

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ANGELA'S URSULINE CONVENT SCHOOL

Forest Gate, London

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 102786

Headteacher: Mrs. D. A. Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr. Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 28th February - 2nd March, 2000

Inspection number: 186255
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Female

School address: St. George's Road
Forest Gate
London

Postcode: E7 8HU

Telephone number: 0208 472 6022

Fax number: 0208 475 0245

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Sister Frances Oakley

Date of previous inspection: 23rd November – 1st December 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Ross Maden	Registered inspector
Jane Alexander	Lay inspector
Geoffrey Binks	Team inspector
Christine Harrison	Team inspector
Geoffrey Hunter	Team inspector
Geoffrey Price	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
Standards are above average in many subjects at the end of Key Stage 4 and pupils gain GCSE results which are well above the national average	
Pupils' attitudes towards learning show high levels of motivation	
Teaching is consistently good and often very good	
Very good leadership, especially that provided by the headteacher, gives the school a clear vision and direction	
Pastoral care and support are very good	
The study support programme is raising pupils' standards of attainment	
The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and they achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment	
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	17
Marking of pupils' work	
Registration procedures for sixth form students	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Angela's Ursuline Convent is a voluntary aided comprehensive school in the 11-18 age range with 1160 girls on roll, which is larger than the national average. There are 240 girls in the joint sixth form with St. Bonaventure's Roman Catholic Boys School. The school population is generally stable. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at 32.7 per cent is nearly twice the national average. The school is oversubscribed with over 300 applicants for 180 places with the majority of pupils from Newham and from the adjoining areas of Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is nearly a third which is well above the national average. Nineteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's special educational needs register which is in line with the national average; fifteen of these have statements of special educational need which is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally in line with the national averages. The school is a specialist technology college and achieved beacon status in January 2000. Pupils' attainment on entry is in line with national averages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school achieves very high standards in most aspects of its work. Most pupils work hard in their lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is very good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teaching is consistently good with much that is very good. Teachers set challenging tasks and this enables most pupils to make very good progress leading to examination results that are well above the national average. The school supports and cares well for pupils; parents are very supportive of the school. The school is well governed and very well led, especially with the leadership provided by the headteacher. It has made significant improvements since its previous inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in most subjects at the end of Key Stage 4 pupils gain GCSE results which are well above the national average.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning show high levels of motivation.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Very good leadership, especially that provided by the headteacher, gives the school a clear vision and direction.
- Pastoral care and support are very good.
- The study support programme is raising pupils' standards of attainment.
- The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and they achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

What could be improved

- There is a lack of consistency in the marking of pupils' work.
- Registration procedures for sixth form students are unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1995. The school has improved significantly since that time. The average GCSE points score has increased from 29.6 to 45.8, a rising trend well above the national trend. The DfEE acknowledged that the school was one of the most improving schools in the country. The proportion of girls obtaining five GCSE A*-C grades has increased from 36 per cent to 61.4 per cent over the same period. The governing body has tackled most of the key issues since the previous inspection. At the

time of the previous inspection there were weaknesses in the roles of middle management, assessment, appraisal and the lack of challenge for pupils. Significant progress has been made in these areas and they are no longer weaknesses. Some progress has been made in registering sixth-form students but this still remains a weakness. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	B	A	A	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	C	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were above the national average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics. Results in English vary from year to year but are usually above average. Both mathematics and science results have improved over the last four years. Results in all three subjects are well above average when compared with similar schools.

GCSE results have improved significantly over the last three years and in 1999 they were well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C is well above the national average and the proportion gaining grades A* to G is very high compared with the average; when these results are compared with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds, the school's performance is in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally. Pupils achieved results which were above the national average in English, science, art, drama, French, German and sociology. Results were broadly average in all other subjects except religious education where they were below. The school sets suitably challenging targets for performance in GCSE examinations which take into account the improving levels of attainment of pupils entering the school. The school achieved all its targets in 1999.

