well above average. Boys performed better than girls did, as they did in 2002. There was a slightly lower than average proportion of the higher A-B grades, but a much higher than average proportion of A-E grades. Students' average points score was slightly lower than the previous year, but still within the A (well above average) interpretation grade. In the great majority of subjects all students entered obtained at least a pass grade. Subjects with above average results were

biology, design and technology, information technology and mathematics. Students' performance in chemistry was very high, in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Subjects with below average results were French, German, history and physics. Business studies' results were well below average.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	98.9 (97.6)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	27.1 (28.6)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	287.7 (308.5)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- In subjects inspected in detail in this inspection, standards are above average overall. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Most students receive good advice about their choice of courses so that few do not complete their studies. Standards are well above average in chemistry and physical education. They are above average in art and design, mathematics, information technology, and sociology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes are good. Standards of behaviour are also good overall. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of students' personal development are good. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students consider that the college is a good place at which to learn.
- Standards of behaviour are good because students behave well in response to clear expectations and firm management.
- The college's specialist status has a significant impact on students' personal development because they learn to develop the social skills necessary for business.
- Lesson plans routinely include opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: mathematics lessons provide particularly good examples of this.
- A minority of students is reluctant to conform and does not behave well in lessons or around the school.

Commentary

- Students have positive attitudes to the college. Those interviewed during the inspection commented that it was a good place to come to learn. This is evident in the generally good levels of interest in lessons, where students show that they have the necessary motivation to work hard and do well. They are ready to take advantage of the variety of activities offered by the college for students of all abilities, in particular the very extensive opportunities to use modern technology as part of the curriculum.
- Considered overall, students behave well in lessons. The college makes very clear to students that it expects high standards of behaviour and explains why it expects them: it is all part of being businesslike and ensuring that lessons proceed without interruption. These expectations apply equally to standards of dress and uniform. Students understand the discipline required and are prepared to abide by it. There are exceptions: a minority of students refuses to conform to the college's expectations and does not behave well. The college provides extensive help for these students but because of its insistence on high standards, the level of internal exclusions and formal fixed term exclusions is high. Permanent exclusion is used as a last resort. Standards of behaviour outside lessons are less consistently good. There are instances of bullying, but students interviewed were confident these would be reported and dealt with, either by peer mediators or members of staff.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1616	186	10
White – Irish	9	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	8	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	248	0	0

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

- There has been a considerable improvement in students’ personal development. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was an issue in the previous inspection report. Now opportunities to include these aspects are a routine part of lesson planning and checks take place to see that they are not missed out. As a result, subjects across the curriculum make sure that they provide time for students to reflect upon their work, or to discuss and explore wider issues. The mathematics department – rarely cited in this area – does so with imagination and success.
- As part of the college’s specialist status, there is a particular emphasis given to students’ social development. All students study how businesses function and thus become aware of the interactive social skills required. Tutor groups are organised by houses, not year groups. Students therefore learn to mix among themselves with others of different ages as part of the college’s daily routine. They share tutorials and take part in house competitions. Students interviewed were keen to say how much they gained from this practice.
- The level of attendance at the college is satisfactory, close to the average for schools nationally. The amount of unauthorised absence is low. Punctuality is good. This is largely because the college works hard to promote good attendance and punctuality and has efficient monitoring procedures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	0.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Sixth form

- Students’ attendance and punctuality are good. Their attitudes to their studies and their behaviour are both very good. Their personal development is good overall.

15. Sixth form students have very good attitudes to the college. They particularly value the wide choice of courses available. This is one reason for the very high levels of motivation. Students come prepared to work hard and to adjust to a different style of teaching and learning in order to improve. Their relationships with their teachers are very good: this shows clearly in their obvious enjoyment of lessons and their mature behaviour. The sixth form is largely run as a separate establishment. While this brings benefits, it also restricts the extent to which students are involved in the main part of the college – working with younger students for example – which would contribute further towards their personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the college is good. Students achieve well because of good teaching in a purposeful atmosphere for learning. The curriculum, level of care and links with the community are very good. The partnership with parents is good but the extent to which students are listened to is only satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, supported by good assessment procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan lessons well. Unsatisfactory teaching is the result of planning that does not meet the college's usually high standards.
- Students achieve well in the college's business-like atmosphere that gives purpose to learning.
- Good use of resources engages and maintains students' interest.
- Teachers build upon good relationships to manage classes well and maintain the pace of learning.
- Although included in schemes of work, opportunities are missed in practice to contribute to the school's wider aims such as the development of literacy and numeracy.

Commentary

16. Teaching and learning are good overall in all years. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was the result of a failure to plan to meet students' needs. Teaching is very good in English for Years 10 and 11 and in sixth form physical education and chemistry. With the exception of design and technology, science and business education in Years 7-9 and science in Years 10 and 11, where it is satisfactory, teaching is good in all other subjects across the college.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 200 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (2%)	39 (20%)	99 (50%)	52 (26%)	5 (3%)	1 (1%)	0

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

17. Such good teaching is the result of continuous monitoring, support and professional development by senior and middle managers. The only relatively common deficiency in this management process is the lack of attention paid in some areas to the provision in subjects for contributing to the college's cross-curricular objectives of literacy, numeracy and personal development. This deficiency stems from a lack of clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for monitoring classroom standards within the faculty management structure. That apart, teaching across the school has many strengths, the effect of which is that the great majority of students enjoy learning and achieve well.

18. Planning is the key strength of teaching. Teachers use their good knowledge of their subjects to plan lessons that engage students' interest and generally meet their individual needs well. Most lessons begin with a clear statement of objectives so that students know what is expected of them. When objectives are reviewed at the end of lessons, their learning is reinforced and often good links are made to earlier learning and learning in other subjects. Good planning results in careful choice of methods and resources together with timing of activities to maintain interest and pace. ICT is used especially well and is a contributory factor particularly in boys' achievement. Good relationships underpin good classroom management so that most lessons are conducted in a purposeful, business-like atmosphere. When teaching is unsatisfactory, planning does not take sufficient account of students' needs, objectives are unclear and expectations are seldom high enough. The result is that pace suffers with attendant difficulties of classroom management.
19. An excellent Year 7 French lesson embodied all the strengths of teaching in the college. First, the planning of the lesson was evident in the impressive use of an interactive whiteboard to engage students' interest and to illustrate key points in the lesson. Well chosen activities, timed to perfection, meant that the lesson progressed at a cracking pace and interest was maintained. No time was wasted. Classroom management was secure because students were so involved in the lesson. Above all, learning in this lesson was fun. Nevertheless, it was a very challenging lesson that the teacher drove hard; students were made to think and developed their confidence in using the language.
20. Teaching of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes is good because of the support they receive and because teachers know them well and most plan to meet their needs. Support assistants are effective in lessons because there is joint planning for their involvement. Teaching in the inclusion department links well with individual education plans (IEPs) and support assistants work very effectively with students. All students who have special educational needs have IEPs. The targets in these plans for students with statements are satisfactory, but they are not always specific enough by being different from the expectations of all students. Discussion shows that most teachers and learning support assistants do judge students' achievements against their targets in class even though these are not fully recorded.
21. Detailed information about students who have English as an additional language is available to all subject teachers to help them work efficiently with them. However, in lessons seen during the inspection, students' precise requirements had not always been identified and therefore there are some inconsistencies in the use and application of the available information. Overall, assessment is good. The college has a wealth of data on students' attainment; Year 6 test scores, primary school teacher assessments and Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) scores form the baseline for a profile of each student on entry to the college. The college's 'Quality Mark' assessment process effectively adds to this profile as students move through the college. The data is thoroughly analysed to establish targets for each student for the end of Year 9 and these are reviewed at the beginning of Year 10 to set targets for GCSE examinations. This thoroughness is a strength of the college's assessment procedures. The quality of marking and assessment in subjects is good overall; National Curriculum levels and GCSE grade criteria are used well across the college. The processes usually ensure that students know the levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve. This is not always consistent, however, across some subjects. Assessment information is generally used well to monitor achievement. Very good practice is seen in particular in English and modern foreign languages.

Sixth form

22. Teaching is good overall, showing the same strengths as in the main school, and students learn well as a result. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and a very high proportion was good or better. This is a very similar picture to that described in the previous inspection report. Teaching is very good in chemistry and physical education.

23. A strong feature of the good teaching is teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They use these effectively to guide students' learning. Teachers combine their good subject knowledge with well-planned lessons and a variety of activities and methods that effectively meet the needs of their students. Learning is strengthened by the constructive advice and individual support that teachers provide in tutorials. Teachers use assessment and marking particularly well to identify needs and help students improve. These attributes of good teaching are reinforced by very good relationships between teachers and students and among students themselves. As a result most students have good attitudes to their work and achieve well. Students are particularly keenly motivated in art and design, chemistry, mathematics and physical education. The occasional weakness appears in individual subject reports but together they do not represent a general trend or widespread factor affecting the overall quality of teaching and learning.
24. Assessment in the sixth form is good. The performance of students in GCSE examinations in Year 11 is used well to set targets for GCE A-level examinations. Teachers use the information well to support students' achievement and to plan for the needs of individuals and groups of students. Students' progress is checked regularly and targets reviewed; students are well informed about what they need to do to improve. Teachers assess students' work thoroughly with examination criteria used effectively to ensure that students know how well they are doing in relation to their targets.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good overall. Provision of resources is good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enrichment beyond the college day are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The college's business and enterprise status has a very positive effect on the structures of the curriculum and the opportunities it offers.
- Arrangements for students' personal, social and health education are very good.
- Students are well prepared for the next stages in their education or employment.
- Continuous review enables the college to adjust the curriculum to students' needs very well.
- Support for learning outside the school day and provision for extra-curricular activities are very good.
- The structure of the college day and time allocations affect achievement in a few subjects.
- Statutory requirements are not met in respect of provision for religious education in the sixth form.

Commentary

25. The curriculum provides good breadth in Years 7-9 and a very good range of opportunities in Years 10 and 11. Management is the key to the strength of the college's curriculum provision. Outstandingly good innovative curricular leadership at senior management level has resulted in a significant increase in the range of courses and pathways for students. A continuous review process ensures that the curriculum is inclusive and accommodates very well the needs of students of all levels of attainment. Good examples are the Year 7 'fast track' group, mentioned elsewhere in this report, the provision for students with English as an additional language, additional classes provided to respond to students' wishes through the 'extended day' and the additional provision for students in Years 10 and 11 whose needs are not met by the conventional curriculum. The newly introduced alternative curriculum effectively meets the needs of disaffected or low attaining students. The school takes the opportunity of some disapplication from subjects to assist these students in training for employment. Students with special educational needs are helped to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in intensive courses in Years 7 and 8 in particular. Courses generally build up self-esteem and develop confidence. Students benefit greatly from the school's generous provision of well-trained support assistants. The class grouping arrangements in Years 7-9 have successfully targeted

needs and reduced any disruption to the timetable. Very good support is available for students with special educational needs during extra-curricular time.

