

# INSPECTION REPORT

Bosworth Community College  
Desford

LEA area : Leicestershire

Unique Reference Number : 120266

Headteacher : Tansi Harper

Reporting inspector : Chris Richards  
Reporting inspector No: T 12341

Dates of inspection : 13th - 17th January 1997

Under OFSTED contract :002721

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of the Schools Inspection Act 1996

## Information about the school

Type of school	Community Upper School (Comprehensive)
Type of control	County
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Leicester Lane Desford Leicester LE9 9JL
Telephone number	01455 822841
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Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors (where appropriate)	Mr Colin Crane

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# REPORT CONTENTS

	<b>Paragraph</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	1-19
<b>Key issues for action</b>	20
<b>Introduction</b>	
Characteristics of the school	21-26
Key indicators	27
<b>PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	
<b>Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school</b>	
Attainment and progress	28-41
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development	42-45
Attendance	46-47
<b>Quality of education provided</b>	
Teaching	48-53
The curriculum and assessment	54-60
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	61-64
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	65-68
Partnership with parents and the community	69-72
<b>The management and efficiency of the school</b>	
Leadership and management	73-78
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	79-83
The efficiency of the school	84-86
<b>PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS</b>	
<b>English, mathematics and science</b>	87-100
<b>Other subjects or courses</b>	101-143
<b>PART C: INSPECTION DATA</b>	
<b>Summary of inspection evidence</b>	144-146
<b>Data and indicators</b>	147

## Main findings

- 1 At Bosworth Community College, students aged 14 to 16 are given a sound education and attain satisfactory standards. Older students taking A-level courses have a very good education; their attainment is above average. The college makes an important contribution to lifelong education in the community. It gives good value for money.
- 2 By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment in GCSE subjects is slightly above the national average, as is the proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\* - G grades. Girls attain better than boys at GCSE in most subjects, though the difference overall is similar to the national difference. Attainment at GCSE has improved steadily over the last three years. Because students enter the college with attainment at least in line with national averages, and attainment is not significantly better than average by the time they are 16, progress is only just satisfactory overall.
- 3 Attainment for students aged 18 is good; their average A-level points score is better than that achieved nationally. Boys attain better than girls at A-level, and reach high standards. The proportion of students achieving General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) is well above the national figure. The improvement in attainment between the ages of 16 and 18 shows that students in the sixth form make good progress, with boys making particularly rapid gains.
- 4 Attainment in English is close to national averages for students aged 16, and girls do better than boys. Attainment at A-level is very good. 14 to 16 year olds, particularly girls, make sound progress overall. Students with low prior attainment make good progress, as do students following A-level courses. In mathematics and science, attainment for students aged 16 is average, but in both subjects progress for students aged 14 to 16 is less than expected, and only just satisfactory. Attainment for students following A-level courses in mathematics and science is well above average, with very good progress being made.
- 5 In design and technology, progress is good; attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 4, and above average at A-level. In information technology (IT), attainment is sound for students aged 16, and good at A-level. In history, GCSE results are high and remain good at A-level. Progress is very good for most students. The progress of students in geography is sound overall; attainment is good by the end of each key stage. Results in media studies, physical education, drama and integrated humanities GCSE are above average. Students receive little religious education; attainment is poor and progress is not made.
- 6 In modern foreign languages (French and German) and music, attainment has been above average in recent years. Attainment in art, business studies and core physical education (PE) is in line with national averages for students aged 16; A-level results are above average. Students make good progress in all these subjects. In film studies and sociology at A-level, both attainment and progress are better than average. Attainment in psychology is sound overall. Results in A-level general studies are in line with national average, as are those for theatre studies.
- 7 Students show positive interest in their lessons, a high degree of perseverance and take pride in their work. They are confident, and subscribe strongly to the college ethos. Students are particularly good at working collaboratively; they show respect for each other's feelings and beliefs. The college expects students to take a high degree of personal responsibility for work; they respond very well and become independent, self-motivated learners, particularly in later years.

- 8 Arrangements to ensure good behaviour in and around the college are effective; standards of behaviour in and around the college and in lessons are generally good. Students show respect for property and the buildings. However, a small number of students, often boys in Year 10, do not come to terms easily with the new freedoms of an upper school; their behaviour in lessons is sometimes noisy and inattentive, and restricts their own progress and that of others.
- 9 The attendance rate (89.5) is unsatisfactory and below the national average (90.3%). Rates of unauthorised absence are above the national average. The college works hard with a small group of persistent non-attenders, but policies for monitoring and following up absences on a day to day basis are not consistently or promptly applied. Punctuality to college and to lessons is good.
- 10 The quality of teaching is very good in the sixth form, particularly in A- level subjects, where teaching is a strength of the college. For students aged 14 to 16, teaching is at least sound in about eight out of ten lessons. However, there are shortcomings in teaching in one in five lessons for 15 and 16 year olds, a significant factor in the unsatisfactory progress seen in a quarter of lessons at Key Stage 4. There are good and very good lessons taught in all subject areas.
- 11 The curriculum for students aged 14 to 16 is broad and balanced. A very good range of A-level subjects is offered, but opportunities to follow vocational courses are too limited. There is a well-planned induction programme, but not enough is done to ensure that the college builds on students' previous attainment and success. Good progress has been made in implementing the code of practice for students with special educational needs. The programme of careers and guidance is good. Community provision in the college is extensive and well planned. Links with industry enhance students' learning and attainment. The provision for regular extra-curricular activities, including sport, is low, except for residential experiences, some concerts and a yearly musical production. Marking of students' work is normally regular and accurate. Reports to parents meet statutory requirements.
- 12 The college emphasises its provision for social and moral development, but planning for spiritual and some aspects of cultural development is under-developed. There are good examples where students consider matters of worth and belief; most subjects fail to exploit opportunities for encouraging spiritual awareness. There are not enough assemblies to make a substantial contribution to personal development. Moral and social issues are frequently discussed. Some lessons help students to experience and appreciate culture and creativity. There are few opportunities in lessons or in the life of the college for the exploration or celebration of cultural diversity.
- 13 Openness and mature relationships between staff and students have a positive effect on standards. An understanding of rights and responsibilities is encouraged. Students are expected to take an unusually high degree of responsibility for their own work, behaviour and progress.
- 14 The college is very successful in promoting the health, safety and general well-being of students, who feel safe, secure, and well cared for. Staff are vigilant, caring, and committed; they know their students well. Systems for monitoring academic progress are particularly effective. Support for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties is very good.

