

INSPECTION REPORT

Highgate Wood School
London

LEA area : London Borough of Haringey

Unique Reference Number : 102154

Headteacher : Mrs Pauline Ashbee

Reporting inspector : Mrs Sylvia Richardson (1038)

Dates of inspection : 11th to 18th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707943

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Maintained
Type of control:	LEA
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Eddie Griffith
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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Mr Selwyn Ward, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, welfare and students' guidance Partnership with parents and the community
Mr Michael Davidson	Religious education	Curriculum and assessment Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency
Miss Gill Biscomb	Special educational needs English as an additional language	
Mrs Barbara Baughan	English Drama Literacy	
Mr John Godwood	Mathematics Numeracy	
Mrs Shirley Daniel	Science Equality of opportunity	
Ms Jacqueline Watson	Design and technology Information technology	
Mrs Heather Boyle	Geography History	
Mr Michael Pennington	Modern languages, French and German	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

About half the teaching is good or very good. Ninety-two per cent of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory.

- I. The school tracks students' performance well and target-setting is effective in helping to raise standards.
- II. There is good support for students with special educational needs and for students with English as an additional language. Provision of equality of opportunity is good.
- III. There is good information to parents, especially about students' attainment and progress.
- IV. Students from different ethnic backgrounds mix and work well together.
- V. The school is well led, works very hard to make best use of its budget and gives good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- VI. Standards in mathematics remain below national averages.
- VII. The school does not meet the legal requirements for religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection in advancing students' spiritual development.
- VIII. The behaviour of a small minority of students is unsatisfactory.
- IX. Marking gives students insufficient guidance as to how to improve their work.

The strengths of the school outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of students at the school, will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

- X. There have been significant improvements in the leadership, organisation and management of the mathematics curriculum since the last inspection, and this gives the subject a secure foundation for future development, although there are still some weaknesses in teaching which require further attention.
- XI. There has been reasonable progress in developing the curriculum, in particular to provide opportunities for lower attaining students. The personal and social education programme has also been reviewed and the training given to teachers has improved its effectiveness, although there is still a need to improve consistency in the work of tutors.
- XII. The school has developed good procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development amongst students, but some staff do not consistently apply the procedures to promote students' good behaviour and self-discipline.
- XIII. Progress in developing the working relationship between senior management, governors and staff has been good, involving a much better strategic overview of the long-term needs of the school and development of all of those involved.
- XIV. Assessment has improved considerably, particularly in the ways in which the school promotes and tracks the progress of individual students. However, there has been insufficient change in the quality of teachers' marking, which still does not support students enough or help them to improve their own work.
- XV. Although there have been improvements in timetabling and in efficiency in the use of time, there are still some split classes which affect students' progress and the continuity of their work. Some teachers have not sufficiently adapted their teaching methods and schemes of work to take best advantage of the new timings and give all lessons the necessary pace.
- XVI. There has been progress in developing the role of assemblies but not in meeting the requirements for a daily collective act of worship. Many moral, social and cultural issues are successfully addressed in assembly but little time is allowed for reflection on values and beliefs

The school has made satisfactory progress overall, and is in a good position to sustain improvements. The strong support of the governing body, good management and improvements in teaching are providing a secure foundation for the future development of the school.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		
				well above average A
Key Stage 3 tests	D	A		
GCSE examinations	D	B		
A/AS - levels	D	N/A		

There has been improvement in the test results in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3, although English results fell slightly in 1998. Overall, at the end of Key Stage 3, in comparison with similar schools, test results are well above average. GCSE results are below the national average but have improved at a rate broadly in line with the rising trend nationally. In comparison with schools with a similar intake, students' attainment is well above average in Key Stage 3 and above in Key Stage 4. Girls attain better standards than boys, in line with the national position, although there are still swings in performance between girls and boys relative to individual subjects year on year. GCSE results in mathematics in particular have shown considerable improvement, although still below the national average. A and AS level results are still below the national average although there has been a gradual improvement over the last three years overall. GNVQ results in the sixth form are broadly in line with the national picture.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English Design and technology Music Modern languages Physical education Science	Art Geography Mathematics
Years 10-11	Satisfactory		

Sixth form	Good	
English	Good	
Mathematics	Satisfactory	

Ninety-two per cent of the 209 lessons seen in the inspection were satisfactory and, of these, over half (fifty-three per cent) were good and thirteen per cent were very good, with a small number which were excellent. This is a much better position than at the time of the last inspection. There were no lessons that were very poor, and in almost all subjects, there is some teaching which is good or very good. There was no subject in which teaching was not generally satisfactory.