26. The very good arrangements for students' personal, social and health education are rooted in the separate personal and social development faculty. In addition, the college's business and enterprise status is evident across the curriculum in the approaches adopted by individual subjects and the identification of opportunities to contribute to the college's wider aims in departments' schemes of work. The business and enterprise culture makes a significant contribution to the very good preparation of students for the next stage of their education and for employment. Very good support for learning outside the school day is provided by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, homework clubs, additional tutorials and examination preparation classes.
27. The college policy for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students is well constructed. With this guidance in place the college is planning more structured opportunities to support their achievement. Additional opportunities for gifted and talented students are offered through curricular enhancement. For example, assessment leads to a group of students taking mathematics courses early. Some subjects have tried to raise the interests and aspirations of more able students so that they extend their learning. For example, talented games players are put forward for county representation. The gifted and talented policy is in place, and in subjects students have been formally identified. Opportunities for these students are being developed well.
28. An area of relative weakness of the curriculum structure is the effect on achievement in a few subjects. For example, time allocations to design and technology and religious education affect achievement. The distribution of time in the continuous day, where lessons are split across the lunch break, also slows learning.
29. Resources for learning are good. A key strength is the number of computers available, which is well above the number normally seen in a school of this size. As a consequence, ICT pervades all areas of the school and enhances teaching and learning. Very good resources support teaching and learning in ICT, business and special educational needs. In design and technology resources are unsatisfactory where much of the equipment is old. The library is well organised and has improved since the time of the previous inspection but it remains small for a school this size and does not adequately support independent learning and research. Resources are satisfactory in citizenship, art and religious education; all other subjects have a level of resources that is good. Most accommodation is of a good standard but achievement is affected by deficiencies in design and technology and science.
30. The leadership and management of the college have been very focused on ensuring that teaching and support staff are well qualified and effectively deployed to raise standards of teaching and learning and to fully cover the curriculum. Recruitment is carefully planned to ensure that the number of staff appointed to faculties is such that the learning of pupils and good subject leadership and management will not be compromised by unexpected absences. Teachers and support staff receive appropriate professional development and training through the college's performance management process. This process has enabled the deployment of trained numeracy teaching assistants to teach additional numeracy lessons for the lowest attainers in mathematics. Administrative and other support staff, including lunchtime assistants, kitchen staff, caretaking and cleaning staff keep the school grounds and buildings in good order.

Sixth form

31. The curriculum allows very good equality of access and opportunity for all students. The breadth and range of opportunities available through the partnership with Grimsby College persuade many students who would not otherwise consider a sixth form education to do so and also attract students from other institutions. Numbers in Year 12 have risen considerably as a result and current applications are high. All students follow a course in general studies.

Provision for key skills and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is identified in departments' schemes of work. Students whose ICT skills do not reach a minimum standard are given 'booster' classes in the sixth form. Opportunities for enrichment are expanding thanks to links with, for example, HSBC Bank and the Ogden Trust, though the college itself recognises that enrichment opportunities could be further developed. In these respects improvement since the last inspection has been good, since curriculum provision was a key issue for the college at that time. However, provision for religious education still does not meet statutory requirements because of the difficulties arising from the college's joint arrangements with other institutions, for one of which provision of religious education is not a statutory requirement.

32. Accommodation and resources are very good overall. Students have a separate sixth form centre on the Tollbar site and access to facilities at Grimsby College. ICT facilities have improved considerably and there is very effective use of interactive whiteboards in several subjects to support teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare and safety of students is very good. Staff draw on an extensive range of information to provide high quality support and guidance for students. Support for students whose behaviour is a barrier to learning is particularly strong. Student involvement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students value the continuity of support and sense of community provided by the house system.
- Systems to support students' academic and personal progress make very effective use of modern technology, as befits a business college.
- Student involvement is not as strong as it could be because students consider the student council (the main forum for this) a somewhat detached body, and they do not learn the results of questionnaires.

Commentary

33. The college looks after the students in its care very well. Health education forms part of this care and here the college has recently sought and won a Healthy Schools Award. Child protection procedures are comprehensive with training and guidance given to all members of staff. Safety routines include a large number of staff trained in first aid procedures. The college changed the way it organises students into tutor groups some two years ago. Students of different ages now make up these groups in a series of 'houses'. Tutors and house staff make sure they know students well. The houses provide continuity and a sense of community, which is important given the very large size of the college. Students interviewed said how much they appreciate this.
34. The college collects a very extensive range of data about students' academic and personal progress. As befits a business and enterprise college, modern technology is used to make this information readily accessible. Members of staff draw on this information to provide high quality support and guidance for students. This is done at the regular formal reviews of academic and personal targets, and through mentoring programmes as well as when a particular need arises. Support for students whose behaviour is a barrier to learning is particularly strong.
35. On the whole, arrangements to involve students in the life of the college are satisfactory, though involvement is not as strong as it could be. The college uses the student council as the main forum for consultation but students, especially older ones, find it remote from them. They are not readily aware of its actions and so do not feel involved. One reason for this may be that while the college does survey students, they do not learn the results of these questionnaires.

Sixth form

36. Standards of care are very good, as in the main part of the college. Students receive very good support and guidance during their time in the sixth form. Arrangements to involve students are satisfactory.
37. Overall, sixth form students feel that they get very good guidance. This applies both when choosing courses and while they are studying at the college. New systems, such as the academic tutorials, provide particularly good academic support, though some subjects are still learning how to use them. The guidance that students receive about university or employment choices is good. The level of sixth form student involvement is no more than satisfactory, as in the main college, and for the same reason: students feel that the college should enable them to play a more active part and seek their views more.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good overall. The college provides good information for parents about its work, but information about their children's progress is more variable. Links with the local community are very good. Links with other schools and colleges are a further strength. The college makes effective use of its specialist status to strengthen its partnerships.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The college provides a wealth of information which parents can access on its website.
- Links with the community are very well developed by the college as a whole and in many subject areas.
- Local primary schools benefit from the expertise of the college's advanced skills teachers.
- Reports do not give enough information about how students can improve their standards.

Commentary

38. The college has developed good links with parents. It provides a great deal of information for them about the college, especially on its website. The range and the quality of this information are very good. The termly assessment reports provide good information about standards, which help parents to track their children's progress during the year. However, the annual descriptive reports need improvement, because they do not give enough information about how students can improve their standards. The college routinely notifies parents about their children's achievements and is quick to react to concerns. Although parents are generally pleased with what the college provides – and certainly want their children to go there – their involvement is not extensive. Attendance at consultation evenings is lower than average and there is no longer a college parents' association because of the difficulties in maintaining sufficient active support.
39. The college makes the most of its specialist status both to provide a range of amenities for the local community and to use expertise available locally. Local educational and sporting groups use college facilities regularly. Some sixth form students help to teach computing skills to local residents. Almost all members of staff have had outside placements to gain business experience and to learn how to adapt business skills to college use. This is an impressive achievement.
40. Links with other schools and colleges are very effective at both primary and secondary level. Through the exchange programme, the college also has productive links with a French and a German school. At primary level the college has effective transitional arrangements and very good curricular links. As part of the specialist status requirement to share expertise, the college's advanced skills teachers take lessons in local schools. This is done both by visiting the schools and by using video-conferencing techniques.

Sixth form

41. Links with parents are good, while links with the community and other colleges are very good. Students benefit from the extensive links that the college has established with the local community and from the strength of the North East Lincolnshire Partnership. The partnership arrangements work very well. As a result, the range of courses available is extensive. This enables students who would not otherwise choose sixth form education to do so.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership. Management is good. The governance of the college is very good overall but statutory requirements are not met in relation to the provision of religious education in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership provides an exceptional clarity of vision and sense of purpose, which determines the college's direction.
- Excellent strategic planning, which reflects the college's ambitions and goals, is contributed to by the governing body's challenge and support of the leadership team.
- The headteacher and governing body's approaches to financial management help the college to achieve educational priorities.
- Inconsistencies in the use of self-evaluation to reach accurate judgements are hampering the capacity of middle managers to take effective action after the monitoring of performance data.

Commentary

42. Despite difficulties of recruitment, retention and low levels of funding, the college is a self-evaluating organisation that is successfully run on business lines, emphasising its business and enterprise culture. Governors are fully behind the headteacher's vision and contribute positively to the planning of strategy and are proud of having invested in the headteacher the executive powers of a managing director of a business organisation. They set performance management objectives for the headteacher long before this became a statutory requirement and are passionate in their desire to give the community a college of which they can be proud. Governors know the college's strengths very well and pride themselves on asking difficult questions in their search for quality of provision, which they believe parents and students of the area deserve. Their oversight of finances is very good and they are knowledgeable about the advantages of being a 'cheque book' college and place great emphasis on using funding most effectively to the benefit of current students. The governing body has clear aims and policies to guide the work of the college and all the policies required by law are provided. All statutory requirements are met with the exception of provision for religious education in the sixth form. Because of joint sixth form curricular provision with other schools and a further education college, where religious education is not a requirement, governors have been unable to make effective provision for all students. Overall achievement is not hampered by this omission.
43. The headteacher provides exceptionally clear inspirational educational direction for the college's improvement. He leads by example and is well supported by the senior leadership team in translating vision into practice. The result is that the college constantly seeks to improve performance. The effectiveness of leadership is confirmed by improvements in standards, students' achievements, teaching and accommodation that have taken place despite the lowest level of funding in the local education authority and significant staff turnover, usually occasioned by promotion or family relocation. The headteacher embodies the innovative, entrepreneurial culture that the college is developing in its students. Examples include the video conferencing of a mathematics advanced skills teacher lesson to a partner primary school; the start of the new college year for Years 8 to 11 in June instead of September; the determination of the college to secure high profile sponsorship; the development of wide ranging uses of ICT for internal and external college websites to improve

information management, marketing and promoting the college's brand; and the placing of all senior managers on business contracts. The headteacher is self-critical, uses external consultants widely, believes that the local education authority is there for illumination not support and encourages the governing body to be part of the extended management team as critical friends.