- 15 Parents are pleased with the values the college promotes. The quality of communications provided to parents is good and well received. Parents' meetings are very well attended; the college is quick to communicate with parents if there are concerns. Considering the age range of students, links with parents are realistic and effective.
- 16 The way in which the college is managed has changed significantly over the past three years. The principal provides sensitive and realistic leadership, which has been effective in bringing about important changes. The senior managers and governors are a strong team. The community provision is managed well. Other managers lead effectively, but there are still some areas where managers have not as yet shouldered fully their accountabilities. For most subjects there is no direct monitoring to inform improvement, and this is an important factor in the unsatisfactory progress made in some subjects. Statutory requirements are largely met, with the exceptions of those relating to religious education, collective worship and appraisal.
- 17 The college has been largely successful in securing a well-qualified and experienced staff. The quality and deployment of teaching and non-teaching staff is a strength of the college. There are good arrangements to help new staff settle into the college.
- 18 Accommodation is adequate, the pleasant site is well maintained, and the college minimises graffiti, litter and deliberate damage. There are adequate resources. The college has enough computers to meet its teaching needs, but some of these are old and of limited usefulness.
- 19 The college has made careful financial plans, has very efficient budgetary controls, and long-term strategic planning is sound. Within a tight budget, the college has been effective in ensuring that accommodation has been improved; money for resources has been allocated fairly. The college provides a good quality education for a unit cost per student that is low. Although progress for students aged 14 to 16 is only satisfactory, for older students progress is very good and attainment is above average. Students' personal development is good. Therefore, the college gives good value for money overall; value for money is better for older students.

20 **Key issues for action**

- . To raise attainment further, and build on the good quality education already provided, the college should:
  - x
  - x
- . Expect students aged 14 to 16 to make faster progress, by ensuring that in all lessons:
  - x
  - x - the pace of activities is determined by the teacher;
    - x
    - x - teachers expect students to demonstrate high standards of behaviour and to show positive attitudes;
      - x
  - x - and assessment is used to help students build on prior attainment by setting challenging learning targets.
    - x
    - x
- . Require all managers to monitor attainment and progress, take responsibility for standards and quality in their areas, and implement college policies, particularly those relating to staff development and special needs.
  - x
  - x
- . Provide sufficient opportunities for spiritual and cultural development in all subjects, and in particular give students their entitlement to a religious education which meets the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus.
  - x
  - x
- . Raise attendance through ensuring that tutors, and others with pastoral responsibilities, take rapid and consistent action when students are absent.
  - x
  - x
- . Comply fully with those aspects of regulations and health and safety issues which have been brought to the attention of the college.

## Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 21 Bosworth Community College serves several communities to the west of Leicester, drawing students from close to the city and from rural areas and villages further afield. A large proportion of students, about 90%, travel to and from college by bus.
- 22 There are 1,082 students on roll, 299 of whom are in the sixth form. There are about equal numbers of boys and girls. Over 40 students from outside the normal catchment area choose to attend the college .
- 23 When they join the college, students represent a spread of ability which is better than average overall, particularly as regards attainment in mathematics and science. Attainment in English is slightly below national expectations. There are some very able students at the college. 126 students are on the college register for special educational needs; 23 of these, an average proportion, have a statement of special educational need. The numbers of students with such a statement has risen in recent years.
- 24 The students are from a wide and varied range of social backgrounds. Most are from comfortable circumstances, and from homes where at least one person is in full-time employment. However, the number of students from homes where there is a tradition of higher and further education is below average. The proportion of students who are entitled to free meals remains low, though it has risen in recent years, and some students, both from rural areas and from close to the city, suffer deprivation. The number of students for whom English is not the first language is low.
- 25 The college has established clear aims and principles which have driven recent developments. Some aims are about students' personal development and stress independence and responsibility. Other targets relate to providing accommodation which meets students' needs. There are specific targets relating to improving attainment; the aim is for at least of 50% of students to gain five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE.
- 26 Other aims stress how important the community dimension is to the college, and seek to build further on the opportunities which being a community college offer. As a community college, the buildings are open throughout the day and evening and during weekends and holidays. A comprehensive programme provides educational, recreational and social activities for all age groups, with over 40 affiliated clubs and societies making use of the facilities. In total, around 1800 people each week attend community classes or participate in other activities.

27 **Key indicators**

**Attainment at Key Stage 4**

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year (1995/96)	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1996	193	166	359

<b>GCSE Examination Results</b>		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
		Number of pupils achieving the given standard	Boys Girls Total	78 90 168
Percentage achieving the given standard	School National	47 (43) 42.6 (41)	92 (90) 88.1 (87)	95 (95) 94 (94)

(figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units, and percentage of <i>such pupils</i> who achieved all those they studied	School	Number	Success rate %
		92	88

**Attainment in the Sixth Form**

Number of students aged 16, 17 or 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year	Year	Male	Female	Total
	1996	30	40	70

<b>Average A/AS points score per candidate</b>	Candidates entered for two or more A levels or equivalent			Candidates entered for fewer than two A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
School 1996	21.3	15.1	17.7	4	6	5.5
School 1995	(19.2)	(17.4)	(18.2)	(2.5)	(5.5)	(4.0)
National 1996	14.2	14.8	14.6	-	-	2.7

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications, and percentage of <i>such students</i> who achieved these qualifications	Number	Success rate %
	School	31
	National	n/a
		84 (68)
		69 (n/a)

### Attendance

		percent
Authorised absence	School	9.1
	National data	8.6
Unauthorised absence	School	1.4
	National data	1.1

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year		number
	fixed period	29
	permanent	2

### Quality of Teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is		percent
	very good or better	18
	satisfactory or better	86
	less than satisfactory	14

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

- 28 By the time they are 16, students' attainment in GCSE subjects is slightly above the national average. In 1996 the proportion of students gaining 5 or more A\* - C grades was 47%, an improvement on the previous year. The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\* - G grades, 92% in 1996, is slightly above the national average. Attainment at GCSE has improved steadily over the last 3 years. The improved results in 1996 are largely due to better performance by girls. The 5 A\* - C pass rate for boys remained the same; that for girls improved by 10%, with the girls now outperforming the boys by 14%. The difference in attainment between boys and girls is similar to the national difference.
- 29 Students enter the college with attainment at least in line with, and in some aspects better than national averages. Attainment is not significantly better by the time they are 16, and progress through Key Stage 4 is only just satisfactory overall. Progress in lessons is unsatisfactory in a quarter of lessons at Key Stage 4, though the rate of progress improves for students in Year 11. Lower attaining students make good progress.
- 30 Attainment for students at the end of their sixth form studies is above average. Most students follow A-level courses, and the number entered for 2 or more A-levels is large. The average points score for these students in 1996 was 17.7, compared with a national average of 14.6; the average points score has been above the national average for the past three years. At A-level, boys do much better than girls, and attain high standards. The average points score for boys in 1996 was 21.3, whilst that for girls was 15.1. This compares with national average points scores of 14.2 for boys and 14.8 for girls.
- 31 The number entered for fewer than 2 A-levels is small, and has fallen over the last three years. The average points score for such students is better than the national average. The college offers intermediate General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses for other students in the sixth form. In 1996 the proportion of students achieving GNVQ qualifications was 84%, which is well above the national figure of 69%.
- 32 The improvement in attainment between the ages of 16 and 18 shows that students in the sixth form make good progress, with boys making particularly rapid gains. In sixth form lessons, progress is never less than satisfactory, and it is good in 8 out of 10 lessons.
- 33 Attainment in English and English Literature is close to national averages for students aged 16, and girls do better than boys. Attainment at A-level, especially for boys, is very good when compared with similar schools nationally. 14 to 16 year olds, particularly girls, make sound progress overall. Students with low prior attainment make good progress, as do students following A-level courses.
- 34 In mathematics, attainment for students aged 16 is similar to the national average. Taking into account their good prior attainment, progress for students up to the age of 16 is less than expected. Attainment for students following A-level courses in mathematics is well above average, with very good progress being made.