In those lessons which were unsatisfactory, poor control of students' behaviour, lack of attention to departmentally agreed schemes of work and methods and inconsistent application of marking and homework policies were the key features.

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

Other aspects of the school

ASPECT	COMMENT
Behaviour	Students behave well in lessons and respond well to good teaching. Around the school, the majority of students behave well but there is a level of thoughtlessness in some students' lack of concern for others.
Attendance	This has improved since the time of the last inspection. It is now routinely over 90%.
Ethos*	The school has a strong commitment to improving standards. This is supported by systems which have been put in place to track students' progress. In most lessons, teachers and students work hard together.
Leadership and management	There is a clear vision and sense of direction for the school. Long-term planning is good. Governors and senior managers work well together and middle managers are effective in most of their roles.
Curriculum	The curriculum has improved to meet students' needs better at Key Stage 4 and is well planned in most respects. It does not meet statutory requirements, lacking sufficient religious education in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
Students with special educational needs	Students with statements of special educational needs receive good support. The school policies for meeting students' individual needs are well known. Provision for students with English as an additional language is very good quality although the quantity is inadequate to meet the needs of all.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	There are strengths in what the school provides, particularly in respect of the celebration of cultural diversity, the harmony within and across racial groups and the development of students' involvement in music and drama. More needs to be done to give students opportunities for reflection on values and beliefs, and to practise considerate behaviour at all times.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing levels are good, but resources for information technology and reading for pleasure in Key Stage 4 are not satisfactory. Accommodation is at maximum capacity. There are still not enough textbooks overall.
Value for money	The school gives good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>XVII. Teachers are approachable and give parents good information about their children's progress.</p> <p>XVIII. The ethos of the school is good. The school encourages students to make friends, acquire strong values and become tolerant of each other.</p> <p>XIX. Children enjoy coming to school.</p> <p>XX. The school encourages its students to succeed.</p> <p>XXI. The present headteacher is well liked and respected.</p>	<p>Homework</p> <p>Behaviour</p> <p>Marking de</p> <p>Mathemati</p>

The inspectors agree with the parents about the atmosphere of the school, its approachability and the good quality of information produced about students' progress and the life of the school. The ethos of the school is generally good and students of all races mix and work well together. The headteacher provides good leadership and works cooperatively with students and staff and consults parents.

The inspectors also agree that some homework seen in students' books and folders is trivial, and does not support learning well. Behaviour is generally at least satisfactory in lessons, although there is sometimes a lack of mutual care and respect in the way students behave around the school. Parents have correctly identified that there is considerable inconsistency in marking and that too little marking gives students solid guidance about how to improve their work. The mathematics department is now well led and improvements have already been made. Some teaching in mathematics is still not as good as the better mathematics teaching in the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The school has clearly made good progress since the last inspection in a significant number of ways. In order to build on progress made and make further inroads into areas which still require attention, the governors, senior management, teachers, parents and students need to work together to achieve the following.

1 Improvements in standards of attainment in mathematics

A good start has been made by improving the management of the subject, writing good schemes of work and setting up a role model of good teaching. Attainment in comparison with national standards is still unsatisfactory, although it has improved since the last inspection and the subject now has good leadership and a satisfactory staffing situation. Further improvements must now be carried forward so that:

- XXVI. all the teaching reaches the standards of the best,
- XXVII. all teachers have appropriate expectations of what students can achieve,
- XXVIII. all teachers participate in implementing departmental policies,
- XXIX. there are good schemes of work for sixth form students,
- XXX. examination and test results improve.