44. Management is good overall. There are some notable strengths in middle management in both the pastoral system and curriculum leaders. In particular, the quality of relationships provides a good model for both staff and students. An outstandingly consistent feature is middle managers' commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of others. Although the quality of middle management is generally good, the monitoring and support for teaching at faculty and departmental level is not always rigorous enough. The college puts considerable effort into self-evaluation and a very good start has been made. The process now requires refining to ensure accuracy and consistency of judgements about the quality of performance across the college. Staff development and training are well established and linked directly to the college's management plan and priorities. All staff have performance management objectives and are supported in the full achievement of these. Another feature of good practice is the 'exit interviews' with all staff leaving the college that are shared with the governors in order to continuously improve processes of recruitment, reward and retention. All staff enjoy a comprehensive induction process. The college is committed to initial teacher training and works well with partners in providing a high quality experience for trainees.
45. Financial management is very good and supports the college's purposes very well. A recent audit found the financial management in the college to be of a very high standard. Records and documentation are well maintained and accurate. A business-like approach has been taken to strategic financial planning with commercial concepts, processes and packages being applied to the college as a business. For example, the college employs external consultants to validate any major projects. The college also invests money on secure money markets in order to maximise return upon the funding it receives, which, per capita, is the lowest in the local education authority. Day-to-day management of the college's finances is very efficient and the principles of best value are applied to all aspects of the college's work. The principle of making full use of available funds for current students means that the college manages with a very small contingency reserve. The headteacher demonstrates excellent strategic resource planning skills and oversight of systems and processes to ensure both very efficient and very effective deployment of resources to the benefit of students.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	5,956,681
Total expenditure	5,815,195
Expenditure per student	3,106

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,420
Balance carried forward to the next	148,906

Sixth form

46. The strong pre-inspection impression of forward-thinking leadership and very well organised, efficient management was confirmed at the inspection. This is particularly the case in respect of the successful joint partnership arrangement for sixth form provision with Grimsby College and St. James' School. It demonstrates very clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations by key staff, and represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, 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

- Good leadership has brought about good improvement since the previous inspection and difficult staffing circumstances are being managed well.
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good and has a significant effect on raising standards at GCSE level.
- Very effective assessment procedures and marking contribute particularly well to students' good achievement.
- Inconsistencies in teaching in Years 7 to 9 affect the quality of some learning: subject to further regular monitoring and sharing of good practice the capacity for improvement is good.

Commentary

47. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were above average compared to all schools, and average in comparison with similar schools. Students achieved at least as well as expected. GCSE results in English were above average and English literature results were significantly above average, representing good overall achievement given students' above average performance in national tests two years before. This good achievement was particularly apparent in the performance of boys, who did significantly better than boys nationally in both examinations and whose performance in English literature was better than in any other subject.
48. Standards in work seen are above average by Year 9 and well above average by Year 11. Most students develop good analytical skills, organise their writing well, show good understanding of texts and write confidently about them at length. Students' personal and creative writing and their spoken confidence are pleasing features of their attainment. Some over-lengthy though knowledgeable writing among higher attaining Year 10 students leads to weak conclusions and they would benefit from a focus on key points in constructing an argument rather than attempting to cover everything in detail.
49. Achievement is good throughout the age range because of several effective aspects of the department's approach. In Years 7-9, programmes of work take full account of the Key Stage 3 Strategy's Framework for teaching English. As a result, students benefit from a wide range of opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and tackle interesting work that is carefully structured to meet the needs of students with special educational needs and suitably challenging for higher attainers. ICT is used effectively to develop students' capability. In all years, students benefit from very effective assessment procedures. Marking of written work explains very well what they need to do to improve and sets suitable targets for improvement based on clear descriptions of levels or grades. Students also have opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their own progress.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There is a clear distinction between teaching quality in Years 7-9, where it is good overall, and in Years 10 and 11, where it is very good. The difference arises directly from the necessary and appropriate deployment of less experienced teachers to the younger age groups because of continuing difficulties in recruiting and securing a stable staff. Some weaknesses in planning for the needs of students and in

lesson timing are evident, resulting in problems of classroom management and consequent effects on learning. One lesson seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory. Other teaching, however, including that of a newly qualified teacher and of teachers from other subjects who contribute to English, is good. In Years 10 and 11 experienced and very skilled teachers involve students actively in their learning. They ensure, through their high expectations, very well paced lessons and very good relationships, that students work with purpose and very productively. These teachers provide continuity, expertise and consistency of approach – they are powerful influences on students' very good achievement in these years.

51. Good leadership is responsible for the good improvement made since the previous inspection. Despite staffing changes and uncertainties that still to an extent persist, standards are higher by the end of Year 11, achievement is good because overall teaching quality has improved, and curriculum development has been sustained. The process of establishing a consistently effective teaching team is being managed well overall. Further regular monitoring and sharing of good practice are required to iron out teaching inconsistencies and weaknesses so that all students are taught equally effectively. Assuming these developments, the capacity for further improvement by the present team is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. As a result of effective guidance, regular checking and good development planning by the literacy co-ordinator and his team, most subjects make a good contribution to the development of students' language and literacy skills. In history, for example, students produce lively written work and are accustomed to presenting material orally using appropriate subject vocabulary. Teachers provide good models for speaking clearly and effectively. In ICT, teachers pay attention to accuracy in students' writing and provide good opportunities for speaking and collaborative discussion in pairs. There is inconsistency in applying effective strategies, however, in such subjects as mathematics and geography, where teachers miss the opportunity to group or categorise 'key words' on display so that students can see how they correspond to particular themes or concepts. In physical education, teachers apply the literacy policy inconsistently and for some it is incidental to their teaching. As a result, literacy skills are less well developed in these areas. Nevertheless, the college has most features of an effective literacy programme in place, to the benefit of its students.

Modern Foreign Languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management have established a strong teaching team.
- Teaching is consistently good and leads to good learning.
- Teachers use assessment very well to set targets and so raise standards.
- Students get very good experience in the use of ICT.
- Boys achieve well, often better than boys do nationally.
- Good provision is made for students with special educational needs.
- Students do not have work books which they could use at home.

Commentary

53. In 2003, the college entered almost half its students for either French or German GCSE examinations with a few students taking both languages. This is well above the national entry, which was below ten per cent. Results in French were above average. In German they were below, but still higher in percentage terms than would have been needed to reach the average level for French. The difference between boys' and girls' performance in French was much less than was the case nationally. In German, boys' performance was not as strong, and their

scores were significantly below their average levels in their other subjects. Teachers' assessments for 2003 indicate above average standards in Year 9 in both languages.

54. Standards in work seen during the inspection in Year 9 are above average in both languages. Higher attaining students can recognise past, present and future tenses and can use the first two of these for their own purposes. They are at ease using the faculty's two computerised language laboratories, where they can access many of their learning materials. This learning environment contributes very well to the climate for learning and is one major reason why boys achieve better than in other schools. Achievement overall is good in both languages, because high standards are reached in less time than is usually allocated to language learning. Lower attaining students, including many with special educational needs, also achieve well in relation to their potential. The college measures very carefully all students' prior attainment and progress, keeping them informed about what they have to do to improve.
55. Some 40 per cent of students have chosen to study a language in Year 10, where this has become optional. Standards in both Years 10 and 11 are above average in French but average in German. This reflects the composition of the groups, which are more mixed in German because there is only one class in each band. Students are focused on GCSE and apply themselves conscientiously, as is seen clearly in effort grades awarded. They are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning, and they achieve well in French. In German, although there are some high attainers who achieve well, there are also a few who underachieve because of their own attitude to learning. Overall achievement is satisfactory.
56. In most lessons teaching is good, leading to good learning. Teachers teaching temporarily outside their specialism are able to work satisfactorily because they are well supported by language specialists. Teachers plan their lessons well, using ICT very well where it is available. They manage their students well, which leads to good relationships and positive attitudes to learning. They use assessment very well to inform students and their parents about progress. However, homework is not used as well as it could be because students do not have work books of their own.
57. Leadership and management are good. All issues from previous reports have been addressed and consistent working practices have been established, for example in the use of assessment and of ICT. Evidence of staff commitment is seen in the exchange links maintained with schools in France and Germany, the latter on behalf of a community of schools in the local area. These contribute well to standards in the learning of foreign languages.
58. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen in Year 9. They have been maintained at a high level in Year 11. Progress has been good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management give the subject a clear vision and direction for improvement.
- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Very good use is made of computers to support teaching and learning.
- Very good provision is made for students with special educational needs.
- Standards are above average and continue to improve.
- Lesson objectives are not used well enough to provide a clear focus for lessons.
- Marking does not inform students well enough about what they should do to improve.

Commentary

59. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above average. They were below average in relation to students' attainment at the end of Year 6. The proportion of students gaining the highest levels was well above average. Improvements made in previous years were continued. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, results were above average in comparison with all schools and in relation to students' attainment at the end of Year 9. GCSE statistics results were very high.
60. By the end of Year 9, students' standards are above average. This represents good achievement as they enter the school with broadly average standards. Most students handle numbers confidently when doing mental calculations although lower attaining students do not recall their tables confidently. The highest attaining students understand how Pythagoras' Theorem and trigonometry can be used to solve problems involving bearings but lower attaining students have difficulty with finding averages from a set of data. By the end of Year 11, students' standards are well above average. The highest attaining students, who successfully completed GCSE one year early and are following a GCE AS level module, are developing well their understanding of how to analyse flows in networks. Most students have developed sound problem solving skills; they can identify patterns, and find rules and formulae in investigational activities. Overall, students' achievement and progress are good
61. The quality of teaching is good and results in good learning and achievement. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to help students understand new skills and concepts. They question students well about what they already know and understand but occasionally opportunities are missed to support students' literacy skills through ensuring that students use the correct technical language in their responses. Teachers' planning is good; very good use is made of computers and homework is used regularly to support students' learning. Appropriately challenging tasks are provided for the highest attaining students and as result they make rapid progress. Students in the highest attaining classes are entered for GCSE one year early and are introduced to AS level in Year 11. Very effective support is provided for students with special educational needs that ensures they make at least good progress; the lowest attaining students are well supported in lessons and through extra numeracy lessons. Teachers set clear expectations for students' work and behaviour and they manage and organise students well. This ensures that students usually have good attitudes in lessons and behave well. Teachers assess and check students' progress well but marking does not always provide sufficient comments for students about what they should do to improve their standards. Lesson objectives are clearly identified in plans for lessons but in some lessons teachers do not share them effectively with students at the beginning of lessons or use them to review learning at the end of lessons.
62. Leadership is very good and management is good. The faculty head provides a clear vision and direction for improving standards and teachers are working well as a team to support this. Subject documentation is very good; it provides suitable responses to whole school policies. Good provision is made for students' personal development; the awe and wonder of mathematics and the cultural aspects of the subject are clearly identified in classroom displays and lesson planning. Although teaching is well monitored and is clearly targeted at improving and sharing approaches to teaching, more can be done to check that policies, for example marking, are being applied consistently across the subject. Data is used well to monitor students' progress as they move through the college. Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Students' performances in tests and examinations have improved. The use of computers and the schemes of work to support students' learning have improved significantly; both are now very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. The contribution made to students' numeracy skills by other subjects is satisfactory. Teachers have been made aware of the Key Stage 3 strategy and approaches that are being used in mathematics. A whole college policy for mathematics across the curriculum is in place. Most

subjects have responded effectively to the policy and have identified opportunities to support students' numeracy skills in their lesson planning. For example, in a design and technology lesson on electronics, the teacher used a mathematics starter to ensure that students could do the calculations needed in the lesson's activities.

SCIENCE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between students, and between students and teachers, are good. This results in a good atmosphere for learning.
- Behaviour within the laboratory is good, and helps to ensure safe working conditions during the high proportion of practical lessons.
- The technical staff provide good support for teaching which ensures that lessons proceed efficiently.
- Unit activity booklets containing key words, spellings and meanings, homework, research, and level descriptions, are an excellent learning resource that is not used fully by staff.