- 35 Attainment in science is in line with the national average for students aged 16. Because students entering the college have already attained good standards in science, progress is only just satisfactory in Key Stage 4, but better for students in Year 11. Attainment in A-level sciences is good, and progress rapid.
- 36 In design and technology, progress for students aged 14 to 16 is good; design skills are below average on entry, and by the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Recent GCSE results have been slightly above average. Girls attain better than boys. At A-level, attainment in design and technology is above national figures; students produce high-quality products and make good progress. In information technology (IT), attainment is sound for students at Key Stage 4, and good for those in the sixth form. Students make good progress through the basic IT course, and many gain a Royal Society of Arts qualification.
- 37 For students following the integrated humanities GCSE course, results have been better than average, with a particularly good number of high grades. Progress in this subject remains good overall. In history, GCSE results are high in comparison with national averages and remain good at A-level. Progress is very good for most students, including those with lower prior attainment, in all years. However, in some classes at Key Stage 4 a few students, particularly boys, make slow progress and their attainment is low. The progress of students in geography is sound overall, and improves in Years 11 and 13. Consequently, attainment is good by the end of each key stage. Students with special educational needs normally make sound progress in geography; they make good progress when receiving extra classroom support. The progress of higher attaining students is too slow in some geography lessons. Students receive little religious education; attainment is poor and progress is not made.
- 38 In modern foreign languages (French and German) attainment at GCSE has been above average in recent years from a relatively small entry. Now that all students study a language, attainment overall is in line with the national average. Attainment in both languages at A-level is good. A large majority of students make good progress in languages.
- 39 By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in art is in line with national averages, though girls do better than boys. A-level results are above the national average. Students make good progress, and students with lower prior attainment do well. In music, recent GCSE results are consistently above the national average, sometimes significantly so. A-level groups include some able instrumentalists, but standards overall are average. Most students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 40 Attainment in physical education is good. By the time they are 16, students following the core curriculum attain sound standards; for students who follow the GCSE courses attainment is good. A-level students' attainment is at least sound and often good. Progress in physical education is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good for A-level students.
- 41 Media studies GCSE grades are well above national averages, as are those for A-level film studies. Drama results at GCSE are very good. Students make sound progress in business studies, and GCSE results are similar to the national average. A-level results are above average. Progress is sound for students aged 14 - 16, and good for students in the sixth form. Many students achieve certificates in typing and word processing, though progress in reaching certificated standards is slow. In sociology at A-level, both attainment and progress are better than average. Attainment in psychology is sound overall. Results in A-level general studies and theatre studies are in line with national averages.

## **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 42 Most students show positive interest in their lessons, a high degree of perseverance, take pride in their work, and are able to sustain concentration well. They grow in confidence as they move through the college, and respond very well to the expectations placed on them as members of the learning community. Most students subscribe strongly to the college ethos, and prove themselves able to display maturity in open and constructive relationships which characterise the college. Students are particularly good at working collaboratively in groups. They normally show respect for each other's feelings and beliefs.
- 43 The ethos of the college expects students to take a high degree of personal responsibility for work. Most students respond very well to this challenge, and become independent, self-motivated learners, particularly in later years. Opportunities to become involved in the corporate life of the college are not frequent, but students show willingness and initiative when given the chance.
- 44 The standard of behaviour in and around the college is generally good, and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are not common. Students are polite and welcoming. Most students show respect for property and the buildings. Correct procedures for exclusions are in place; exclusions are only made for serious and specific reasons. Parents are involved quickly and kept informed. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the week of inspection. When incidents occur, they are dealt with quickly and to the satisfaction of students and parents.
- 45 Behaviour in lessons is mostly very good. However, a small number of students, often boys in Year 10, do not come to terms easily with the new freedoms of an upper school; their behaviour is sometimes noisy and inattentive, and restricts their own progress and that of others.

## Attendance

- 46 The attendance rate (89.5%) is unsatisfactory and below the national average (90.3%). Rates of unauthorised absence are above the national average. The college works hard with outside agencies to encourage better attendance from a small group of persistent non-attenders. College policies for monitoring and following up absences on a day to day basis are not consistently or promptly applied.
- 47 Appropriate procedures are in place for recording attendance; these comply with legal requirements. Registers and records are normally well maintained. Registration is dealt with efficiently. Punctuality to college and to lessons is mostly good, even though buses are sometimes late.

## Quality of education provided

### Teaching

- 48 The quality of teaching is very good in the sixth form, particularly in A- level subjects, where teaching is a strength of the college. There is no unsatisfactory teaching at A-level, and teaching in three-quarters of lessons is good; 20% of lessons in the sixth form have very good features.
- 49 For students aged 14 to 16, teaching is at least sound in about eight out of ten lessons, and there are good features in half the lessons. However, there are shortcomings in teaching in one in five lessons for 15 and 16 year olds, and almost 10% of lessons are unsatisfactory for students of this age. This is a significant factor in the unsatisfactory progress seen in a quarter of lessons at Key Stage 4.
- 50 There are good and very good lessons taught in all subject areas; a third of teachers taught at least one very good lesson during the inspection, and three quarters of the teachers taught at least one good lesson. Consistently good teaching is seen in art, design and technology, information technology, music and science.
- 51 The unsatisfactory lessons and those with shortcomings are concentrated in some elements of the guidance programme, a few subjects at Key Stage 4, particularly history, mathematics, and humanities; and in tutor periods for students of all ages.
- 52 The strengths of teaching which lead to high standards and ensure good progress are seen where:
- teachers have high expectations of their students, for example in design and technology where good quality examples of students' work show what it is possible to achieve;
  - teachers make sure that short-term targets are known to students, for example in A-level mathematics they are given a very detailed syllabus with weekly deadlines;
  - teachers have a good command of their subject, and are confident with the materials. This is a feature common in most subjects, but particularly noticeable in science and information technology;
  - teachers use a range and variety of methods to encourage participation and motivation, for example in a physical education lesson on women in sport and an English lesson on love poetry. In both lessons teachers use video, group

discussion, class discussion, teacher exposition, demonstration and good quality resources;

- students have clear instructions from the teacher about how long a task should take, for example in a design and technology food lesson on planning and making a dish to a recipe;
- teachers provide and make use of high quality and appropriate resources, for example in a languages lesson a television programme from France was used as the basis for a lesson on advertising;
- teachers use, and expect students to use, accurate specialist and technical language, for example in art lessons developing techniques for using oil pastels;
- lively and well-informed presentations are made by the teacher, for example in geography when studying settlement in cities;
- teachers use, sharp, accurate, probing and demanding questioning. This is a characteristic of good lessons in many subjects;
- teachers have generated positive relationships which enable effective work with individuals; again, this feature is seen in good lessons across subjects;
- students' work is marked regularly and accurately, and includes helpful comments for improvement;
- teachers give high-quality feedback and regular information about attainment and progress to students.