A-level results have improved steadily since 1997 and now match the national average. Students achieved good results in English, art, media studies and sociology. Of the 43 students in their final year of GNVQ courses in 1999, 33 were successful in gaining a qualification. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment generally reflects that indicated by recent test and examination results. The notable exception is in mathematics where standards in Key Stages 3 and 4 have improved. There is now clear evidence that attainment in mathematics is improving. Pupils' attainment by the age of 16 are well above average; they gain much better GCSE results than might be expected in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress and achieve A level results which generally match those predicted on the basis of their attainment in GCSE examinations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils focus well on their work and show enthusiasm in most lessons. Pupils' attitudes are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are courteous and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between pupils and between students in the sixth form. They listen carefully to other people's opinions and show respect for different cultural traditions.
Attendance	Attendance is very good especially at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good	Good

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

In 35 per cent of lessons the quality of teaching was excellent or very good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. There was a higher proportion of very good teaching in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 or in the sixth form. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

Teaching in English is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. In mathematics it is good overall at both Key Stages 3 and 4 although individual lessons vary in quality. Teaching in science is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of physics owing to lack of specialist expertise. Teaching and learning were particularly good in art, drama, and French. In information and communication technology and in sociology both learning and teaching were of a good standard. The only area of weakness in some subjects was an inconsistency in the quality of marking of pupils' work. The quality of learning is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4. The good and often very good GCSE results that pupils gain is a reflection of the quality of good teaching and learning within the school.

The school teaches literacy skills well, providing continuity from the primary literacy hour. Numeracy skills are well taught within mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum is good The curriculum is broad with many good features. It is well-supplemented by additional extra voluntary lessons after school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate teaching and effective support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Almost a third of pupils have English as an additional language but no pupils are at an early stage of language development and language needs are well met in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Catholic ethos informs pupils' attitudes and enhances their learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All the staff work well together and with outside agencies to provide excellent pastoral care and strong academic monitoring throughout the school. The dedication of the teaching and non-teaching staff towards all aspects of pupils' progress is recognised and valued by pupils in all year groups. The procedures for child protection and health and safety are good. Overall the school is very good at caring for its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school has very good leadership. The headteacher has a clear vision of how to improve the school and is skilful in attracting the financial resources which enable her to secure large scale improvements to the school which would otherwise be outside the school's reach.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is good in meeting its legal obligations and it has justifiable faith in the leadership for the school provided by the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a very good programme of self-evaluation. There is a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and clear strategies are in place to eliminate the weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	There is an excellent use of external funding, effectively targeted for the purposes for which they are intended. In targeting resources the school applies good principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers have high expectations for their child to work hard• The school is well-led• Their child likes school• The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible• Behaviour in the school is good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework set

Almost all parents believe the school is providing a very good quality of education for their child. These views are shared by the inspectors. Some parents have concerns about the amount of homework. The inspectors' judgement on homework is that generally the amount of homework set is appropriate and the tasks set extend the work in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are above average in many subjects at the end of Key Stage 4 and pupils gain GCSE results which are well above the national average

1. Pupils attain above average standards in most subjects at the age of 16. They have at least satisfactory knowledge of the topics they are studying and most pupils have a level of understanding which is better than expected for their age. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and use their discussion skills very effectively. They usually listen carefully to their teacher and to contributions from other pupils. Their skills in reading are at least average. Higher attainers in Key Stage 4 are fluent readers and read aloud with expression, fully conveying the meaning of the text. Pupils take great care in the preparation and construction of their written work and standards of writing are high. Pupils enjoy using their creative skills and do so particularly effectively in art and drama.

2. Pupils' numeracy skills are above average and they apply them well both in mathematics and other subjects. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson, pupils successfully use information from graphs to deduce the speed and distance travelled by a moving object. Attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 3 has been lower than that in English and science in recent years but standards have risen and there is now much very good work in both key stages, notably some successful work on trigonometry ratios in pupils' exercise books in Year 9.

3. In science, pupils' overall attainment is good and they are very successful in GCSE examinations. Their attainment varies slightly between the various strands of science: pupils gain high marks in their investigation work but their knowledge of 'physical processes' topics is often not as detailed as it is in the 'materials' and 'life processes' topics.

4. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C was well above the national average and the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G was high in comparison with the national average. Both these proportions are high when compared with the average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Pupils gained results which were above the national average in English, science, art, drama, French, German and sociology and gained average results in all other subjects apart from religious education where results were below average. The school's performance in GCSE examinations has improved since the time of the previous inspection and has improved faster than the national trend over the last three years.