See Paragraphs 13, 14, 23 and 120-131

1 Improvements in the opportunities for students to gain insights into their own beliefs and those of others, and a clear understanding of the moral obligations of living in the society of the school, so that:

- guidelines are followed to provide opportunities for reflection in assembly and in class,
- a daily act of worship is provided,
- the values of courtesy, respect, consideration for others and respect of others' right to learn in orderly conditions are consistently reinforced.

See Paragraphs 40, 69, 71 and 89

1 Improvements in marking students' work, so that:

- it reinforces and develops the learning in class,
- it gives students good guidance on how to improve their work,
- policies on marking in subjects are applied, in line with the school's overall intentions.

See Paragraphs 62 and 63

4 Improvements in behaviour of a small minority of students, mostly boys, who have poor attitudes to work, by:

- ensuring that all class and homework is well designed and purposeful,
- continuing to provide teachers with high quality training in behaviour management,
- applying school behaviour policies and codes of conduct consistently, and analysing in a departmental and pastoral context, how each subject contributes to fulfilling policy aspirations,
- staff responding consistently to breaches of the school code of conduct, whenever and wherever in the school these occur.

See Paragraphs 39, 40, 50, 70 and 74

Governors and senior managers may also want to consider the following less significant weaknesses for inclusion in the action plan:

How to give better access to the different vocational levels in sixth form GNVQ courses – see paragraphs 54, 55, 56 and 61

How to provide a broader and more balanced sixth form course – see paragraphs 56 and 61

How to obtain better consistency in the teaching of PSHE – see paragraphs 76 and 87

How to improve attainment in information technology – see paragraphs 178, 179 and 182

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Highgate Wood School serves a mixed population in the Crouch End area of north London, where rolls are rising, and the school is oversubscribed. Most students come from Crouch End, Islington, Finsbury Park and beyond as far as Tottenham. The housing in the immediate vicinity of the school is of very high quality and where there is family occupancy – the minority of cases – these families tend to send their children into private education. The school is popular and over-subscribed, but there are still two boys to every girl in the intake. The school has admitted an extra form of entry in every year for the last three years, despite very tight accommodation. There are 1219 students on roll currently: there are expected to be about the same number in Years 7 to 11 alone by 2001. The sixth form is also expanding, but at a slower rate.
2. The sixth form is jointly provided with Hornsey School for Girls through a consortium arrangement which has been in operation for a considerable length of time. The combined sixth form numbers are 280 with 90 from Highgate Wood School. The admission policy currently operating for A level requires students to have gained at least 4 grades A* to C at GCSE prior to entry.
3. A very high proportion of the students is eligible for free school meals – almost double the national average.
4. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, as measured by students' performance in the national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2, and the various tests which the school uses to establish students' starting points.
5. The school has a much higher than average number of students whose first language is not English. There are as many as forty-five other languages spoken of which Turkish is the most prevalent. Many students with English as an additional language join the school in Year 7, having had at least some years in local primary schools, with a small number entering other year groups. Most have some knowledge of English, and many have good English, but a small number arrive with no previous experience of the English language.
6. Sixteen per cent of students (203 students) are on the register of special educational needs, somewhat higher than the national average; the majority of these are at stages that need individual education plans. Almost three per cent have statements of special educational need, which is similar to the national average.
7. The school has established a set of aims and targets which are very specific: it has analysed all the students' examination results for the last three years by attainment on entry, gender and ethnicity, and has decided upon a set of outline targets which are:
 8. 42% of the present Year 11 to obtain five or more A* to C grade passes in their GCSE examinations
 9. 98% of the present Year 11 to obtain five or more A* to G grade passes in their GCSE examinations
10. In its development plan, it breaks these targets down to reflect the needs of all such groups.