53 Teaching that has shortcomings, and does not lead to high standards and progress, is seen where:

- there is poor behaviour, in that students talk to each other about things unrelated to lessons, sometimes when the teacher is trying to talk, and do not heed instructions to work. In several lessons this behaviour is unchecked by the teacher;
- teachers do not make explicit the expectation for students to listen and work consistently on tasks set;
- teachers do not give sufficient support to those students who are unable to cope with the high degree of personal responsibility for learning which the college expects;

- the pace of lessons is determined by the rate at which students choose to work. Consequently, the slowest student determines the progress of all. This is accepted as normal by a few teachers. This is seen, for example, when students copy from the board or worksheets; and where students are set extra, undemanding tasks whilst waiting for others to catch up;
- assessment of prior learning is not used to inform lesson planning, set targets for students, or build on previous success. This is often a feature of otherwise sound lessons;
- teachers have no clear development objectives for a lesson, so that students are busy but to no real purpose;
- teachers are not trained or fully qualified for the subject;
- where there is a lack of suitable resources to support students of different abilities.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

- 54 The curriculum for students aged 14 to 16 is broad and balanced; all students follow a sensible core curriculum, and option choices allow students to extend chosen areas of study. All students follow well-planned non-GCSE courses in information technology, physical education, careers and guidance. There is equal access to all courses, although there is an imbalance between the numbers of girls and boys choosing some subjects. The curriculum meets statutory requirements except that not enough religious education is not provided. The total lesson time available each week (24 hours and 10 minutes) is below the recommended provision of 25 hours.
- 55 A very good range of A-level subjects is offered. The college collaborates with other local institutions to offer GNVQ courses at Foundation and Intermediate Level. Opportunities to follow vocational courses are too limited, considering the needs of students in a college of this size and composition, though Advanced Level GNVQ is to be offered next year. There is not enough religious education taught in the sixth form.
- 56 There is a well-planned induction programme for students when they join the college and if they move on into the sixth form. Students aged 14 commit themselves to optional courses before arrival, sometimes on the basis of relatively limited experience. There are improving links with feeder schools, and arrangements to ensure a smooth transition to the college are very good. Some subjects have made productive links with other schools, but overall not enough is done to ensure that continuity of learning is assured, or that the college builds on students' previous attainment and success.
- 57 Good progress has been made in implementing the national Code of Practice for students with special educational needs, and arrangements are in place for annual reviews. A certificated course provides a suitable alternative English curriculum for some students. Individual education plans are in place and contain much helpful descriptive information, but targets are not yet sufficiently specific or precise, and not fully effective in helping subject teachers meet students' needs. The provision for special needs students is most effective where students are supported in normal classes by teachers with specialist knowledge and assistants with special expertise. Provision is effective where specialists teach a well-chosen alternative curriculum. Provision is least effective where students are withdrawn from normal lessons and looked after in a base where there is only limited access to specialist resources and subject expertise.

- 58 The programme of careers and guidance covers a wide range of relevant topics, including sex education, the misuse of drugs, personal health development, citizenship, environmental matters and economic awareness. The courses are planned well. Careers education is good and is supported by an up to date library, access to information technology and the county careers service. Adults make good use of the careers library. Work experience is well-planned for all students in the college, and is followed up systematically in lessons and tutorials. Community provision in the college is extensive and well planned. There is little direct integration between college classes and community classes.
- 59 There is a comprehensive whole-college policy on assessment which ensures that there are accurate, consistent, clear and reliable systems for assessing students' attainment. Teachers use results from mock examinations and coursework well to inform curriculum planning and to identify specific ways in which students can improve.
- 60 The provision for regular extra-curricular activities, including sport, is low, and does not greatly enrich the curriculum, except through residential experiences, concerts and a yearly musical production. A short lunch break and the need to transport students by bus from a number of outlying districts affects the take-up rate. A late bus is organised one day a week to enable some activities to be undertaken.

#### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 61 The aim of the college to develop its students into responsible, self-reliant adults is clearly reflected in its ethos and life, and the college emphasises its provision for social and moral development. Adults in the college set an excellent example for students to follow. Planning for spiritual and some aspects of cultural development are under-developed, and there is no policy or whole-college approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- 62 There are good examples - for example in a history lesson on the different beliefs of native Americans and European settlers, and in a English lesson exploring reactions to death - of opportunities for students to consider matters of worth and belief. Most subjects, however, fail to exploit opportunities for encouraging spiritual awareness or promoting a sense of wonder. There are no acts of collective worship. Students have assemblies, which consider moral and social questions once each week at most; this is not enough to make a substantial contribution to personal development. Moral and social issues are frequently discussed in guidance and other lessons, but unsatisfactory teaching in many tutorial lessons prevents these contributing significantly to students' self awareness and personal standards.
- 63 Openness and mature relationships between staff and students generally have a positive effect on standards. The college's emphasis on team work and frequent group discussions foster good relationships between students successfully. An understanding of rights and responsibilities is encouraged through such activities as the visits of politicians to the sixth form and college councils. Students have the opportunity to support charities and have given generously to the elderly. They are expected to take an unusually high degree of responsibility for their own work, behaviour and progress. There are relatively few opportunities for students to take on responsibilities within the college community.

- 64 Some lessons help students to experience and appreciate culture and creativity, as does a rich programme of residentials and visits to art galleries and theatres. There are some opportunities to look at other cultures, for example in a physical education lesson when a student described his experiences of mixed race soccer in South Africa. Bringing black youth workers into college gives a positive message to students. There are, however, few opportunities overall in lessons or in the life of the college for the exploration or celebration of cultural diversity. A relatively limited range of extra-curricular activities is offered, although there are several concerts and a successful musical, involving large numbers of students, is staged each year.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 65 The college is very successful in promoting the health, safety and general well-being of students. They feel safe and secure, and well cared for. Students willingly approach their tutor, head of year or the college counsellor if in need of help or support. Good use is made of the counselling service and there are effective links with other support services such as the educational welfare officer and Social Services. Staff are vigilant, caring, committed, and know their students well. Procedures for child protection are in place; they are in line with LEA policy and there is a designated teacher for child protection. Parents value the support given.
- 66 Monitoring of behaviour, attendance and personal development is carried out by tutors and is generally good for students of all ages. The system for monitoring academic progress is particularly effective in enabling teachers and students to receive regular and accurate information about progress and attainment. Parents are quickly informed and invited to the college if there are difficulties. Pastoral support for students with special educational needs, especially those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, is very good.
- 67 The topics covered in the personal and social education programme, for example those related to drug and health education, are relevant to students' needs, and planning is good. The careers programme is effective and well received. Work experience is available for all students and is valued.
- 68 Arrangements to ensure good behaviour in and around the college are effective; staff are diligent in carrying out their duties. Students are fully aware of the need for good behaviour; the sanctions for inappropriate actions are applied when necessary. Behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place; they are understood and supported by students. The college has regular checks on health and safety, and has taken measures to ensure that any problems are dealt with. The college has been notified of a small number of minor items relating to health and safety in design and technology and physical education.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 69 Parents are pleased with the values the college promotes. The quality of communications provided to parents is good and well received. The style of letters is friendly, clear and informative. There are regular, helpful newsletters. Reports to parents meet statutory requirements, except that they do not include information from tutors giving details of students' skills and abilities outside normal lessons.