Commentary

64. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above average. They were below average in relation to students' attainment at the end of Year 6. Following an over-ambitious examination entry, results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average. This is a situation that has been recognised and rectified within the department.
65. In work seen during the inspection, standards are broadly average by the end of Year 9. This represents satisfactory achievement overall in relation to students' standards on entry to the college. Students in Year 9 show good knowledge of renewable and non-renewable energy sources and awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of the production of electricity from nuclear fuels. Within the department there is good emphasis on practical work. Students work efficiently and co-operatively within the laboratory. By the end of Year 11, standards are average, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to standards at the end of Year 9. Higher attaining students are able to relate structure and function when examining insect mouthparts under a microscope. Average attaining students are able to determine the factors necessary to bring about the decomposition of organic material. With support, they are able to identify the microbes responsible for this decomposition.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. Teachers show their knowledge, planning ability and enthusiasm to motivate their students. Clear objectives and precise instructions, together with the use of interactive whiteboards ensure satisfactory progress. Students with special educational needs, as well as those who are gifted and talented make good progress because of the additional support they receive. A strong feature that runs throughout the department is the good relationships between students, and between students and staff. This has a good impact on teaching and learning, and is reflected in students' very good punctuality and attendance. A further positive influence on teaching and learning is the efficient support within the laboratories provided by the department's technical staff. High quality resource booklets related to each part of the syllabus are not used effectively enough. The marking of students' work lacks uniformity throughout the department. Both these deficiencies have a detrimental effect on learning.
67. The leadership of the department is good; management is satisfactory. The head of faculty has a clear vision for the improvement of teaching and learning. This vision is in written policy form but is not fully implemented. The large teaching team demonstrates a pleasant working relationship and a determination to meet the needs of all their students. Eight of the eleven laboratories provide a stimulating environment for learning; the remaining three are

unsatisfactory and not conducive to learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection; the use of ICT is now a strong feature.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have supported excellent improvement since the previous inspection which includes all Year 10 and 11 students following a GCSE examination course in ICT.
- Good teaching is raising standards.
- Business and enterprise informs much of the work in ICT.
- The number of computers available for students' use is significantly above the number usually found in a college of this size.
- Planning does not consistently support whole college policies.
- Target information in reports to parents is unclear.

Commentary

68. It is unusual for all students in a college to follow an ICT examination course in Years 10 and 11. It is a huge undertaking to provide this for students in a college of this size. Results in 2003 were below average. Students are currently following a new examination course with much of the work focused on business and enterprise. This will be examined for the first time later this year.
69. In work seen during the inspection, standards seen are rising and are broadly average. When students' prior attainment is considered, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Teachers assessed students' standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 as well above average. This assessment appears high in relation to standards in work seen during the inspection, which are average. The introduction of ICT resources from the national Key Stage 3 Strategy is improving the accuracy of assessment and achievement is good in Years 7-9 when students' prior attainment is considered. Students have the use of one computer each in lessons and confidently and independently use the college's computer system to store and retrieve their work and to find information from the Internet. Students create databases to handle information, use spreadsheets to model a college production and consider audiences for their work well. Students also use presentation and word processing software but more reflection and evaluation is required to develop a greater understanding of their work.
70. Teaching and learning are good. Students are achieving well because teachers make it very clear to students what has to be done and good questioning is used often to check students' understanding. A good range of resources is used well to support learning and to help students to understand how well they are doing. All students achieve well because teachers know their students, move around the class well to help them with their work and make it clear to them what is required to improve it. Displays of students' work help to set standards but reports to parents do not include clear enough target information. Students use the college's ICT resources very well outside of the college day for homework and coursework. They are provided with very good support as teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the students' success.
71. The leadership and management of the department are very good. Constant change through innovation, national initiatives, new courses and new teachers is being managed very well. Students' experiences are very well planned but whole college policies are not consistently supported. Improvement since the previous inspection is excellent. Every aspect raised at the time of the previous inspection has been improved, including the quality of teaching and students' performance. A computer network has been established and the number of

computers available for students is now significantly above that normally seen in a school of this size. A very professional support team ensures the effective day-to-day use of this extensive computer system.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. ICT is used in this college more extensively than usually seen, pervading all areas of the college. This practice extends into partner schools through the use of video links and a Tollbar teacher was seen giving an excellent mathematics lesson to primary school pupils. Computers are used to support learning very well within the special educational needs department, in business education, history, modern foreign languages and in design and technology for computer aided design and manufacturing work. Good use is made of computers in English, mathematics, physical education, citizenship and in music for composition work. There is satisfactory use in art and design, geography and religious education. Interactive whiteboards are also very well used across the college to enhance teaching and stimulate learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps to improve students' achievement.
- Most students are prepared to work and give of their best.
- Work and text need to be levelled to meet the needs of all students.

Commentary

73. GCSE results in 2003 were just below the national average whereas in the previous year they were just above. For most of the last four years the boys have gained more higher grades than girls.
74. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average. Achievement is good in relation to students' earlier learning and standards are improving. Students are making good progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Students increase their skill at analysing pictures, interpreting graphs and using maps and are able to discuss their findings well. While students' ability to write about their work has improved for many, some would benefit from more extended writing. Standards are above average by the end of Year 11, representing good achievement in relation to students' standards at the end of Year 9. Students make good progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. This is because of good teaching and a greater commitment on the part of the students. Most students come prepared to work and concentrate on the tasks they are given. Students with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language are achieving appropriately but make better progress when supported.
75. The quality of teaching is good overall. A strong feature of most of the teaching is the challenging start to each lesson followed by a wide range of activities, many specially prepared, that engages students' interest and enables them to acquire new knowledge and skills. This is helped by skilful questioning in many lessons, which deals with any lack of understanding by students. Lessons successfully incorporate a wide variety of learning styles, strategies and activities that promote good achievement. Good relationships are reflected in students' positive attitudes and behaviour. Marking of students' work is regular although in some cases it lacks the detail that would help students to further improve their understanding. National Curriculum targets and estimates of GCSE grades feature highly in students' planners

and targets that give students an idea of how to improve their standards. Special words and phrases used by geographers are carefully explained and some are displayed on the classroom walls. Fieldwork, much of it within the college grounds, helps to extend what is learnt in the classroom.

76. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good. The definition of roles and responsibilities between faculty manager and subject leader lacks clarity. One result is that the management plan is not sufficiently focused on the subject. The subject leader has a clear vision of how the subject should develop. Strong teamwork is helping to maintain standards. Good schemes of work are in place and resources are well organised. Progress since the previous inspection has been good, with most of the outstanding issues successfully resolved.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning enables teachers to use a range of methods to help students learn.
- Students have good attitudes, enabling teachers to involve them in learning, and as a result achievement is good.
- Teachers do not always ensure that students reach the same standard in their written work that they display in their oral work.
- Students have no opportunity for first hand investigation of history.
- There are insufficient assessment opportunities to enable teachers to monitor the progress of students in the different elements of history.

Commentary

77. Results in the GCSE examination in 2003 were well above average. Students did significantly better than in their other subjects. The proportion of higher grades has risen over recent years.
78. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average and achievement is good. In Years 7-9 students develop their skills in the use of sources and most students confidently use them to select relevant information. Higher attaining students consider motive and reliability, although most students need to be directed to do so. Students' skills of analysis and interpretation and speaking skills are developing well. Written work is more mechanical and contains less interpretation and explanation.
79. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above average. Students attain their highest standards in oral work and coursework. Higher attaining students use sources confidently and recognise the use of cross-referencing to support reliability and identification of bias and motive. Lower attaining students use sources with confidence but take them at face value, not linking with the social conditions of the time or evaluating their reliability. Students work well together and can compare opinions and listen to the reasons for them. They are willing to listen and contribute their thoughts about a topic and, as a result, they are developing their skills of analysis and achieving well.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students benefit from teachers who are committed to active learning that leads to good achievement. Good planning ensures that lessons start promptly and a variety of learning styles are used. Teachers treat students' responses with respect and, as a consequence, students are keen to be involved and treat their peers with similar consideration. Teachers provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively and they support each other's learning. Students achieve well because teachers provide activities that ensure they use the information they gain, and they are expected to demonstrate understanding. In lessons that are less effective, teachers fail to ensure the quality of written work and do not help students to develop their understanding

further by the use of supplementary questioning. In a minority of lessons, teachers dominate the work of the class and students answer questions rather than develop responses. Teachers assess students' standards through the Quality Mark tasks and marking is generally constructive. Assessment of students' progress is not sufficiently rooted in the key elements of history to enable teachers to monitor areas for individual development. The use of interactive whiteboards enables teachers and students to explore different views clearly and collaboratively, which supports learning and helps to raise standards.

81. The quality of leadership is satisfactory and management is good. The newly appointed leadership team are establishing their roles and have identified priorities for development. Monitoring of teaching is established and good practice is shared across the department, although the wide distribution of rooms makes informal communication and support more difficult. They have rightly identified the lack of enrichment experiences in history and have already begun to develop this area. There is no local history study that would enable students to develop an appreciation of their local history and culture. There is insufficient independent research experience for students other than through the Internet, and the library is not available to enable students to extend their interest and encourage independent exploration.
82. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen and students are now undertaking more challenging work. Progress has been good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of students in Year 11 are entered for the full course at GCSE and are achieving well.
- Good development of teaching and learning successfully implements methods advocated in the national strategy for Key Stage 3.
- The introduction of levels of attainment in Years 7 to 9 is producing more rigorous assessment of students' progress.
- The curriculum for Years 7-9 offers insufficient coverage of major religions other than Christianity and Islam.
- Opportunities for using ICT to support students' learning are planned but only partially implemented.

Commentary

83. The college is unusual in preferring to enter a large number of students for the full course in religious studies at GCSE, rather than the short course. These high expectations were justified in 2002, when the results were close to the national average. They dropped below average in 2003. Girls performed better than boys but both did worse in religious studies than in the average of all their other subjects, which have two more lessons each week.
84. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are average overall and students are achieving well in relation to their earlier learning. Their understanding of religious teaching on moral issues is higher. They started GCSE courses early in the year and this has raised the standard of their academic work. Higher attainers have responded well to the challenge and are already producing thoughtful answers to examination questions. Students' main weakness lies in their limited knowledge of other faiths beyond Christianity and Islam. The cost of starting GCSE so early has been a reduction in time devoted to the various strands in the locally agreed syllabus and the lack of any systematic study of one of the eastern religions. By the end of Year 11, standards are closer to average than last year on the GCSE full course. This represents good achievement on only one lesson per week. The fact that the majority of the students are following the full course, covering double the amount of work on

the short course favoured by most schools, means that by comparison, overall attainment is above average. Students in the higher attaining classes are on course for high grades. Achievement is highest amongst those motivated students in the middle band who have chosen to take the full course and are working extremely hard to reach a high standard. For many students, the pressure to cover the course does not allow time to study topics in sufficient depth to ensure good understanding. Girls are doing better than boys but students are generally serious in their approach to religious studies at this level and their note coverage of the course is thorough. Lower attainers are making good progress on the short course, except for a number of disaffected students, mainly boys, who have lost interest.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All teachers in the department are specialists, who make the subject interesting and relevant to the lives of their students. They have created attractive and stimulating subject environments in the classrooms. Lessons are well planned around clearly communicated objectives, capturing students' interest with starter activities and using a variety of methods, particularly small group discussion, to achieve the intended learning, which is carefully reviewed in a final plenary session. Occasional use is made of ICT in lessons but not to the extent intended in the schemes of work. Learning resources are well balanced between textbooks and worksheets, making appropriate use of artefacts and video material. Where learning was just satisfactory, either the lesson was slow to gather momentum, reducing time for planned activities, or time was wasted by a small number of students persistently talking out of turn. Teachers set ambitious targets for students in Years 10 and 11 but the resulting pressure to cover the GCSE full course in the minimum amount of time inevitably means students are not able to explore issues in sufficient depth. The introduction of levels of attainment similar to those used in history and geography has strengthened assessment. Teachers provide helpful feedback on students' work that encourages them to improve their standards.
86. The subject is well led but management is stretched because the head of department combines heavy responsibilities as head of the sixth form, without being able to delegate any duties within the department. It works because of the supportive teamwork of colleagues. Leadership has raised the academic standing of the subject. The department has improved its provision well since the previous inspection when the subject was taught within a life skills programme in Years 10 and 11, with no examination work. Now it is established as a separate subject with specialist teachers, playing a leading role in developing the national Key Stage 3 Strategy for foundation subjects.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good industrial experience helps raise standards in designing and making.
- Standards in textiles are above average.
- Innovative vocational studies with strong enterprise links raise standards.
- Limited curriculum time and insufficient appropriate resources hamper progress.
- Poor accommodation hinders teaching and learning.