10. **Key Indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	152	52	204

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	84	76	91
	Girls	32	21	22
	Total	116	97	113
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	56(62)	47(49)	54(57)
	National	65(60)	60(64)	56(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	32(28)	30(23)	28(23)
	National	35(28)	36(37)	27(27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	86	91	104
	Girls	32	31	31
	Total	118	122	135
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	57(53)	60(47)	64(61)
	National	62(59)	64(63)	62(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	27(17)	23(18)	33(33)
	National	31(28)	37(37)	31(29)

Attainment at Key Stage 4¹

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	134	63	197

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of students achieving standard specified	Boys	45	115	123
	Girls	29	57	63
	Total	74	172	186
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	38(N/a)	87(N/a)	94(N/a)
	National	44(43)	90(88)	95(94)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of *such students* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	19	N/a
National		72.5

Attainment in the Sixth Form²

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	28	30	58

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	12.4	13.6	13	1.8	2.6	2.2(N/a)
National	N/a	N/a	17.6(17.1)	N/a	N/a	2.8(2.7)

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success Rate
School	12	58%
National		58%

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.4
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	3.8
	National comparative data	1.1

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

² Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of students (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	76
Permanent	3

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	12
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Attainment

11. Attainment on entry to Highgate Wood is below average. A significant proportion of the pupils has not reached the national expectation for attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science.
12. By the end of Key Stage 3, in **English**, students are close to the national expectation of level 5 or above and higher attaining students are achieving above the national average at level 6 or better. In speaking, pupils participate willingly at Key Stage 3 in English lessons in class and group discussions. High attaining pupils are fluent speakers, as are a number of the average attainers. Lower attaining students do not structure their talk well and mainly use simple sentence styles. Reading practice helps students to raise their attainment in this skill to levels overall which are appropriate for them to move on to Key Stage 4 work. Presentation of written work is just satisfactory across the board. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty in presenting their written work well and accurately. In comparison with similar schools, attainment is above average in English, however.
13. Students' attainment on entry to Highgate Wood in **mathematics** is also below average. The percentage obtaining the national expectation of level 4 or better was 15 percent below the national figure. By the end of Key Stage 3, students are still below average in comparison with national averages but are broadly in line with similar schools. At level 6 or better, although below the national average, they are well above average for similar schools. Attainment in mathematics at the end of this key stage is similar to that of English, but below that for science.
14. At the end of Key Stage 4 in **mathematics**, although still below the national average, the difference is decreasing, and that trend is consistent over the three years leading to 1998. Girls underperformed boys in 1998 but slightly outperformed them in 1999. The relative performance of boys and girls changes from year to year in mathematics. Although attainment in the sixth form reflects students' prior attainment, it is significantly below average. It has declined over the last three years. Students' understanding of concepts is relatively weak and they lack the confidence to apply their skills to new situations and solve problems in tests and examinations.
15. At Key Stages 3 and 4, attainment in **science** reflects the students' different ages and development, although higher attaining pupils are not always attaining the results of which the data about their prior attainment indicates they are capable. There has been some improvement in attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 over the last three years in science. 1998 results were not as good as in 1997. Attainment is close to the national average and well above average when compared to schools with a similar intake. All students take the double award GCSE examinations in science and results are close to the national average for pupils attaining the higher A* to C grades. Girls and boys do equally well. In the sixth form, where results are below the national average but improving, a significant number of candidates, who had relatively low GCSE performance, persevere and do well in A levels after two years in the sixth form. All pupils use their graphical skills well to present and analyse information in science, but numerical skills are not so well used. Higher attaining students solve problems and undertake scientific investigations to a satisfactory standard in lessons. They

take advantage of information technology to log data. At A level, students have satisfactory understanding of principles and terminology.