5. Pupils in Key Stage 4 had attainment on entry to the school which was broadly average. However, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils achieve particularly well in examinations and a much higher number than might be expected gain GCSE grades A* to C. There are several factors which contribute to this very good achievement:

- the very good attitudes to learning evident among pupils of all levels of attainment
- the high proportion of teaching which is very good or better;
- the effective use of assessment data to monitor pupils' attainment and set targets for the future;
- the guidance which pupils receive on effective ways of learning and the thorough and well planned preparation for GCSE examinations;
- the clear focus, shared by all teachers, on raising pupils' attainment;
- the exceptionally strong and effective pastoral system which provides support for pupils who experience difficulties and enables them to maintain concentration on their

learning;

- the study support groups which are provided after school.

6. The school has identified pupils and students who are gifted and talented. Teachers are aware of these pupils and their need for appropriate challenge. These pupils, like those of other levels of attainment, generally make very good progress in Key Stage 4. In art and design and technology there are particularly exciting and stimulating projects for gifted pupils. In other subjects there is extra work provided for pupils who work more quickly but strategies generally are at an earlier stage of development.

7. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly average and represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Achievement in the sixth form is also satisfactory. The teaching in sixth form lessons is generally good and often very good. The school is aware that its very good emphasis on raising attainment is not yet as well developed in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form as it is in Key Stage 4.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning show high levels of motivation

8. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They respond very well to school. Pupils are well-motivated and are well-supported by teachers both academically and pastorally. This is apparent not only in Key Stages 3 and 4 but also in the sixth form. In lessons observed pupils focus well on their work and work with enthusiasm in all areas. They respond particularly well in creative subjects, notably art and drama. Pupils in Year 9, for example, expressed disappointment that more time is not allocated for these subjects. Older pupils and sixth-form students spend much additional time working on course work and improving their knowledge and skills at break times and after school under the supervision of teachers.

9. Behaviour is good in all areas of the school, in classrooms and during the movement between different parts of the building. The observations of inspectors are matched by the feelings of parents in this respect. This school has a clear code of expectations for pupils in regard to conduct in school and this is respected. Pupils understand rules and try hard to work within them. Pupils are courteous and friendly towards visitors in all areas of the school. Their general behaviour is particularly impressive at lunchtimes when they use much of the building with minimal adult supervision. For example, many pupils work in the computer rooms each day with great maturity, observing carefully the ground rules for care of the equipment. Relatively few pupils are excluded from school. Most cases are for limited periods of up to five days when there have been serious breaches of rules or conduct such as instances of unacceptable violent behaviour.

10. Within the school pupils are very good at relating well to each other and to teachers. They listen with respect to other people's opinions and are aware of different cultural traditions, although most share and practise the Christian faith. Teachers, and particularly those in art, English, history and sociology, successfully encourage pupils to value their own ethnic origins and to understand different social and cultural traditions.

11. The arrangements for monitoring and encouraging very good attendance by pupils are particularly strong in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the main part of the school. Pupils' attendance was over 95 per cent in the last school year and is over 94 per cent from September to February in the current year. This is above the average for schools nationally. It reflects the feeling expressed by parents that pupils enjoy coming to school. It reflects also the diligent work of the school and the educational welfare officer in working with families to maximise the attendance at school of pupils coping with difficult personal

circumstances. Although there is a strong pastoral concern for sixth-form students, the monitoring of attendance in the sixth form is not as rigorous as at Key Stages 3 and 4 and leads to poorer attendance in some cases.

Teaching is consistently good and often very good

12. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. All the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, usually good and often very good. At Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching was very good or better in four out of every ten lessons seen. At Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, nearly a third of lessons were judged to be very good or better. This improvement has had a marked effect on pupils' learning and their attainment at all key stages. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high now in most subjects, including mathematics, which provided insufficient challenge to all pupils at the time of the previous inspection. The inspectors' views are shared by those parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire. 97 per cent of parents feel that teaching is good and all agree that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve the best they can.

13. Teaching in English is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. This is reflected in what pupils learn in lessons and in their overall levels of attainment. Levels of attainment are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 and GCSE results show steady improvement over the last three years. English teaching is particularly good at Key Stage 4. In a very successful lesson seen in Year 11, pupils acted the court scene from 'To Kill A Mockingbird', interpreting the text well and then wrote an account of the trial in styles appropriate for the readership of different newspapers.

14. Teachers in different subjects contribute well to the teaching of literacy. Some pupils with particular weaknesses in literacy skills are identified and are taught effectively in literacy groups. All pupils bring personal reading books to lessons; all pupils benefit from the good general practice by teachers of explaining and discussing new vocabulary and new concepts to ensure understanding. Good examples of this were seen in English, art, geography, history, and science lessons where key words are prominently displayed to help pupils to spell accurately and to remember key terminology. This focus on language by teachers is helpful to all pupils and particularly to those for whom English is an additional language.