Commentary

87. Standards in 2003 GCSE examinations were below average. Results for textiles students were above average. In food technology results were just below average, but results in systems and control were low.

88. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Years 9 are below average. Restricted curriculum time, poor accommodation and inadequate resources hinder progress but achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 in relation to students' earlier learning. Planning across these years has been interrupted by many changes in design and technology. Students express a feeling of frustration on some very short units of work where products are often unfinished. Designing lacks a consistent approach to initial designs, working drawings, flow plans and evaluation. These processes are stronger in textiles and food. Students with special educational needs achieve well because teachers match work to students' need and use support staff effectively. The lack of a wide range of reference books and difficult access to the library restrict research. ICT has improved significantly and good use of computer-aided design and manufacturing has strengthened designing. Lack of classroom flexibility impedes practical work and independent learning.
89. In Years 10 and 11 achievement is good and standards are about average by the end of Year 11. Students work well because they concentrate on their option choice. Designing accelerates because most take responsibility for their learning. They give attention to their target market and complete good research, capitalising on business and enterprise principles when designing a new product. Good use of market research and analysis of their results directs their design choices. Working drawings, rendering and annotation still lack polish in some students' work. The impact of inconsistent provision in Years 7-9 is felt at this stage, for example many textiles students have not studied textiles before Year 10. The good links with the local college for GCSE engineering provide well for lower attainers. A new industrial technology course makes links to science to support high fliers. Girls achieve better than boys.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have very good expertise and industrial experience so that good demonstrations and discussion raise students' skill and understanding. An occasional lesson is unsatisfactory. For example, in a Year 9 lesson lack of planning to meet students' needs led to a fall in pace and some difficulties in managing behaviour so that learning was unsatisfactory. Teaching is more effective in Years 10 and 11 because students make good use of the examination criteria and teachers' marking to guide their individual work. Good relationships improve students' attitudes to learning. Teachers' enthusiasm encourages students' personal development and independence.
91. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Review provides targets for strategic development. The team shares ideas and development. Effective monitoring identifies good teaching and areas to improve. Good support is provided for teachers new to the college. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching makes effective use of expertise, visual aids and ICT, resulting in good achievement.
- Teachers use assessment information well to help students understand how to achieve their targets in examinations and in terms of National Curriculum levels.
- Students enjoy their work, behave well and respond positively to their teachers' high expectations and encouragement.
- Teachers' planning to meet the needs of the highest attaining students in lessons is not sharply enough focused on extending the level of challenge in the tasks set.

Commentary

92. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average at grades A*-C. Attainment at the highest grades was above average but a significantly greater proportion of students fell into the grade D range than was expected. Girls' attainment was slightly below average, boys did a little better than boys nationally and the difference in standards between the sexes was less marked than that seen nationally. Since the previous inspection, attainment has fallen from above average but current students are on course to gain above average results this year.
93. In work seen during the inspection, standards are above average by the end of Year 9 - an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average. In relation to students' earlier learning, achievement is good. Observational drawing skills are often high. Students handle paint with confidence and use a variety of three-dimensional media competently. Students throughout Years 7-9 make good progress in improving their practical skills and knowledge and understanding of the work of other artists and cultures but there is scope for improving the use of sketchbooks. Students of all levels of attainment achieve well but the highest attainers do not always receive a significantly higher level of challenge in the range of tasks set them and this restricts the rate of progress and attainment of the highest standards. Students' skills in talking about art and about their own work are well catered for in many lessons as a result of teachers' effective promotion of literacy through art and design. The most able students in Year 9 can share ideas about their work and offer opinions about visual qualities as a result of effective teaching using whiteboard technology and presentation software. Students in lower attaining classes are helped to improve their use of language through key words and writing guides.
94. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average, particularly in practical skills, with high levels of achievement in observational drawing, painting, ceramics and textiles. Achievement is good in relation to students' standards at the start of the course. Research and development work is very well presented and the higher attaining students marry technical skills with interesting, individualistic lines of enquiry and imaginative responses. The standard of research into the work of other artists is satisfactory but many students are less confident in expressing their own ideas and responses to the work that they have studied. Few demonstrate skills in using ICT as a creative tool for developing creative images or ideas. In Year 10, able students are using clay very well to create imaginative sculptural heads following visual research into portraiture and figures. Sketchbooks are used regularly for homework and competently for art history research, but are overly formal documents rather than a place for developing ideas, or experimenting with techniques and materials. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls or students with special educational needs.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lesson planning is consistently good and quality visual resources and teaching methods are deployed well to develop students' knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design. Teachers have high expectations and as a result behaviour and students' attitudes to learning are positive and this is helping to raise standards. Students work hard in lessons and are purposeful. Presentation of work is often of high quality. The teachers provide very good extra-curricular opportunities for students to learn beyond lessons and these are well attended, particularly by GCSE students. Students are appropriately involved with their own assessment and this, together with the thorough use of assessment information by teachers, helps to give them a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve well at GCSE and in the National Curriculum assessments. Targets are regularly set and reviewed. Individual and group feedback to students is helpful, encouraging and constructive but some marking is not always informative about strengths and how to improve. The department contributes well to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the reflection on art, group work opportunities, visits to galleries in Years 10 and 11, the widespread displays of artwork throughout the college and the increased emphasis on the study of other cultural traditions.

96. The department enjoys sound leadership and is well managed and organised. Teachers are well qualified and deployed. The curriculum offers reasonable breadth and balance and there is a satisfactory plan for future improvement. Some classes in Years 7-9 receive less time for art and this is restricting their achievement. The rooms are well organised and cared for but two rooms are very small for the numbers and are challenging environments for teaching, particularly for three-dimensional work. The lack of suitable storage provision is exacerbating the difficulties in providing an appropriate three-dimensional curriculum in Years 7-9. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- The curriculum is well balanced and planned well to provide good National Curriculum coverage.
- The department has good community links with local colleges and partner primary colleges.
- Attitudes and behaviour of students are very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs are not supported fully and do not make as good progress as others.

Commentary

97. GCSE examination results in 2003 were below average and lower than in previous years. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are above average, representing good achievement in relation to students' variable standards on entry to the college. Students demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the elements of music. They can compose and perform confidently and are familiar with and use a variety of different musical styles and musical vocabulary confidently. Singing and instrumental skills are well developed, for example, students can sing in harmony and can find their way around keyboards with confidence to record their compositions. However, students have a limited knowledge and understanding of music from different cultures, which was highlighted in the previous inspection report. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average. Students achieve well because of good teaching that is now related better to the new syllabus. They can compose in different styles such as classical, experimental, and pop styles including reggae, rock and dance. They can arrange effectively using ICT tools. Students are also strong performers and can confidently perform in front of their peers.
98. A small proportion of students enhance their musical knowledge and understanding with additional instrumental lessons and through the small number of extra-curricular activities offered. Participation in these is low but strong and includes a string group, choir, brass and percussion group and various ad hoc groups, such as a soul band, which regularly perform in college assemblies.
99. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Lessons are planned to meet most students' individual needs, providing challenging activities and encouraging students to use ICT equipment to compose music. Lessons are well structured with reference made to the Key Stage 3 Foundation Strategy though starter activities tend to be limited in ideas and structure and thus fail to encourage the participation of all students. For example, students will tend to listen to a rhythm or piece of music but only a small number of students are encouraged to demonstrate their understanding. Students with special educational needs and gifted and talented students are identified but planning the use of resources to meet their individual needs does not consistently provide for appropriate levels of challenge. As a result, progress is hindered in otherwise satisfactory lessons. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, gifted and talented students were able to produce outstanding work but they were unable to make

the progress of which they were capable because they were sharing equipment with less able students. In Years 10 and 11, lessons are well planned, providing challenging activities and encouraging students to use ICT equipment, their own instruments and tuned and untuned percussion instruments to compose music. Lessons are well structured with reference made to the examination requirements and business and enterprise links to the subject.

100. On the whole leadership is good, though management is hindered by the accommodation, which makes daily contact between departmental staff difficult. Relationships with visiting peripatetic staff are good. The department encourages communication through the use of evaluative questionnaires and the college acts upon suggestions and views where appropriate. Visiting professional musicians provide workshops for students which support schemes of work in progress. The subject leader has a clear vision for the department. Assessment procedures are good overall and students are aware of their standards and how to improve.
101. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The department has maintained above average standards in students' performance and in the use of ICT while GCSE provision has expanded.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results were well above average in the 2003 GCSE examination.
- Good teaching is helping all students to learn and achieve well.
- Leadership is innovative and has resulted in good progress and improvement.
- Extra-curricular activities give very good opportunities for students to extend their learning.
- Feedback to students is inconsistent so they are not always aware of what to do to improve.

Commentary

102. GCSE examination results were well above average in 2003 and students did much better than in 2002 when results were broadly average. More boys than girls embarked on the course in 2002 and 2003.
103. Students have below average skills in most activities when they enter the college as they have had varying experience in sport. Standards are average by the end of Year 9 and students achieve well, in most activities, because teachers have high expectations and students have good attitudes. By the end of Year 11, standards in the core curriculum and for those following the examination course are above average and students achieve well. Boys, in particular, respond very well to the choice of activities offered and acquire skills quickly because they are well motivated to succeed. The standard achieved by team players is high and talented students have the opportunity to compete at area and county level. A very good extra-curricular programme also offers possibilities to improve standards. There are too many non-participants in some lessons and they are not pushed to achieve as well as they should.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers usually demonstrate skills well and questioning is effective in drawing out all students' learning and understanding. Teachers modify some tasks so that students are pushed hard and talented students have good opportunities in leading some groups in warm-up sessions. GCSE students assist in some lessons to improve personal performances. When teachers work to their strengths, students' performance and achievement are improved. Students learn well when teachers encourage them to view one another's work for consolidation and improvement. Good use of digital cameras and computer programs allow students to observe and analyse performance to improve practical assessment. Objectives in lessons are not always shared with students or evaluated in terms of improvement and achievement. Assessment is used well to help students to check their progress against targets but marking and evaluation are not always

linked well to grades and objectives to identify areas for improvement. Students outside the examination course are aware of their progress because of the good college monitoring system, which targets students well.