- 70 There is little, formal parental involvement in the college, for example there is no parent/teacher association. Parents' meetings are very well attended and valued. The college is quick to communicate with parents if there are concerns. Considering the age range of students, links with parents are realistic and effective.
- 71 Links with industry enhance students' learning and attainment. Students are involved in projects, for example with Asda, and are supported by local businesses through sponsorship, use of facilities and provision of equipment. There is good liaison with the local Technology Education Council, the Royal College of Art and Technology and local universities. The college provides an effective work experience programme for students in Year 11 and in the sixth form. Students value their work placements with local employers.
- 72 Some community links have been established, for example students are involved with elderly and disabled people, and there are opportunities to attend community classes, be involved in the play scheme, visit local primary schools and to take a community sports leadership course. Students' experience of life is enhanced through these activities.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

- 73 The way in which the college is managed has changed significantly over the past three years, as a new senior team has built on previous traditions in response to demands brought about by developments in education. The aims and values of the college are clear, and reflect an ethos which is characterised by strong expectations for high achievement, responsibility, good relationships, and equality of opportunity in an effective learning environment. The policies which the college has adopted support the ethos.
- 74 The principal provides sensitive and realistic leadership, which has been effective in bringing about important changes in the way people think about their management roles, and has also inspired direct and practical developments to the curriculum, buildings and other aspects of the work of the college. In this, the principal has been ably supported by two vice-principals and an assistant community principal. These people have different and complementary qualities; together they make a strong team, and along with the governing body provide clear educational direction for the work of the college. The relationship between the management of the college and the community provision is managed well, to the benefit of all concerned.
- 75 Many other managers lead effectively; most curriculum managers administer their subjects efficiently, and provide good support for teachers. That said, there are still some areas where managers have not as yet shouldered fully their accountabilities for quality and standards as well as organisation and administration. Pilot studies in two subjects are introducing classroom observation as part of monitoring and supporting curriculum development, and all subjects use information from tests and examinations to give broad indications of relative performance. For most subjects, however, there is no direct monitoring of the quality of teaching, or the work of students, to inform improvement, and this is an important factor in the unsatisfactory progress made in some subjects.

- 76 The college has introduced and refined a development plan based on wide consultation with staff and governors which reflects its values and the policies which are in place. Although targets in the plan are often not sufficiently specific, and many of the initiatives are still at an early stage of development, it has been effective in bringing about change.
- 77 The college has identified sufficient funding for those students who have special educational needs. Help is provided through classroom support and in a special base. Monitoring and evaluation of the relative effectiveness of the different kinds of provision for special needs have not been undertaken.
- 78 The governors are active and effective in their support for the college, and take their duties seriously. All the required governors' policies are in place. Statutory requirements are largely met, with the exceptions of those relating to religious education, collective worship and appraisal. There are some minor omissions from the college prospectus.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 79 The college has been largely successful in securing a well-qualified and experienced staff. The exceptions are in modern foreign languages, where some of the teaching is undertaken by staff who are less qualified and experienced in this area, and this has an adverse effect on attainment. Also, the college has not made arrangements to ensure that properly qualified or experienced staff are available to meet the needs for religious education. This situation is unsatisfactory. Staff are deployed well, except that the non-teaching time available for those staff with extra management responsibilities is comparatively low. Overall, the quality and deployment of teaching and non-teaching staff is a strength of the college.

- 80 The college and subject development plans include staff training needs, but the relationship between the plans and what happens in practice is not close enough. There is little evaluation of the impact of staff development on the quality of education provided, or of its cost-effectiveness. There are good arrangements to help new staff settle into the college. After good initial progress, arrangements for teacher appraisal have ceased. This is contrary to regulations, impedes monitoring of teacher effectiveness, and makes personal development more haphazard.
- 81 Accommodation is adequate for the numbers and ages of the students, and provides a good range of specialist facilities. There is an overall plan for the gradual refurbishment of buildings which are difficult and expensive to maintain. This is effective in improving the use of space and the appearance of some areas. The pleasant site is well maintained, and the college minimises graffiti, litter and deliberate damage.
- 82 Overall, there is adequate provision of books, materials and resources. Good quality text books enhance learning in some courses in English, history and geography. On the other hand, some parts of the science and mathematics curriculum do not have enough books. In many subjects, particularly for students aged 14 to 16, books and resources do not always fully support the full range of student attainment.
- 83 The library/ resources centre provides pleasant accommodation and an adequate range of learning resources. A review has analysed patterns of use and highlighted future needs, but this has not yet led to a development plan for the gradual improvement of the stock, facilities and services. The college has enough computers to meet its teaching needs, but some of these are old and of limited usefulness. Some subjects, for example history, geography and English, make good use of museums, galleries and other resources outside the college.

### **The efficiency of the school**

- 84 The college has made careful financial plans despite uncertainties about future income. These plans ensure that educational developments are able to be supported. The development plan, however, does not identify directly the cost of proposed initiatives, and decisions about priorities for action are not always based on a full analysis of financial implications. Having said that, some developments, for example those relating to improving the premises, have been carefully costed. Long-term strategic planning is sound overall. The college makes exceptionally good use of comparative information and value-added indicators to plan budgets and monitor expenditure. The cost-effectiveness of some expenditure, for example money spent on staff training, is not evaluated against development plan targets.
- 85 Within a tight budget, the college has been effective in ensuring that accommodation has been improved, and money for resources has been allocated fairly and sensibly. Staffing arrangements are mostly efficient in ensuring that suitably qualified teachers are available, and that there is a proper balance between teaching and support staff. The college has very efficient controls on the budget at all levels, and procedures for financial administration keep a careful eye on all spending patterns.
- 86 The college provides a good quality education for a unit cost per student that is low. Although progress for students aged 14 to 16 is only satisfactory, attainment is in line with

national averages. For older students, progress is very good and attainment is above average. Students' personal development is good. Therefore, the college gives good value for money overall; value for money is better for older students.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **English, mathematics and science**

#### **English**

- 87 By the time they are 16, students' attainment in English and English literature meets national expectations, with examination results at GCSE in line with the national averages. For students aged 18, attainment at A-level is very good. Recently, every student entered for A-level English has passed, and the number attaining higher grades has been above average. Boys do particularly well at A-level. Students who enter A-level examinations in film studies also achieve good results, and attainment in GCSE media studies is very good; in 1996 no student was ungraded and 70% achieved A\* to C grades. Work in several other subjects, and particularly in history, geography and modern foreign languages, makes a good contribution to the development of language skills.
- 88 The attainment of students in English is slightly below the national expectations when they enter the college. Students of high attainment and A-level students make good progress in lessons. By the end of Year 11 they produce accurate writing in a range of styles, read aloud with good expression, listen well and are able to present reasoned oral argument. Students of average attainment make at least sound, and sometimes good progress. By the end of Year 11 they can produce written work of reasonable to good length, though minor spelling and punctuation errors remain. They can speak and listen well, and read satisfactorily. The progress of low attaining students is generally sound; by the end of Year 11 they can produce short pieces of written work, but are often untidy and make a considerable number of errors. They speak well but listen poorly.
- 89 Most students have good attitudes to learning. Relationships and behaviour in the classrooms are good, and students generally concentrate and listen well to their teachers. A few students in some lessons - most often lower attaining boys - persist in talking to each other while the teacher is addressing the class. A-level students have excellent attitudes to their work and show considerable responsibility.
- 90 In lessons for 14 to 16 year olds, teaching is rarely less than sound; in a quarter of lessons teaching is good, and in a further quarter very good. Teachers plan their work well to make good use of lesson time and resources. This ensures that work is varied and interesting and that students are kept on task. Most lessons have a good working atmosphere, but in the few lessons with shortcomings the pace is slower, students do not concentrate well and persistent gossip hinders progress. In Years 10 and 11 it is unusual to see enough attention given to the needs of either the highest or the lowest attainers. At A-level, teaching is good. Lessons proceed in an excellent atmosphere, and teaching is responsive to the needs of individuals.
- 91 Marking and assessment are strengths of the faculty; students are often given a clear explanation of their strengths and weaknesses, and are set targets for improvement. Processes for the analysis of student achievement are developing well, but the faculty does not yet take full advantage of these to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching or the progress and attainment of groups and individuals. The English faculty is staffed by competent teachers who know their material and the students well. The head of faculty provides good support to the teachers, and those with special responsibilities carry them out well.