15. Teaching in mathematics is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Most lessons are well-planned and delivered in a brisk style with good use made of boards to illustrate teaching points. The only weakness noted in mathematics was that the marking of some lower-attaining pupils' work was unsatisfactory. In some of these cases important mistakes were not rectified.

16. In science the teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally good and they plan lessons carefully. A particular strength of teaching is in the preparation of pupils for examinations. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. At all stages there are examples of very good teaching which often involves enthusiastic discussion of topics. The quality of discussion observed within the sex education topic in Year 7 helped pupils to talk confidently about their own understanding. Teachers gave sensitive and sympathetic replies to questions. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of physics owing to the lack of a specialist physicist within the department. Within the combined science approach, the physics components are not covered so thoroughly. In some exercise books, for example, errors in written work were not always corrected.

17. Teaching is of a good standard in information and communication technology at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and learning is similarly good. Pupils are very well motivated and conscientious which means that teachers can spend time giving individual help as needed in the knowledge that most pupils will work well to find solutions for themselves. Particularly successful work was observed where Year 7 pupils were developing skills in desktop publishing to create designs for magazine covers.

18. Teaching of a high standard helps pupils to succeed particularly well in art, drama, design and technology and sociology. In art, the quality of pupils' work at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is consistently high. Teachers use their own expertise, enthusiasm and experience well and draw valuably on the support and resources of the East London Arts Partnership. The quality and range of drawing, painting and three dimensional work has been enriched by regular visits to galleries and observing the skills of practising artists working within the school. Preparation seen for the examinations for GCSE and A-level was of an appropriately high standard. In a Year 8 lesson in design and technology the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher in outlining the task for the lesson resulted in clear enjoyment by the pupils as they strove to complete the task. The particular strength of teaching in sociology lies in the thorough and detailed preparation students receive to meet the requirements of the GCSE and A-level examinations and the high expectations teachers have of students. Drama teaching is also skilfully focused on preparing pupils well for the GCSE examination and on harnessing the considerable enthusiasm pupils have for the subject. Very good teaching produces higher grade GCSE passes which are well above the national level.

Very good leadership, especially that provided by the headteacher, gives the school a clear vision and direction

19. One of the main strengths of the school is the very good quality of leadership at all levels within the school. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership. She has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and is particularly adept at securing the extra funding which enables the vision to become reality in relatively short periods of time. Applications for such funding, some of which comes from statutory initiatives, although time consuming are very successful, particularly in the way that they are directed closely at supporting the priorities identified in the school development plan. For example, the application to become a specialist technology college was based on a recognition at the time that technology was a weakness in the school and did not meet the high standards being achieved in other areas of the school's life. The decision to appoint advanced-skills teachers within the school was a deliberate strategy to try to improve the recruitment and retention levels of staff within the school. St Angela's, in common with many schools in the London area, has great difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers. The issue of recruiting and retaining teachers is a major priority within the school's development plan and the appointment of advanced-skills teachers has been used as one strategy amongst many to achieve a more stable staff.

20. One person alone cannot provide the vision and necessary support for teachers to enable consistent improvements to be achieved. In this respect the school is well served by a hard-working and dedicated senior management team. It shares the headteacher's vision and is committed to identifying strategies which support school improvement. The members of the senior management team have a particular strength in evaluating and monitoring the work of the school in a detailed and systematic way. They lead by example and provide a rigorous but supportive framework to ensure the highest standards are achieved.

21. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in middle

management. The demands placed upon middle managers to provide curriculum and pastoral leadership are considerable. The quality of middle management is very good. There is a clear understanding in all curricular areas of their strengths and weaknesses and middle managers work very hard to eradicate areas of weakness, whilst being supportive of their staff in the pursuit of higher attainment. Teachers within the school operate with confidence, which comes from recognising they are working in a school with a proud track record of achievement and of outstanding improvements over time. There is no complacency within the school. Teachers know their efforts have raised levels of attainment and that gives them the incentive to strive constantly for further improvements.

22. For teachers, this is a challenging, innovative school to work in. Many demands are placed upon them but equally they know they are going to be well supported. For teachers at all levels, the school works very hard on its induction and training strategies in an effort to recruit retain the best staff.