16. Attainment in **art** at the end of Key Stage 3 barely reaches the national expectation. Attainment is not consistent from class to class, within similar age groups. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment matches the national expectation in lessons, as it continues to do in the sixth form. Results at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form in GCSE and beyond were below the national average and the discrepancy between the results of boys and girls has widened, with girls' results continuing to be much better than those of the boys. There has been no change in GCSE attainment over the last three years. Results at A level are hard to compare with national averages, because the examination is taken by very few pupils.
17. In **design and technology**, attainment is in line with national expectations in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. GCSE results have been on a rising trend and are now close to the national average and in line with secondary schools with a similar intake. Results are at least in line and often better than those students obtain in their other subjects such as mathematics and science. In Key Stage 3, making and designing skills are not significantly different. The quality of the presentation of work in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory and lower attaining students find it difficult to complete written work which involves explaining their reasons for choices, or an evaluation of their work. There are some well-made artefacts. In Year 11, a significant minority of pupils has poor literacy skills, which impairs their examination results when aspects, such as coursework, rely on sound literacy levels.
18. Attainment in **geography** is below the national expectation when pupils arrive at the school. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils use mapping skills, graphical presentation of data such as bar charts with facility. Higher attaining pupils show a considerably improved depth of geographical knowledge and concepts. Results in geography have been rising over the last three years and by the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998, they were close to the national average. In A level, half the candidates entered for the examinations in 1998 achieved passes in the higher grades of A, B and C.
19. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in **history** tests is broadly in line with the national average. Students who generally arrived at the beginning of Year 7 with poor historical knowledge have acquired the ability to evaluate historical events and have reasonable factual knowledge. GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 have fluctuated somewhat, year on year, but have improved since 1996 when 52% of students attained higher grade A* to C passes. In 1998, 61% achieved this standard. This was above the national average.
20. Overall attainment in **information technology** is below the national average at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students have good word processing skills and are able to follow routine instructions and enter data provided. However, basic skills are practised rather than concepts, so for example, students apply good keyboarding skills in lessons on that aspect, but often do not apply what they have learned in word processing tasks in lessons. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national expectation as pupils have insufficient experience of the more complex skills and concepts of the subject. However, the vast majority of students achieve accreditation for their work in information technology through successful completion of the NDTEF Certificate of Competence.
21. Overall standards in modern foreign languages, **French and German**, are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 3, and are average at GCSE when compared with similar schools, although below average when compared with all schools. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards in German are similar to the national average, whilst French is below it. Girls considerably out-perform boys in French, though not in German, where boys do equally well. Listening is generally good, reading and speaking average and writing below average. Standards at A level have met course requirements over the last three years, albeit from very small numbers of students, which makes comparison unreliable. Standards in German have improved to average and in 1999, all students received pass grades in the A to E range. However, many students need considerable support in French.

22. Standards are high in **music**, despite the fact that pupils arrive at the school with a wide range of musical experiences, from good to very weak. By the end of Key Stage 3, about half the pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards in composing are very good. GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 are now significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection. The small number of candidates for the A level examination show a wide spread of attainment which is generally rather below the national average.
23. In **physical education**, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are at least in line with national expectations. The newly instituted GCSE course had its first examination successes in 1999 when attainment was significantly above the national average. Standards in team games are at least satisfactory throughout both key stages, most pupils can swim in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 3, and in 'core' PE in Key Stage 4, standards are often better than average.
24. **Religious education** presents an improved picture of attainment since the last inspection, when it was below average. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is average overall, ranging from clearly above to well below expectation. The school's curriculum does not yet enable students to prepare for GCSE examinations, but in class, attainment is below average with respect to the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.
25. The majority of students who have **first languages other than English** are able to follow their subject courses adequately. Some do very well in a comparatively short time and are successful in some GCSE work. Other students have a sound understanding of an every day vocabulary but achieve less well than they should because they do not understand technical language, for example in science and technology. This limits the progress that they are able to make in some subjects.
26. Results in the twenty **A level subjects** available were generally satisfactory, given students' previous attainment. In nine subjects, all students achieved a pass grade; in the remainder, the number of pass grades attained was below the national average. These were chemistry, English, mathematics, history, art and business studies. Results in business studies fell well below the national average.
27. Results in the Year 12 **leisure and tourism** course are below the level seen nationally. In lessons, the quality of the work is broadly in line with that expected of foundation level GNVQ students. Students have a sound understanding of portfolio development and use research skills with a degree of confidence. Action plans for the higher attaining students in health and social care contain satisfactory levels of detail, whereas average and lower attainers provide limited detail when developing their plans. Students' planning in the business vocational area states only brief actions and rarely extends to detailing methods. However, there is evidence of review and adjustment. Students are able, with guidance, to analyse information, which is presented in a variety of forms. For example, high attaining students are able to provide evaluative comment on health promotion leaflets whilst average attainers or those with special educational needs tend to describe the content or read sections out to the group. Low attainers in business were unable to identify simple differences between local, national and multi-national companies. Higher attainers were able to compose simple letters but did not fully understand the purpose behind their requests for information.
28. Sixth form students following the **Intermediate level GNVQ course in leisure and tourism** had a low completion rate in 1998, well below that expected for GNVQ. In 1997-98, results were better than in 1998-99; two thirds of those taking the course achieved the full award. Less than half the students taking the course in 1988-99 achieved the full award. The remaining students were able to gain some accreditation, with a number of students missing the full award by only one unit. Students are able to compare promotional literature, with higher attainers making more analytical comment, stating concisely their views. Lower attaining students were only able to describe the contents, rather than make evaluative comments. Examples were seen of effective use of desk top publishing and word processing to create brochures promoting local recreational facilities. Students in both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form operate effectively in groups and