## Mathematics

- 92 Results in mathematics at GCSE are in line with those found nationally, with a small improvement in the most recent year. For students aged 18, A-level results are well above national averages and progress in lessons is very good. Boys achieve significantly better than girls, especially at A-level. Students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in their coursework, investigating increasingly complex situations and becoming more sophisticated in making and testing generalisations. However, overall progress in the 14 to 16 age range is unsatisfactory. Students join the college with better than average attainment, and by the time they are 16, attainment is only average. Progress at Key Stage 4 is often adversely affected by the quality of teaching and students' response. Students make very good progress in the 16 to 18 age range. A-level students acquire new knowledge rapidly and are quick to develop their skills to a high level. Students with special educational needs make good progress, taking into account their prior attainment.
- 93 Students in the sixth form have very good attitudes. They are keen, interested and demonstrate the will to improve. For example, the GCSE re-take students are strongly motivated to improve on previous grades; and many A-level students seek appointments with teachers beyond their lessons. Many students aged 14 to 16 do not sustain positive attitudes or good behaviour, and their overall response to teaching is unsatisfactory in about one third of lessons at Key Stage 4. Students occasionally arrive late; many are slow to settle to work, show poor concentration and work at a slow pace. Poor behaviour is more common with boys than girls. During the better lessons students settle quickly to work and collaborate very productively.
- 94 The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good, but at Key Stage 4 teaching is at least satisfactory in only three fifths of lessons. Teachers have a competent command of the subject at all levels. They give clear explanations and provide high-quality individual support. In sixth form lessons, teachers encourage rapid pace and high attainment. They make very effective use of well-structured syllabuses with weekly deadlines for students. At Key Stage 4, teachers often do not ensure that all students are listening to an important explanation. There is insufficient use of questioning to check understanding, and widespread misconceptions are not identified or used as whole-class teaching points. Teachers frequently do not make their expectations of good behaviour and appropriate pace sufficiently explicit, and allow off-task activity to go unchecked for too long.
- 95 The curriculum provided by the mathematics department is broad, balanced and provides very good opportunities to use and apply mathematics within coursework. Students have few opportunities to use or develop their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Careful use of accurate and consistent assessment ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of all students, except that there is no planned use of information technology in mathematics. There are links with high schools, but not enough is done to ensure that students entering the college build on previous success in mathematics. The department is sensitively managed and makes very efficient use of its well-qualified staff, adequate learning resources and good accommodation. The departmental development plan is not specific enough, and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.

## Science

- 96 Students receive a good quality science education. Attainment for students aged 15 to 16 is in line with the national average. At A-level, attainment is above average in physics and chemistry. In biology there has been a consistent improvement in attainment over a three year period and standards are now in line with the national average. Attainment in lessons is always at least average, is above average in some Year 11 classes and is often very good in the sixth form.
- 97 Curriculum planning does not take into account the good prior attainment of students when they join the college, so progress does not lead to attainment as high as might be expected by the end of Key Stage 4. Progress in the sixth form is very good; students make significant gains in knowledge and understanding as well as in experimental and investigative science.
- 98 Students' attitudes and behaviour are sound in most Year 10 classes, though in some lessons students are less motivated, and they become involved in background chatter which inhibits progress. Attitudes and behaviour are much better in Year 11 classes and in the sixth form; students are conscientious, show high levels of motivation and are willing to respond to high expectations. The development of independent learning skills and opportunities for collaborative learning are given high priority by the teachers, particularly for the most able in Year 11 and in the sixth form.
- 99 Overall, good teaching is a strength of the faculty. Nine out of ten lessons are at least good; some are very good. However, in Year 10 the pace of many lessons is slow. Effective alternative approaches to teaching are used, for example in lessons on genetics and displacement reactions, and these approaches contribute to high levels of knowledge and understanding. Good planning of lessons contributes to high levels of attainment in experimental and investigative science, for example in a "rates of reaction" investigation.
- 100 The social development of the students is very good, though the recognition of how science affects our lives is not consistent across the department. The science curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The management of science is good, and a high degree of team work and co-operation takes place. Development planning, action planning and professional development of staff are good. The use of accommodation is good and appropriate for the current number of students in the college. Access to computers is good, but the use of IT for sensing and data collection is not significant and is an area for development. Although the faculty has a relatively low allocation of technician hours for the amount of curriculum provision, their work is well organised and has a significant beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Health and safety in laboratories and lessons is good

## **Other subjects or courses**

### **Art**

- 101 Art is taught through three GCSE art and design courses. Across these courses, students' attainment is in line with the national average by the time they are 16. GCSE results overall are sound, though girls do better on average than boys. In recent years, results achieved in the textiles course are above average; in the 3-dimensional course they are average, and results are below average in the 2-dimensional course. A-level examination results are above the national average. Students learn with self-confidence and develop expertise in a range of material and styles.

- 102 At Key Stage 4, students' design skills are strong and well-developed. They undertake large scale two-dimensional projects with confidence. All students develop competent drawing skills, and their command of the specialist language of the subjects is well developed. Students of all abilities, in all years, make good progress with the skills and competencies related to the art course they are undertaking.
- 103 Relationships in art lessons are conducted on a professional footing and students work with interest and enjoyment in all years. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Students are supported by considerate teachers who give sensitive advice, are experts in their subject, and expect high standards. Teachers set effective homework tasks and expect them to be completed. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment to provide students with feedback about their attainment, or about progress toward targets.
- 104 Good teaching is supported well by carefully planned schemes of work which show clearly how observational skills, problem solving and personal response are to be developed. There are adequate resources and equipment. Information technology facilities have improved recently, though IT has not yet become a routine means of developing art work. Development planning in the subject does not make enough use of information collected over time about standards in art.