23. The governing body is supportive of the work of the school. Governors recognise the high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and give her considerable support. However, they are well informed about the school not just from the quality of information provided by the headteacher but also because they have an effective system of evaluating the work of the school. At each meeting of the governing body one or two heads of department provide a presentation of the work in their subject areas. The follow-up to these presentations is for two governors to spend a day in the department and report back their findings to the next meeting of the governing body.

Pastoral care and support are very good

24. As a result of the combined efforts of the teaching, administrative staff and the Educational Welfare Officer, attendance rates have continued to rise and are at a level which is well above the national average.

25. All members of staff expect good behaviour from pupils and there is a consistent approach by all teachers to achieving high standards within lessons and around the school. Many teachers give freely of their time to support pupils. They clearly have a respect for pupils and in turn there is respect from pupils towards teachers. The dedication of teachers to the pupils' welfare sustains the happy, well-regulated activity of the school day which is extended by the very good range of extra-curricular activities. In particular the after-school study groups make a significant contribution to pupils' academic achievement. However, the school is not just about academic achievement, important though this is. There are many opportunities such as the dance productions, theatre trips, music concerts, sporting activities and the considerable charity-raising events which allow pupils to develop their social skills in a safe environment.

26. Pastoral care generally, including the monitoring of both personal and academic development is very good. Child protection is a further strength of the school and the school's system for dealing with these issues has been recognised as a model of good practice by outside agencies.

27. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and on the very rare occasions when behaviour is unacceptable the school has no hesitation in taking appropriate action. The school has a detailed assessment policy which makes significant demands on teachers to be implemented effectively. However, the efforts are worthwhile because the detailed knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses enable the effective targeting of individuals and groups of pupils in order to raise standards even

higher.

The study support programme is raising pupils' standards of attainment

28. In 1997 the school began to develop a study support programme to enhance girls' learning beyond that which they achieve in normal lessons. The programme has been refined and enhanced each year since that it plays a substantial part in improving the standards of pupils' achievement.

29. There is now a coherent post-school provision for Key Stage 4 pupils designed to cater for their needs rather than being dependent on staff availability. Provision is timetabled so that there are no clashes of interest. Support is given to the pupils on the basis of their performance in various subjects as identified from the school's tracking and reporting procedures. Parents are kept informed of what is happening through the pupils' planners. Key Stage 3 pupils also benefit from the study support provision in the shape of a homework club which is effectively an extension of their school day.

30. The library is open from 8am to 5pm for all pupils. This provides access to multi-media resources including CD-ROM and the internet. There are two teachers present as well as the school's chartered librarian. The main computer area is also available giving access to computer-assisted learning and integrated-learning systems. For each club or subject area there is a member of the teaching staff available supported by a member of the curriculum support team.

31. Pupils attend sessions on a voluntary basis; most are identified as having particular needs whether because they are part of the gifted and talented programme, or finding some areas of their studies difficult or are underachieving. Younger pupils enjoy the opportunities available to them immensely. Some Year 11 pupils feel pressurised to attend these sessions. All benefit substantially in their learning. The detailed records of attendance that are kept show that the majority of pupils avail themselves of the opportunities offered. The programme adds to the school's focus on achievement. Gains in learning are evident and substantial.

The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and they achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment

32. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum and teachers are well informed about the needs of pupils in their groups. These pupils take an active part in lessons and, for example in information and communication technology in Year 11, use their own particular skills to provide support for others. There is particularly good planning for pupils who have statements of special educational need; individual subjects provide detailed strategies to enable these pupils to make progress both in the subject and in relation to their overall targets. Where it is appropriate, the school and the Local Education Authority provide additional support teachers in lessons. This support is effective and is often of benefit to many pupils within the class, in addition to those who are specifically targeted. Teachers provide appropriate learning activities for pupils with special educational needs; the strong emphasis on understanding the meaning of key words is particularly valuable for pupils with weaker literacy skills. The newly-established learning support unit provides a valuable facility in which pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties, or are in danger of becoming disaffected, can receive sympathetic and skilled support to restore their confidence and maintain their progress.