when engaged in independent research.

29. Students enter the school with a wide range of competence in **reading and writing**. Some have considerable experience in the language of formal English. Others do not speak English at home and, of these, some are at an early stage in learning the language. The school has for some time had in place a network of staff, notably the Special Needs and the Ethnic Minority Achievement coordinators, working with the Literacy coordinator to provide practical support in this area. All students in Year 7 have regular structured reading practice in the library. Departments provide opportunities for discussion and they provide specific subject vocabulary for speaking and writing about their subjects. The coordinators have worked with the history and geography departments on making materials for topics; these give vocabulary, sentence forms and phrases for the writing of essays and enable students to write in appropriately formal language in their essays. The English department takes a similarly structured approach to supporting formal writing.
30. Over the past year, students' **numeracy** has begun to improve through increased attention in Key Stage 3 mathematics lessons. A policy is under development but at present, although mental arithmetic is taught regularly, not all teachers use the same methods. Some students still lack a feel for number because they have a poor foundation from their prior learning or they rely too much on the use of calculators. In Key Stage 4, students studying the Foundation Level Mathematics GCSE learn skills in arithmetic, but some higher attaining students do not have the understanding of number necessary to check their calculations or manipulate formulae successfully. There are few opportunities for students to apply their number skills in other subjects. In Science, students in Key Stage 3 and 4 apply and understand a variety of formulae and in the Sixth Form, students use statistical data in Biology and successfully apply fractions and formulae in Physics. In Design and Technology, they are developing the skills of measurement, calculation and estimating. The Mathematics Department is planning a systematic programme for the development of numeracy skills which includes discussions with representatives of other key subjects on the application of number across the curriculum.

30. **Progress**

31. In the vast majority of lessons seen during the inspection, pupils made satisfactory and often good progress. In a few lessons, progress is very good and occasionally excellent. There is little evidence now that boys and girls are making different rates of progress overall, although it is clear that by the end of Key Stage 4, boys in certain ethnic groups do less well than the rest. In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, students with special educational needs in Key Stage 3 make at least satisfactory progress when helped by a second teacher in the room. In English, science, physical education, geography and history they make good progress by the end of the key stage and satisfactory progress in all other subjects. In Key Stage 4, where there is rarely an additional teacher available, the students with poor reading and writing skills make more limited progress in lessons. Well-produced materials help progress in science, for example on forces or energy, where materials are specifically designed for students whose reading is poor. Some science homework is also designed to help these students. There are examples in geography and modern foreign languages of materials being used by learning support teachers which enable students to make good progress with their learning. By the end of Key Stage 4 progress for students with special educational needs is satisfactory except in religious education.
31. Students who arrive at the school with reading ages that are more appropriate for students aged eight and nine have effective individual support as do students in both key stages who have a statement of special educational need. Although progress over time is often slight for these students, progress in the lessons is mainly good. For example, learning to spell through repetition and practice often has significant results.