### **Design Technology**

- 105 In design and technology, students are given a broad and well- balanced curriculum through which they can make progress and develop technological skills. Attainment for students aged 16 is broadly in line with national expectations. This is reflected in GCSE results marginally higher than the national norm. Girls attainment at GCSE is better than boys. Sixth form students are attaining standards well above the national average.
- 106 Students' knowledge and understanding of design and technology is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in the application of electronics and control systems. Students aged 14 to 16 are making good progress in developing their research and designing skills. Graphical presentation of ideas is good; the use of colour and annotated drawings is a particular strength, and skills in this aspect are above average. Making skills are good; students use tools and equipment safely and with increasing accuracy. Students with special needs make satisfactory progress and their attainment is often higher than expected.
- 107 Sixth form students have skills which are well above average in graphics and designing, and have made very good progress. Students have folders which include thorough information about how ideas have been generated, researched, investigated and planned. Good links with commercial firms help students develop a realistic concept of industrial product design.
- 108 Students' attitude to learning is at least satisfactory. Most keep on task and show enthusiasm for their work. Behaviour is generally good; students are able to work as individuals or in teams and groups without difficulties. They display good relationships towards each other and staff.
- 109 The department is led well, and staffed by competent teachers. Subject knowledge is good and projects are carefully planned to match student abilities. Expectations are high and assessment is checked to ensure consistency across the department. The overall quality of the teaching is good. Staff display a caring attitude for the students.

## Geography

- 110 Students make good progress in geography and attainment is in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The attainment of some students is high. Students have a good understanding of human geography, including urban development and tourism. They have a less secure understanding of some of the processes of physical geography, such as the causes of rainfall and climate. Students are good at drawing and interpreting graphs, and geographical skills are developed well. A good start has been made on using information technology skills to aid students' learning. Students with special educational needs make sound progress. They benefit greatly from the support they receive, but struggle with work not designed for their particular needs when extra help is not available.
- 111 Most students show enthusiasm for learning and work hard in lessons. They listen well to teachers and to each other, and are keen to answer questions. They present their own ideas confidently, and ask challenging questions in the relaxed atmosphere of the classroom. The co-operative way students work together in groups and assist each other in their learning is a particularly strong feature of many lessons. A very good example of students taking responsibility for their work and showing initiative was seen in a coursework lesson where they selected their own methods of depicting data on holiday choices.
- 112 The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes very good; a few lessons are excellent. Teachers draw on their wide knowledge of the subject to enhance competent and lively presentations with fascinating examples. They make good use of the blackboard, video and resources. Class management is friendly but firm, and relationships are very good. Teachers do not, however, always use time well, and sometimes allow activities to continue for too long. More challenging work to stretch higher attaining students is not provided often enough.
- 113 The head of department manages the department very well overall, but there is not enough liaison with feeder high schools to ensure good continuity and progression.

## History

- 114 Attainment in history is good. Recent GCSE results are well above the national average. The overall attainment of students currently studying history matches previous high standards. A-level results in 1996 were below average, though the number of students was small, and results matched prior attainment. Attainment for students currently studying at A-level history is at least in line with national averages.
- 115 A-level students, and most of those following GCSE courses, make good progress. Students with special needs make sound progress in relation to prior attainment, particularly where they are given individual help. A minority of students, mostly boys, make unsatisfactory progress. This is because their behaviour is not good; they do not concentrate well, and talk too much. Good progress is often based on keen listening skills, and students are able to ask relevant historical questions. Their ability to analyse

historical information in terms of bias and reliability is secure. Students have developed good thinking skills, and are able to handle complex information from a variety of sources. Written work is carefully presented.

- 116 Most students show interest and concentration, especially the sixth form. They apply themselves to coursework with enthusiasm, and show good individual initiative. Most students are courteous, friendly and well-behaved. There are good relations between students and teachers, and friendly collaboration between students. History teaching is good, except where students are allowed to gossip and the expectation to work is not made sufficiently clear. The teachers are experienced, and clearly love their subject. Effective management has led to a carefully planned curriculum, individual lessons are prepared thoroughly, and enable students to make good progress. Resources are used effectively, except that not enough use is made of information technology. Teachers assess work thoroughly and set homework carefully.

### **Information Technology**

- 117 Students receive a good education in information technology. At Key Stage 4, they make good progress in lessons leading to Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and GCSE qualifications, and in the sixth form towards A-level and GNVQ courses. At GCSE, the number of students obtaining grades A\* to G improved markedly this Year, to above the national average, though the proportion of students gaining A\* to C grades at GCSE was below the national average.
- 118 All students develop good competencies in word processing, using spreadsheets and databases during the core information technology course, and many are successful in the RSA examinations. At A-level, examination results are above average and those students in the sixth form studying for GNVQ develop sound IT skills and understanding. Students with special educational needs make steady progress and gain good skills in word processing. Able students make good progress.
- 119 Most students are interested in their work and are able to talk confidently and purposefully about IT. They treat the equipment with respect. Most students are able to sustain work for considerable periods of time and have developed good learning habits.
- 120 Teaching in the department is almost always at least sound at Key Stage 4 and is good in the sixth form. In many lessons, the teachers acts as a consultant, an effective style which encourages high-quality interventions and challenges students to think for themselves. In addition, activities are well planned and relevant. In a few lessons, a minority of students, mostly boys, are disrespectful to the teacher and other students; they take advantage of the good relationships and are unduly loud. Teachers are not prompt enough in managing this behaviour, and these students lose interest in their work and do not make enough progress.
- 121 The department is led wisely. Documentation is excellent, and carefully costed plans have outlined the next stage of development. The core IT curriculum is strong, and several subjects make other good contributions to the development of IT capability. However, not all subjects carry out the commitments they have already made in departmental guidelines. The number of computers in the college is close to the national average, but some equipment is old, and an increase in A-level numbers has affected access for other students.

## **Integrated Humanities**

- 122 All students in Year 11 are following a GCSE integrated humanities course, as has been the practice in recent years. Many students in Year 10 have chosen to study integrated humanities. Attainment and progress in integrated humanities is good, particularly for girls. There has been a steady improvement in GCSE results over recent years, and the proportion of students gaining grades A\* to C at GCSE is consistently above the national average.
- 123 Students studying integrated humanities are taught about a wide range of topics in a well-constructed and balanced curriculum. Teaching is most often good, and sometimes very good in humanities lessons, but in some lessons there are shortcomings which prevent some students from making satisfactory progress.
- 124 It is no longer the policy of the college for all students to study integrated humanities at Key Stage 4, and since August 1996 students have been required to choose to study one GCSE subject out of integrated humanities, history and geography.

## Modern Foreign Languages

- 125 All students in Year 10 study French or German, and their attainment is in line with the national average; some attain well above average. Most students in Year 10 are making sound progress. Students with special needs value their extra support, try hard, and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Some students in Year 11 have chosen to continue to study French and/or German; their attainment is better than average. A-level results in both languages are mostly good, and sometimes very good. In all year groups there are a few outstandingly successful students - mostly boys.
- 126 Students at all ages show an unusually good balance of expertise across all the four main skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students support each other well in group and pair work, and appreciate the wide variety of enterprising teaching techniques. For example, teachers use video, overhead projectors and cassette tapes regularly and effectively; and in one lesson there was a French fashion show! The main weakness in the students' response in language lessons is a reluctance to use the foreign language for routine communication.
- 127 There are four specialist teachers and two non-specialists. They are valuably supported - though for a small amount of time - by both a French and a German foreign language assistant, who provide extra conversation practice for sixth form students. Teachers expect high standards from students. Lesson planning and organisation are good, and use a wide range of resources to maintain student interest and concentration. French and German reading books and computers are under-used and not readily accessible.
- 128 Overall, teaching in the large majority of lessons is at least sound, and a third of lessons are very good. Relationships with students are mostly productive. Teaching in a few lessons is unsatisfactory, mostly because teachers fail to ensure a variety of activities at a suitable pace. These lessons are taught by teachers who are not yet fully trained language specialists, though some teachers in this category also teach sound lessons.
- 129 Caring, supportive departmental management ensures a good team spirit. Useful links with the feeder high schools have been established. Although there are no college links with schools abroad nor language clubs, there are a few much appreciated visits abroad, and the European work experience for sixth form linguists is particularly successful.