105. Good leadership has focused attention strongly on improving standards and much has been done to raise achievement. Good guidance for teachers is provided in detailed schemes of work but consistent implementation in the structure of lessons of literacy, numeracy and citizenship policies would give students a wider understanding of the impact and value of their learning across the college. Action is not always taken to monitor improvement when weaknesses have been identified. The school sports co-ordinator programme has not been started in the area but good links with partner primary schools and other institutions already exist.
106. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have improved and students' needs have been met in preparing them well for leisure activities when they leave college with the introduction of a good fitness course. The organisation of the college day restricts participation in extra-curricular activities for those constrained by travelling on college buses at the end of the day.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

Provision in business education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pace of lessons is brisk with both good support and challenge from teachers.
- An outstanding feature is the extensive use of ICT to promote the active engagement of students in their learning.
- Teachers establish good rapport with students which supports good constructive working relationships.
- There are many good examples of students working both collaboratively and independently.
- There is scope for a greater range of strategies to identify and disseminate best practice within the faculty.

Commentary

107. In 2003, results at GCSE were significantly below average in terms of A*-C grades with girls' results below average and boys' results significantly below average. The pass rate at A*-G was just below average and overall students did less well than in their other subjects.
108. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are average with students achieving satisfactorily. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Standards by the end of Year 11 are average. The GCSE mock results for 2004 would give a predicted pass rate at A*-C and A*-G which would be in line with national pass rates based on 2003 results. In Years 10 and 11, students achieve satisfactorily when considering their attainment levels on entry to the course, with girls and boys achieving equally.
109. Overall, teaching is good. In Years 10 and 11, learning is good but longer-term achievement over time is hindered by some students' lack of commitment to completing coursework to the highest standards. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is satisfactory overall with some teaching being unsatisfactory and with examples of very good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident and competent, with teaching characterised by very good planning with good structure to the lessons. The pace of lessons is brisk with both good support and challenge from teachers, thus ensuring active engagement of students in learning. Learning objectives are invariably shared with students and sometimes learning gains are

reviewed at the end of the lesson. However, the review process is not consistent and not all objectives are made clear, which makes it difficult for students to ascertain their achievement at the end of a lesson or series of lessons. An outstanding feature is the extensive and imaginative use of ICT and interactive whiteboards in Years 10 and 11. Students are able to save their work to personal folders and redraft as necessary to achieve the highest standards. Case studies contributed by post-16 students give a relevant and authentic flavour to the work, which further motivates students. Teachers establish good rapport with students, which supports good constructive working relationships so that most students show good attitudes to their learning. There are many good examples of students working both collaboratively and independently with talk invariably centred on the topic being studied and a realistic work environment being created. The use of assessment to inform students of targets and next steps to improvement is good in Years 10 and 11 but only satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, where students do not understand well enough how they can improve. There is still work to be done with lower attainers to ensure improvement in their achievements and the deployment of classroom support assistants is not always focused sharply enough to derive optimum benefit to students. The use of homework to reinforce, extend and connect a series of lessons is not consistently satisfactory, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

110. Curriculum leadership is good. The head of faculty, in post less than two years, is committed to the achievement of all students and provides a very good role model for staff and students with his articulation of high aspirations and high expectations of himself and others. Clarity of vision is developing with a shared sense of purpose, among a newly formed team of teachers. His leadership provides for a good collegiate structure in which he and others demonstrate very knowledgeable and innovative thinking in respect of the curriculum and teaching strategies. Assessment data are systematically collected and evaluation processes that should lead to improvements in learning and teaching strategies are fast developing. Monitoring of the teaching of colleagues is very effective. However, there is scope for a greater range of strategies to identify and share best practice. The faculty is improving fast and there is clear progress since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship and personal, social and health education are taught within the PSE faculty. Citizenship was inspected in full and is reported below. Personal, social and health education was sampled. Good teaching of a carefully planned programme promotes students' personal development well.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The courses and resources are very well organised.
- Enthusiastic teaching of citizenship in the PSE faculty ensures that all students receive a core curriculum in the subject.
- The college provides many opportunities for students to learn the skills of active participation and responsible action.
- Schemes of work in subjects across the college identify elements of citizenship but there is little co-ordination of these contributions to the subject.
- Aspects of citizenship in other subjects are not explicitly taught or recorded as part of students' formal citizenship education.
- Assessment and recording of students' standards and achievement in the subject are not yet in place.

Commentary

111. In work seen during the inspection, standards are average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Achievement is good in relation to students' earlier learning. Students show that they have acquired the expected levels of knowledge and understanding required to become informed citizens. The faculty's emphasis on active learning through practical exercises and group discussion allows lower attainers to make equally good progress. Year 7 students take responsible attitudes towards public nuisance issues such as noise and litter. Year 9 students show good awareness of the civil rights issues involved in any proposed ban on smoking or alcohol. Year 10 students understand the main causes and consequences of juvenile crime. Similarly, students' oral skills of enquiry and communication on citizenship issues are well developed in lessons. Very lively debates were observed in Year 9 on drug issues and in Year 10 on police 'stop and search' laws. Students are not developing written work in the subject to the same extent. Citizenship skills of participation and responsible action are being developed well through regular use of discussion and group work in lessons. Where class work leads to ideas for community action, such as proposals for college improvements arising from Year 9 work on democracy, or the Year 7 kite flying exercise in aid of charity, students make good progress as active citizens. The college provides many extra-curricular opportunities for students to get involved in community activities, ranging from the enterprising college carnival to the community elements of the Duke of Edinburgh's award. In particular, those students who volunteered for the Humberside Constabulary's Lifestyle awards have achieved a high standard of community service. The house councils and college council provide active forums for students to voice their concerns and put forward ideas.
112. Teaching and learning are good. The PSE team has taken on the teaching of the subject with enthusiasm and is giving personal and social education a citizenship bias, to develop it in all aspects of their work. In essence, the citizenship strands of enquiry, communication and participation form the basis of their teaching strategy. Lessons engage students actively in learning, maintaining a brisk pace and including a wide variety of activities to maintain a high level of involvement. Highly effective use is made of the interactive whiteboard to make presentations and focus agendas for group discussions. In the odd lesson, tighter control of discussion is needed, to ensure maximum participation. Teachers establish constructive relationships and good order in their classes and students respond positively to the subject, appreciating the relevance of the topics to their everyday lives. Assessment, recording and reporting are still at an early stage of development. Self-assessment has been successfully piloted by Year 9 students, who keep a log of work they have done across the curriculum. Invariably, the cross-curricular contributions are implicit rather than explicit in the teaching, lessening their impact on students' formal citizenship education.
113. Leadership and management of the subject are good within PSE but only satisfactory across the curriculum. There is a clear strategy for ensuring that the core curriculum in the subject is well taught within PSE. The well-planned courses and resources have been carefully designed to plug the gaps revealed by the college audit of provision in other subjects. The department evaluates its work critically and is planning improvements in assessment and co-ordination of the subject across departments. It has identified the potential for the subject in the humanities subjects, business studies and ICT but has yet to establish the necessary links to gain an overview of students' progress in the subject. At present, subject schemes of work include relevant contributions to citizenship but they are not given sufficient prominence in the teaching to register with students as such and the quality of the actual provision is not being monitored. The situation is one of well-managed development of the subject within the PSE faculty but only incidental contributions across other subjects.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, eleven 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 tables below show entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	3	100	80.1	66.7	23.7	43.3	29.9
Biology	2	50	65.2	0	11.1	10	20.6
Business Studies	1	0	76.4	0	16.3	0	26.2
Chemistry	1	100	72.7	0	13.9	20	24.1
Classical Studies	3	66.7	87.4	0	34.3	23.3	35.2
Communication Studies	1	100	86.4	100	23.8	50	32
Drama	1	100	86.5	0	19.6	30	30.6
English / English Language	2	50	82.9	0	17.5	15	28.7
Design and Technology	3	66.7	74.9	0	15.1	23.3	25.3
General Studies	5	100	73.9	0	17.8	22	25.7
Geography	2	50	74.3	0	19.8	15	26.5
German	1	100	81.5	0	19.5	40	28.9
History	2	50	80.7	0	19.5	20	28.6
Information Technology	2	50	67	0	10.9	10	21.4
Mathematics	3	66.7	61.9	0	17.1	23.3	22.1
Other Social Studies	4	50	69.7	0	16.7	17.5	24.1
Physics	5	100	68.6	0	14.4	20	22.7

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	6	100	98.6	33.3	50.2	83.3	87.5
Biology	8	100	96.4	37.5	39.2	77.5	78.6
Business Studies	17	100	98.7	5.9	36.8	65.9	80.1
Chemistry	6	100	97.6	66.7	49	103.3	84.9
Drama	1	100	99.5	0	40.1	80	83.6
English / English Language	27	100	99.4	33.3	36.3	77.8	80.9
French	10	100	98.8	40	51.5	78	87.6
Design and Technology	7	100	97.8	28.6	35	80	77.9
General Studies	60	100	94.7	21.7	31	68.7	73.1
Geography	15	100	98.7	26.7	44.5	78.7	84
German	5	100	98.4	40	47.9	72	84.8
History	19	100	99	26.3	44.6	75.8	84.6
Information Technology	16	100	95.6	25	24.6	73.8	69.5
Mathematics	13	100	96.7	61.5	55.6	92.3	88.8
Other Social Studies	10	100	97.4	30	42.7	80	81.8
Physics	7	100	96.7	28.6	44.6	71.4	81.7
Sports/PE Studies	10	100	98	30	30.9	70	75.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subjects for this inspection were the combined English language and literature course and French.

One lesson of German was sampled in Year 13, in which there were two male and two female students, including a mature student from the local community. Standards of spoken and written German were up to expectations for A-level. Teaching, learning and achievement were good.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in good achievement in relation to the attainment of the students when they begin the course.
- Teaching methods promote independent learning and are well suited to students' needs.
- Thorough assessment procedures ensure that students are clear about what they need to do to improve.
- A small minority of students do not participate and so they are not fully challenged.
- Too few opportunities are available to broaden students' knowledge and understanding beyond the classroom.