33. The school has high expectations for the attainment of pupils with special

educational needs and these are reflected in the success of these pupils in GCSE examinations. Almost all pupils in the school, irrespective of individual needs or difficulties, are enabled to achieve at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to G. Pupils who are likely to find GCSE examinations in a particular subject too demanding are appropriately provided with the opportunity to gain a certificate of achievement. However, they often also attempt the GCSE examinations to ensure that they have every chance to gain the best possible qualification. The school is constantly seeking to raise its expectations of what pupils with special needs can achieve; the number of GCSE subject entries for pupils with special educational needs has increased steadily and the number of their successes at grades A* to C almost doubled between 1998 and 1999.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Marking of pupils' work

34. There are within the school many examples of very good marking practices. However, this good practice is not consistent within subjects nor across the whole school. The best marking indicates clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve their performance, for example, if a piece of work is marked 'good' pupils are given a clear indication of what they needed to have done to have received 'very good'.

35. There is a system, within the quality assurance policy, to ensure marking is monitored by heads of department on five occasions during the year. However, from the analysis of pupils' work undertaken by the inspectors there is little evidence of changes in marking practices towards a more consistent approach over time. Much marking consists of 'ticks' with brief comments of a supportive nature such as 'well done' or 'good work'.

36. Although one of the strengths of the school is the evaluation and analysing the work of the school, little use is made of a systematic approach to scrutinising pupils' written work by heads of department. For example, significant efforts are made on checking the quality of homework tasks being set but there is no policy for the analysis of work to ensure that the work has been marked within a reasonable length of time. Pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that many pupils had to wait several weeks before their work was marked.

Registration procedures for sixth form students

37. The procedures in place for recording the attendance of sixth-form students are unsatisfactory. At the moment pupils are expected to come to a registration session each morning on one of the two school sites before going to their first lessons. In the two registration sessions visited for Year 13 groups only 58 per cent of students were present. The tutors spent some of the registration time checking retrospectively which students marked absent or not marked at all on previous days had in fact been present. In some cases they checked by asking other students to remember who had been present. A check of eight of the registers on the St. Angela's site showed that registers were often left open during the school week and totals of numbers attending daily, weekly and termly were not completed. There was no indication that any registers had been checked by senior staff since September 1999. For example, in the first week of attendance in January 2000 the

attendance of one group had been noted only on the Wednesday of that week. There is no record of who was present on the Thursday and Friday.

38. The lack of knowledge of how many sixth-form students are on the site at any one time is a health and safety issue, for example, in the event of a fire there would be no clear indication of the number of students on site. It contrasts markedly with the very strong procedures in place for registration and attendance checking of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 at the school. The school's procedures for identifying and recording the arrival and departure of visitors to the school are similarly fully satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. In order to raise the standards of work, the quality of learning and improve the recording of attendance the governing body, headteacher and senior management should:

- (1) Improve the consistency of the marking of pupils' work by:
 - Identifying time limits for teachers to mark pupils' classwork and homework;
 - Ensuring a consistent approach by all teachers to identifying targets after work has been marked to indicate how pupils' work could be improved;
 - Ensuring that all heads of departments monitor regularly the quality of marking by members of their department;
 - Ensuring that the good marking practice which exists within the school is shared with all teachers.

(Paragraphs 34-36)

- (2) Improve the registration procedures for sixth form students

(Paragraphs 37-38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	32	35	31	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	913	247
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	335	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	181	17

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	406

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999		178	178

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls	137	96	104
	Total	137	96	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (83)	55 (49)	58 (59)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	28 (46)	31 (20)	23 (28)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls	135	110	102
	Total	135	110	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (75)	62 (59)	57 (66)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (39)	29 (20)	16 (9)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999		166	166

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys			
	Girls	102	165	166
	Total	102	165	166
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	61 (58)	99 (100)	100 (100)
	National	46.3 (45)	90.7 (90)	95.7 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46 (45.3)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999		75	75

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School		15.2	15.2 (15.1)		4.1	4.1 (4.9)
National		18.1	17.9 (17.6)		2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	76.7
	National	55.1

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	216
Black – African heritage	275
Black – other	16
Indian	57
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	11
White	350
Any other minority ethnic group	200

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	14	2
Black – African heritage	8	
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	8	
Other minority ethnic groups	1	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	71.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	563

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.2
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.6
Key Stage 4	20.1

Financial information

Financial year	1997/1998
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	3 135 224
Total expenditure	3 090 852
Expenditure per pupil	2 768
Balance brought forward from previous year	37 941
Balance carried forward to next year	82 313

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1160
Number of questionnaires returned	291

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	32	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	39	5	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	38	11	1	0
The teaching is good.	53	44	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	38	8	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	36	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	44	8	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	31	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	39	7	2	3