## Music

- 130 Overall standards of attainment in music are good. In recent years, GCSE results have been consistently better than the national average, sometimes significantly so. 60% of all candidates have achieved A or B grades. A-level music groups include several very able grade 7 and grade 8 instrumentalists, and A-level students have above average general musical knowledge. Attainment in harmony and composition is less secure, and standards overall are average. Most students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 131 Students are well-motivated and enjoy music lessons. They take pride in their compositions and performances, and listen attentively and appreciatively to the work of their peers. They can discuss their work in a confident and mature manner and can identify areas for improvement. They readily accept advice and suggestions and, if in difficulty, seek support.
- 132 The quality of teaching is consistently good and is sometimes very good. The teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. His enthusiasm and enjoyment of music is transmitted to and shared with the students, both in class and in extra-curricular activities. Lessons are well-planned and have clear objectives. They are conducted with good pace and in an atmosphere of good humour and mutual respect. Tasks are interesting, challenging and achievable.
- 133 Music courses at both key stages have good breadth and balance, and provide opportunities for students to experience music in a variety of cultural contexts. European and world music traditions are covered. The department's aim to encourage students to use information technology in music is constrained by a shortage of appropriate equipment. Similarly, there is only a limited range of available sound sources, with not enough percussion and "world" instruments. The department does not have a curriculum development plan.
- 134 The short lunch hour and the dependence of students on college transport limit the number of extra-curricular music activities regularly available. Music makes an important contribution to the life of the college, though only a small proportion of students (less than 10%) receive regular tuition or guidance in music through the college.

## Physical Education

- 135 Standards in physical education are good. By the end of Key Stage 4, most students following the core curriculum attain levels that are average, and attainment is good for those following the additional physical education option. In games, students develop satisfactory levels of skill, a sound understanding of defence and attacking strategies, and know the rules in most games. Fitness knowledge is appropriate, with all students able to conduct their own warm-up and stretching exercises. Swimming technique is generally sound, and in some cases better. Progress is normally at least sound and often good.

- 136 GCSE standards are high and significantly above the national average in 1996. Students demonstrate good understanding of competition rules for swimming and table-tennis. Students' performing skills range from sound to very good. Written work is well-presented and is appropriate for the levels of ability. Attainment for A-level students is at least average, and for some students is better than average. Written work shows that students have a sound understanding of the sociological aspects of the subject, and practical performances range from sound to excellent.
- 137 Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They are quick to change for lessons, respond quickly to instructions and work with a sense of enjoyment. They co-operate well in discussion and problem-solving activities, and in competitive activities they show good levels of care for others. In lessons, most students gain new skills and tactics, but in a small number of lessons poor attainment and progress results either from lack of appropriate challenge or limited time allocated to an activity.
- 138 Teachers' knowledge is good and lessons are mostly well planned and organised. Relationships are consistently very good. Good lessons are well planned, with progression appropriate to individual students' needs, a range of suitable teaching methods, and very well managed resources. In less successful lessons learning objectives are unclear with the main focus on activity rather than developing skills and understanding.
- 139 The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements at Key Stage 4, though programmes of study for fitness and some other activities lack sufficient depth. Time allocation is good at Key Stage 4, but for students aged 16 to 18 only those who are taking examination courses have physical education. The teachers work hard, and strong leadership is provided by the head of department. Insufficient monitoring of teaching and progress results in different, and sometimes less effective, practice between teachers. The college has very good facilities and resources are used well. However, there is limited range of textbooks and no IT software for examination courses.
- 140 The college provision for extra-curricular sporting activities is restricted mainly to lunchtimes and one evening per week. Team activities include games, (soccer, rugby, netball, basketball, rounders and cricket), athletics, cross-country and trampolining. There is very little provision for sixth form students. The number of students participating in college teams and open club practice is low. There are no intra-college competitions, except a knock-out tennis competition in the summer. Students compete in county competitions and there are some effective links with the community provision.

### **Religious Education**

- 141 There was no teaching of religious education during the inspection, and insufficient evidence in students' work for judgements to be made concerning its effectiveness. Conversations with students show them to have only a basic knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity and other major religions.

142 In the sixth form there is only one short module of religious education, and no plans to increase this amount. There is very little religious education taught at Key Stage 4, and students' progress is not reported to parents as required by the regulations.

143 The college has worked very hard to produce a development plan for the phasing in, over three years, of religious education at Key Stage 4. However, the cross curricular provision, as planned, is a collection of diverse themes and activities which do not adequately cover the programmes of study of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### Summary of inspection evidence

- 144 During the inspection, a team of 13 inspectors spent a total of 55 days in the college. 174 hours and 25 minutes were spent observing in lessons. 196 lessons were visited. In addition, inspectors joined tutor periods, assemblies, and visited a range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtimes and after college. Two inspectors visited the college on one evening to look at the community provision. In-depth interviews were held with all senior managers, and with all staff who have a responsibility for a curriculum area or some other aspect of the work of the college. Inspectors joined departmental meetings which took place during the inspection week. There were many incidental and less formal discussions with staff about their work as the week progressed.
- 145 During inspection week some inspectors met with a group of governors to talk about how the governors carried out their duties and how they were involved in the life and work of the college. Before the inspection, a meeting for parents was held; 35 parents attended, and discussed their views about the college; 128 parents returned the questionnaire about the college.
- 146 The college provided the inspection team with substantial and useful documentation about the college, and the inspectors spent a day looking at the documents prior to the inspection week. During the inspection week the college provided a sample of work from 24 students, which the inspectors looked at in detail. Inspectors also looked at work during lessons and where extra evidence was provided by teachers. Inspectors met with 6 students from each year group and talked with them about their work and their experiences as a student at the college. There were many other conversations with students in the course of lessons, and around the college.

### 147 Data and indicators

#### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's SEN register	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free meals
YR10 - Y13	1082	23	126	50

#### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

##### Qualified teachers (YR10 - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full time equivalent) 60

Number of pupils per qualified teacher 18

##### Education support staff (YR10 - Y13)

Total number of education support staff 17

	Total aggregate hours worked each week		338
<b>Secondary</b>	Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes		0.8
(for Key Stages 2,3,4 only)	Average group size	Key Stage 4	22.5

## FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1995/96
	£
Total income	2,295,184
Total Expenditure	2,275,300
Expenditure per pupil	2082
Balance brought forward from previous year	-19,869
Balance carried forward to next year	+15

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out	1080
Number of questionnaires returned	128
Percentage return rate	11.9

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	8	56	23	11	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	36	54	8	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	12	47	35	5	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	14	57	20	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	25	61	6	8	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	29	56	9	6	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	25	47	18	9	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	61	7	10	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	20	48	24	7	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	14	39	33	9	4
My child(ren) like(s) school	37	55	5	2	2

Note: Percentages for each statement may not add up to 100 if some parents did not make a response to the statement.