Commentary

114. Results at A-level in 2003 were average. Although the average points score was slightly below the national, all students obtained at least a pass grade. The performance of boys was slightly better than that of the girls but the difference was not significant.
115. Standards in work seen are average overall by the end of Year 13, maintaining the improvement seen since 2002. These standards represent good achievement in relation to students' GCSE performance, which can span quite a wide range. Students' written work, at its best, is well structured, fluent and analytical both in the language and literature sections. They use their knowledge to comment on demanding aspects of the subject such as the use of pragmatics and semantic fields and their work on, for example, '*Talking Heads*' and '*The Miller's Tale*' shows that they can identify and compare literary features. Some students' writing suffers from inaccuracies in both paragraph structure and grammar. These students also tend to describe and provide an account as opposed to analysing and constructing an argument. Students are helped to achieve well because thorough assessment procedures are used. Teachers set clear targets, provide examples or models for students' writing, and students know and understand the assessment criteria. As a result the students know what they need to do in order to improve.
116. Teaching and learning are good overall. The reasons for this are that the teachers have secure subject knowledge and they use this to provide tasks that are interesting and promote enthusiasm. As a result, the students respond positively in class. They are keen to contribute to the lessons and they persevere with quite demanding tasks over long periods of time. They enjoy collaborating; they listen respectfully to each other and they take constructive criticism well. Teachers use effective questioning techniques. In discussion sessions, students are constantly encouraged to use the precise terminology to phrase their answers, a crucial requirement for obtaining even average grades on this particular course. A few students, however, are much less confident and they contribute little. As a result they do not benefit from the chance to test out their ideas or to learn the ability to challenge others. At present, learning opportunities rarely extend beyond the classroom. Theatre trips are organised occasionally but there are very few other chances to participate in activities that would extend the most able and broaden the general understanding of the others.
117. Leadership and management are good. The teachers are well matched to the course in terms of knowledge and experience and the course itself has been well chosen from the options available to provide the best chance of success for the greatest number of students. This is reflected in the growing popularity of the subject, especially since the introduction of AS level. Policies and procedures are rigorously applied so that there is a consistent quality of provision across all groups. Teachers have taken account of the previous inspection report and have adapted teaching methods well to meet the needs of this older age group. They provide good preparation, in particular, for those wishing to go on to higher education. This, together with the improvement in results, shows that improvement since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

118. Use of language and the level of literacy skills are satisfactory across most subjects, so that students are able to tackle the language demands of their different subjects and courses successfully.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory and has strengths in planning and in the use of ICT. Teachers' assessments support students' achievement well.
- The course makes a good contribution to students' personal development.
- Around half the students in Year 12 are developing their language skills beyond GCSE to support other interests. This meets one national objective for AS level.
- Students lack confidence in speaking because they do not have enough experience in lessons of speaking and listening in French.

Commentary

119. In 2003, ten students took French at A-level. Three gained a grade A but overall standards were below average, as they were in 2002. Results at AS level are still unclear because some students have retaken certain papers. They indicate average standards overall. Two students achieved high grades.
120. Standards are average by the end of Year 13, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to students' prior attainment. The course content expands students' personal development well. Global issues are on the agenda in Year 13, raising serious questions about overpopulation and limited resources. Comparisons of life expectancy between the Third World and western countries such as France or the UK give cause for serious thought. By this stage students have writing skills to address these concerns. Students are greatly helped by rigorous assessment procedures that show students where they are and point the way forward to improvement.
121. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers impart a substantial amount of information, much of it statistical, as befits a business college. The teacher in a Year 12 class, for example, was providing a mass of detail about the history and present state of television services in France, in the same week as students were studying with another teacher an analysis of preferred holiday destinations. Because much of this is coming to them on a computer screen, Anglo-American computer culture comes to dominate the lesson and reduce the amount of French spoken. Students therefore lack sufficient experience of speaking the foreign language, which impairs the quality of learning. Teachers are not yet ready to insist on the next step of using French with regard to the technology. Although there is a high level of professionalism and skill in teachers' preparation and management of hardware and software, teaching and learning are not better than satisfactory because a core skill is being neglected.
122. The course is managed well. Leadership is satisfactory because although the new head of faculty has vision she has not yet had the time to make a strong impact. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. In 1997, as now, students made better progress in writing skills than in speech.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good management ensures that teachers' expertise is used well.
- The quality of teaching is good and as a result students make good progress with learning.
- Very good relationships result in very good attitudes that help students achieve well.
- Assessment of students' work is good; students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
- Questioning does not involve students sufficiently during discussions in lessons.

Commentary

123. In 2003, GCE A-level examination results were above average. This represents good achievement in relation to students' attainment at the start of the course. Results were similar to those of previous years.
124. Overall, standards of work seen are above average. Students are making good progress and achieving well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results and their standards at the beginning of the course. In mechanics, students understand the concepts of potential and kinetic energy and their use when dealing with impact and collision of objects. In statistics they are developing well their understanding of the 'normal distribution' and its use in probability. Students following further mathematics show a good understanding of the processes of integration.
125. Teaching is good and results in good learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good; new and difficult concepts are clearly explained. Lessons are well planned with opportunities provided for students to use computers to support learning. Relationships are very good and as a result students show very positive attitudes to their work; they make considerable efforts to understand the work they are doing and teachers provide good support and guidance when requested. The day-to-day assessment of students' work is good; it supports students' learning well so that they know how well they are doing with the result that they achieve well. Although teachers often question students well they do not always involve students sufficiently in discussions. As a result some students take longer to build upon previous knowledge and understanding than others.
126. The subject is very well led and well managed. Teachers are deployed effectively to ensure that their specialist knowledge is utilised well. Very good schemes of work ensure that the various modules are taught consistently. Assessment procedures are good; students' work and progress are assessed regularly and they are well informed of how well they are doing in relation to examination criteria. Improvements since the previous inspection have been good. Results are now consistently above average.

Mathematics across the curriculum

127. Use of mathematics and the level of skills shown by students are generally satisfactory across almost all subjects.

SCIENCE

The focus subject in this inspection was chemistry.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good, and result in very good achievement by students, and attainment that is well above the average standard.
- Relationships between staff and students are very good, and ensure positive attitudes and a good working atmosphere.
- Students behave responsibly, enabling practical lessons to be carried out efficiently and safely.
- Support by the technical staff for students and teachers is very good, and contributes to the overall efficiency of learning.

Commentary

128. Results at A-level in 2003 were very high, with 67 per cent of students achieving grades A or B, and all students obtaining at least grade C. These results put the college within the range of the top five per cent of schools across the country.
129. The achievement of Year 13 students is very good, and attainment is well above average. In work seen, students demonstrated their knowledge and understanding during practical investigations by synthesising aspirin, determining the temporary and permanent hardness of various spring waters together with the calcium content, measuring the concentration of copper ions in a copper solution, and measuring the quality of vitamin C. These investigations were carried out under examination conditions, with students achieving high levels of attainment. Students taking the AS course demonstrated their levels of practical skills by determining the physical properties of halogens.
130. The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is very good. Lessons are well planned and taught with enthusiasm and humour. Lessons engage and challenge students in their practical investigations. A notable feature of lessons is the excellent provision of necessary reagents and apparatus for individual students by the science technician. A very positive feature that runs throughout the department is the very good relationship between students, and between students and staff. The students' good attitudes and behaviour make a positive impact upon teaching and learning, and are reflected in the students' good attendance. Students' homework and end-of-unit topics are marked carefully and constructively. Individual unit booklets provide glossary terms, subject specifications, and details of specimen questions. Students find these booklets a great asset to learning.
131. The department is very well led and managed. The Year 13 laboratory is spacious and well designed but lacks preparation room facilities. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has supported excellent improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
- Very good ICT resources are available for students to use in coursework and for independent study but are not used fully to support independent learning.
- Good teaching with a high level of technical expertise supports project success.

Commentary

132. Results in A-level examinations in 2003 were above the national average.
133. Standards seen are above average, representing good achievement when students' attainment on entry to the course is considered. Good links have been made with local companies to provide a real audience for the range of ICT systems that are designed including auditing, college data management, and stock control systems. These links support achievement well. Students use technical terms well as they communicate clearly how their systems work and produce high quality project documentation that is above the average standard.
134. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a high level of expertise and a secure grasp of the subject which is helping students to be successful in the completion of their systems. Teachers also work well as a team to ensure good continuity in students' studies. Students

know what they have to do to improve through the high quality marking and very supportive tutorials that are programmed into the course. However, independent study is not used fully to ensure the best use of contact time with students. Students' attitudes to the subject are always very good.

135. Leadership and management are very good, particularly in relation to improvement brought about since the previous inspection. At that time attainment in Years 12 and 13 was well below average but standards are now above average. The number of students following the A2 course is low but the number of girls choosing this option has increased since the time of the previous inspection, when girls were not represented. There is now much productive use of ICT when previously there was 'little encouragement'. This very good improvement is reflected in the excellent improvement in ICT provision in the college as a whole.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

136. There has been significant development of computer resources available for students since the previous inspection. Excellent use is made of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching in science and business with all other sixth form subjects using them very well. There is excellent use of ICT in the learning of sociology and business education, where the business and enterprise context of the financial markets is modelled with a high level of student participation and the effects of decisions displayed as they would be in a real-life situation. Very good use is made of ICT in history and in physical education to analyse performance. Good use of ICT is seen in English and French, and also in mathematics to help in understanding trigonometric functions.

HUMANITIES

The focus subjects in this inspection were history, sociology and psychology.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' positive attitudes and interest enable them to achieve well.
- Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject and this enables them to provide clear direction for students.
- Students are encouraged to do their best by the high expectations of their teachers.
- Teachers' good questioning extends students' thinking and challenges them to evaluate information carefully.
- Teachers involve students actively in lessons so that they learn well.
- Some students do not ensure that preparation is complete and deadlines are met.

Commentary

137. Results in the 2003 examinations were below average, but achievement was satisfactory overall because, as in previous years, all students obtained at least a pass grade in the subject. The number of students who choose to follow the course is rising. Most students who complete the AS level go on to complete the A-level course.
138. Standards in Year 13 are average. Students have a clear grasp of the events they study and some recognise the significance of contributory factors. Students evaluate the information they gain and are able to present well-reasoned arguments about their chosen priorities. Students use sources confidently and recognise the need to compare the views of different witnesses in order to verify information. They consider the interpretations of different historians and most students can suggest reasons for their different viewpoints. Lower attaining students present

written responses clearly, including relevant information, but analysis is limited and they fail to consider less obvious interpretations of the facts. Students in Year 13 enjoy debate and when they have to defend their opinions or judgements they rise to the challenge and use good reasoning skills. They achieve well because they are actively involved and tasks are demanding.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good grasp of their subject and are able to give clear direction to their students. Their very good use of questioning encourages students to develop their responses further and their expectations in lessons are high. Teachers challenge students to evaluate the information they receive. Relationships between students and with their teachers are positive and as a result they work and learn as a team. Teachers are committed to involving students actively in their lessons. In a lesson on the success of the Bolshevik revolution students were willing to challenge each other to justify points made. They demonstrated good-natured banter and confidence when supporting their own judgements. In class most students work hard but a minority of students do not prepare sufficiently for lessons or ensure that assignments are prepared in good time. As a result, work can be rushed. Teachers provide constructive advice and individual support in tutorials and students benefit from these.
140. The quality of management is good and leadership is satisfactory. The teaching team is clearly committed to raising standards and works hard to develop the profile of the subject. As a result numbers choosing to follow the course are rising. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy the subject and achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Teachers plan well and use a good variety of approaches to engage and interest students and help them to develop their independence as learners.
- Assessment is used effectively to inform students about their progress and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Very good resource materials have been created to support students' learning.
- Teachers do not give sufficient emphasis to important study skills.

Commentary

141. Students taking A-level in 2002 obtained below average results but achieved satisfactorily. In 2003 a higher proportion of students gained pass grades in both examinations and they achieved well. The small numbers taking the A-level course means that a trend cannot be reliably discerned and national comparisons are unreliable.
142. In the work seen in the inspection, standards are broadly average. When account is taken of the students' below average standards on starting the course, this reflects good achievement. In Year 12, students quickly grasped the issues causing stress in three different case studies. They were able to work in groups effectively to debate the likely causes and suggest one of three therapies that may best suit the individual cases. They were less effective in reinforcing their assertions by drawing on past work and giving weight to their opinions by quoting research in the field. Year 13 students, dealing with therapies available for common mental illness, showed a greater maturity in their approach. They were able to categorise illnesses and produced a presentation for the lay person that outlined possible approaches to dealing with problems, for example those associated with depression. In both groups of students there is a common weakness in their use of the technical language of the subject. Their written work shows a good understanding of basic concepts, and they can define and describe concepts

like validity and reliability in psychological studies. However, their responses to questions and their classroom debate are at an altogether simpler level, devoid of reference to past research work studied or use of correct, accurate technical vocabulary.

143. Teaching is good overall and leads to the students learning well. As a result, they achieve well from a below average starting point. Students enjoy the subject and the informal but very informed approaches taken by their teachers. The depth of knowledge and understanding of teachers is respected and their familiarity with examination demands is much appreciated by students. Teachers' longer term planning is very good and is augmented by their producing very good resource materials to support their teaching. Teachers challenge students well and use a good variety of approaches to maintain the level of challenge throughout their lessons. As a result, students concentrate, make good contributions to the learning that takes place and develop their skills as independent learners. An area of relative weakness lies in teachers not teaching actively enough some study skills, such as effective and efficient note-taking and planning adequately to make group presentations to the rest of the class. Marking is very thorough and provides detailed guidance for students to improve further. Performance data is used well to set students' targets and track their progress.
144. Students' good achievement, the consistency of good teaching and the increasing popularity of the subject are the result of good leadership and management. The head of department gives a clear lead for the quality of work that is expected and colleagues and students respond positively to the lead given. Teachers work well together in order to continue to raise standards. Students are regularly consulted and the provision is kept under constant review. Teaching is monitored systematically and is informed by regular and extensive continued professional development of staff. The subject was not reported upon at the last inspection, but standards and the quality of provision reflect continued improvement. The number of students taking the subject has increased and retention rates are very good. The course is a very good example of positive links made between the college and the local college where the course is taught. Students on this course are very satisfied with the arrangements made that ensure their needs are met.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 12 and 13 as a result of good teaching and effective support.
- The assessment and evaluation of students' work is a strength. Students know how to improve.
- ICT provision is excellent and supports learning very well.
- Students' skills of class debate and discussion are not as well developed as other aspects of their work and this affects their participation in lessons.

Commentary

145. A-level examination results in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and projected grades for the coming year are very encouraging.
146. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average. Students are achieving well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. Good progress is made as a direct result of effective teaching and excellent student support and guidance. Students are helped to achieve well because of their ready access to a wealth of sociological information via the college intranet. They are able to use course guides and lesson information in their preparation and planning and catch up on any missed class or course work. Students have above average

understanding of sociological theories of development and can relate these to empirical evidence well.

147. Teaching is consistently good and often very good. Teachers' high expectations and their attention to individual students' learning needs are particularly impressive and help to develop very good relationships within the classroom. The principal features of good teaching are a good command of subject knowledge and high levels of individual student support. High quality resources and the use of appropriate assessment give students confidence and support learning very well. Students know what to do to improve and are given opportunities to set their own targets. Students are generally well motivated and confident in Year 13 but a significant number are reluctant to take part in class discussion or answer questions voluntarily. In otherwise good lessons there are less effective moments when there is an over-reliance on one activity or there are too few opportunities for students' involvement.
148. The department benefits from good leadership and management. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and achievement through the continued use and development of ICT. This progressive approach ensures all students have the means to access the curriculum 'on line' and have the highest quality of information to support their learning. It now remains for the department to continue sharing good teaching and learning practice and to focus more clearly on the learning outcomes of lesson planning to aid student participation. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

149. Subjects in this curriculum area were not a focus for this inspection, but **design and technology** was sampled. The college offers AS and A2 courses in textiles, food technology and product design. The numbers at AS are low, but many students use the courses as preparation for university and future careers; retention across the two years is good. Two 'extended day' sessions, discussion with students and scrutiny of work formed the basis of the sample.
150. Students' standards vary depending on the course. In textiles, standards are above average, while standards in the other design and technology areas are broadly average. Achievement is good because students get good individual support to guide their development. Teaching and learning are good - and very good in the case of textiles - due to very good research and development of ideas to meet the target audience. Areas for development are note-taking skills, revision techniques and time management.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

151. The focus subject in this inspection was art and design. A lesson in **music** was sampled and work examined. Standards were above average. Students were able to constructively appraise their own and each other's work critically against examination requirements. They performed well independently and in ensemble. Teaching was well planned, allowing independence of thought and leading to good achievement.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and as a result achievement is good.
- Standards have improved since the previous inspection as a result of good teaching.
- Assessment and evaluation of students' work are strong. Students know how to improve.
- Leadership has more to do to develop aspects of the department's provision.

Commentary

152. A-level examination results in 2003 were broadly average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Numbers in Year 13 are relatively small and have fluctuated over recent years.
153. Standards in Year 13 are above average and are higher than in previous years. Students generally achieve well. This is a result of good teaching and very good student support and guidance within the studio. Students make good progress both in lessons and over time. They are better as a result of good planning and preparation for coursework pieces and through a clear focus on examination requirements. Students respond well to their teachers' expectations and maintain good concentration and motivation in lessons. They generally have a good understanding of colour and tone and their drawing and sketching skills are well developed. Students are able to record their experiences and ideas in both written and visual form. They can select appropriate materials but their creativity in the use and effect of these materials is less well developed. Students understand the work of prominent artists well. The evaluation skills of some students are limited and these students lack confidence when assessing their own work and the work of others.
154. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. This is due to the excellent relationships forged on mutual trust and co-operation. The principal features of good teaching are a good command of subject knowledge, enthusiasm for the subject and high levels of individual student support. Teachers clearly and succinctly explain terminology and artistic processes. Students are encouraged and motivated by their teachers and are unafraid to ask for guidance. Students lack encouragement to explore contemporary influences and processes and do not have direct access to more up-to-date ICT provision.
155. The department is well managed. All members are conscientious and hardworking and committed to raising standards and achievement. Leadership is satisfactory. There is more to do in terms of developing and sharing good practice, further developing and improving ICT provision for all students, and strengthening business and enterprise links. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus subject in this inspection was physical education.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Year 13 because teaching is very good and students are achieving very well.
- Leadership and management are very good, providing consistent assessment and planning.

Commentary

156. In 2003, A-level examination results were average, but not as high as in 2002 when they were well above average. AS results have been below average over the last two years. Given that the starting point for many in Year 12 was below or well below average, their achievement was good in 2003.
157. Standards by the end of Year 13 are well above average, representing very good achievement by these students. Their work is well presented and shows clear thinking. They work well together, for instance on a synoptic analysis of elite performers. They work independently and

also share ideas at an advanced level. They use ICT effectively by e-mailing material home and researching the Internet for more information. They understand technical terms and know how to apply them in reasoned statements. Year 12 students' standards are currently below average in their written presentations and clarity of argument. Some students are reluctant to contribute to discussion, for example when the interesting topic of racism and gender issues in sport arose. Better oral work was forthcoming in an outdoor education topic and an average standard was attained. Much more rigour and accuracy is required to reach an above average standard.

158. Teaching is very good overall. A variety of practical approaches and resources, including ICT, are used which makes learning more interesting. The relationships between teachers and students are good, supporting learning well. ICT is used by all the students to present and research their work. One of the strengths in the teaching is in the planning and preparation of units of work. Accurate worksheets and the use of computer presentations assist students' progress. Video examples are researched and discussed, making the analysis more relevant to each student. Work is assessed and targets set so that all students are aware of their progress through the course. More feedback and relevant grading would further assist the students in realising their targets. Common features of teaching are the expert specialist knowledge that all of the teachers have acquired and their high expectations of students' performance. Any questions on the topics are answered with clarity and understanding. Their use of the interactive whiteboard is confident and unflustered, as seen when minor breakdowns threatened the continuity of a lesson. The variety of approaches and strategies leads to excellent teaching at times, which has a great impact on learning. The teachers involved in A-level physical education teach to their strengths. They provide experience, innovation and stability.
159. Leadership and management are very good. The examination courses are well documented and assessed and attract a viable number of students. Links with other colleges provide the opportunity for students to choose an appropriate course to suit personal strengths. Staff work together to produce the units of work and they provide relevant handouts and worksheets to the students. The department's knowledge of ICT assists students in their research and presentation of work. Enrichment courses and activities are offered to the students and representative teams are formed in a few sports. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

BUSINESS

The focus subject for this inspection was business education.

Business Education

Provision in business education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pace of lessons is brisk with good support and challenge from teachers. Students learn well as a result.
- An outstanding feature is the extensive use of ICT and interactive whiteboards to promote the active engagement of students in their learning.
- Teachers establish good rapport with students so that good constructive working relationships are fostered.
- There are many good examples of students working both collaboratively and independently.

Commentary

160. In 2003 results at A-level were below average. At AS level, students' points score was above the average for all subjects, with both male and female students attaining above the average points score.
161. In Years 12 and 13 students achieve well considering attainment levels on entry to the course. Male and female students achieve equally well.
162. Teaching and learning are good. There are examples of very good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident and competent. Teaching is characterised by very good planning with good structure to the lessons. The pace of lessons is brisk with both good support and challenge from teachers, thus ensuring students' active engagement in learning. Teachers establish good rapport with students, which supports good constructive working relationships. There are many good examples of students working both collaboratively and independently. One of these was in a very good Year 13 lesson, where the interactive whiteboard was used extensively by the teacher and students - a link to an online simulation demonstrated graphically the effects of speculation on the Foreign Exchange Market.
163. Curriculum leadership is good. The head of faculty, in post less than two years, is committed to the achievement of all students and provides a very good role model for staff and pupils with his articulation of high aspirations and high expectations of himself and others. His leadership provides for a good collegiate structure in which he and others demonstrate very knowledgeable and innovative thinking in respect of the curriculum and teaching strategies in this fast improving faculty.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Subjects in this curriculum area were not a focus for this inspection.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Subjects in this curriculum area were not a focus for this inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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