32.

32. All students, whether high, average or low attaining, progress well in **English** in Key Stage 3 in most lessons and over time, especially in Year 7. Higher attaining pupils, although often progressing well, sometimes have their progress impaired by the poor behaviour of a few individuals, but by the end of Year 9, attainment in English is in line with national averages. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory and enable students to make progress through discussion; some students among the higher and average attainers are very skilled speakers. Reading now meets national expectations, and students are ready to cope with the demands of their GCSE texts. Writing skills are more varied: higher attainers produce work of very good quality, but some students have problems with technical accuracy and use a very limited vocabulary. For a large number of students, poor presentation of written work prevents them from reaching their own best standard.

33. Progress in **mathematics** in lessons in both key stages is generally satisfactory, though the rate of progress over time depends to a large extent on the quality of teaching. This is evident when, for example, higher attaining pupils make insufficient progress where work is not consistently well matched to their needs. Progress is not satisfactory in A level. Students make satisfactory progress in coursework but for too many, their knowledge and understanding is insufficiently secure to be able to apply it in examinations. Students make satisfactory progress in the GCSE resit course

34. Progress in **science** is generally good in Key Stage 3, particularly in Years 7 and 8, although in some classes the highest attainers could make more progress. In Key Stage 4, much progress is good, with boys making slower progress than girls.

35.

36. In Key Stage 3, progress is satisfactory in **art** and **design and technology**. Students make satisfactory to good progress in **geography**, in particular through increasing their geographical skills and ability to apply them to geographical problems. In **history**, progress is slightly better than the National Curriculum test results indicate. In Year 9 in particular, progress is generally good. Progress varies in the case of lower attaining pupils who do not undertake sufficient independent study. Progress is satisfactory over time in **French** and **German** in Key Stage 3. Progress in listening and speaking is good. In **information technology**, although progress in lessons is satisfactory, overall over time it is unsatisfactory because pupils do not have sufficient time to build their skills or learn new ones at an appropriate pace. Progress improves as pupils move up the school in **music**, starting from generally satisfactory in Key Stage 3 to very good in some cases and often good in many in Key Stage 4. Pupils make best progress in response to the tutorial type of teaching, prevalent in Key Stage 4. In **physical education**, across all year groups, progress is generally steady, and pupils consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding and build on practical activities from previous lessons. It is satisfactory overall in **religious education**, sometimes good in lessons and satisfactory over time. Progress in learning about and from religion occurs in both knowledge and understanding and pupils develop the ability to empathise, which contributes to the school's racially harmonious ethos.

36.

37. In Key Stage 4, whilst progress is satisfactory in **art**, some groups make insufficient progress. Progress is satisfactory overall in **design and technology**, although a small minority of boys with unsatisfactory behaviour does not make progress at the rate they could. In **geography**, in both lessons and overtime, progress is satisfactory. Progress in lessons in **French** is unsatisfactory throughout the key stage and especially so in writing. The main reason for this is that many students do not take the demands of producing French seriously enough. In lessons, progress is better for most pupils, because of often good teaching. Progress is better in **German** than in French. Progress in **religious education** is unsatisfactory overall. Though many pupils make satisfactory or good progress in some lessons, this varies between teachers; some make poor progress due to poor attitudes to the subject. Progress over time is unsatisfactory because too little time is allocated to enable students to prepare themselves better.

35. In the sixth form, progress in **art** is satisfactory because students take responsibility for the direction of their work. Progress in **languages** is good in the sixth form. There has been no recent progress in **religious**

education, which is provided only in the PSHE programme in the spring term. There are, similarly, few opportunities for progress in **physical education**.

38. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

36. In the majority of lessons, most students have a positive attitude to their work. They are attentive and listen with interest both to their teachers and to contributions from other students. Although not always able to sustain concentration through the whole lesson, many students participate with enthusiasm and are keen to answer questions and join in class discussion. In a number of lessons however, particularly at Key Stage 4, there are some students who show little interest in what is being taught. These students are sometimes quietly uninvolved, but in some lessons a small number are disruptive and their unchecked behaviour also impedes the learning of others.
37. The behaviour of most students in lessons is good, as is the behaviour seen in the school grounds. The behaviour of many students in confined areas around the school is satisfactory, although on the stairwells and in narrow corridors, a few students barge one another. In these cases, this small minority shows little courtesy to other students or, occasionally, to the adults in the school. There is a level of thoughtlessness and lack of mutual respect involved, which is at odds with the behaviour of the considerable majority. A few students seem to be unaware of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and use inappropriate and vulgar language in front of teachers.
38. The number of permanent and fixed term exclusions has fallen in recent years, although it is higher than it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school additionally makes use of internal exclusion by referring students to "Room 32" where they work under the supervision of a senior member of staff. For most students, this is an effective sanction.
39. When collaborating in paired or group work in lessons, students often co-operate well. This is particularly the case in physical education and drama, and in other subjects where teachers make their expectations clear. In all key stages, many students have developed appropriate note-taking skills and are capable of independent working and research. A number of students have taken the opportunity to train to become mentors to help others. Students in each year group take part in school council meetings, and all students in the sixth form are expected to take on a voluntary duty in the school. Students of different races mix well together, and the harmonious relationship which has been achieved is a notable strength of the school.
40. Most students on the register of special educational needs have good attitudes to work and respond well to the help they get in the classroom. Response to individual teaching outside the classroom is mainly very good and students are relaxed, co-operative and they concentrate well.

Attendance

41. Although unauthorised absence is very high, attendance figures overall are satisfactory, being in line with those for similar schools. The punctuality of a significant minority of students remains unsatisfactory, particularly in Key Stage 4. Students are often slow moving between lessons and this results in some loss of valuable teaching time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

42. At the time of the last inspection, there was a range of specific concerns about the quality of teaching, in particular related to the teaching of mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the effective use of time. Teaching in the vast majority of lessons is now at least satisfactory. In 92 per cent of lessons seen this was the case, and in over half of these (53 per cent), it was good, very good or excellent. Of the 209 lessons seen, only 17 had some weaknesses and no lessons were very poor. A significant number of the weaker lessons were in mathematics, where although most teaching is now satisfactory and sometimes good, and there are now good role models, good schemes of work and a consequent improvement in standards, more still needs to be done by some teachers. Teaching in PSHE has generally also improved, supported by better schemes of work, but there is still inconsistency here too. Time is now used much better, with most lessons involving students working hard for the whole session.
43. In history, information technology, music and physical education, all lessons seen were at least satisfactory. The best teaching, which occurred in lessons in design and technology, English, science, modern languages, music, physical education and English as an additional language, had a number of common features:
- good working relationships between teachers and students, in which teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects is evident;
 - involvement of students in investigation, problem solving and other active approaches to the subjects;
 - very good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher and technical expertise which inspires respect;
 - good use of resources such as artefacts and videos, as well as application of real problems to students' learning;
 - a wide range of language experiences, such as through role play, the use of structured writing frames, ensuring that questions draw out extended answers rather than monosyllables, supporting the development of students own language, written and spoken;
 - high expectations by the teacher of what the students can achieve, and a good level of challenge for all;
 - very good planning for individual needs, seeking to ensure that the work is well matched to needs at the levels both of the tasks set and the outcomes encouraged, so that for example, students with special educational needs can make progress and integrate well;
 - very good planning of the schemes of work, translated into detailed lesson plans, with clear objectives for what students should learn in each session;
 - very good shared planning between subject teachers and teachers of students with special educational needs or English as an additional language;
 - raising awareness of the National Curriculum levels of class and homework;
 - effective management of students' behaviour to ensure that all worked hard throughout the lesson;
 - brisk pace of teaching with activities timed to make best use of the whole period;
 - well designed homework which is regularly marked and subject to good feedback.
1. In the small minority of lessons where teaching has weaknesses, these centre on three factors. Firstly, some teachers do not have sufficiently well developed skills in students' behaviour management and find their lesson planning subverted by the lack of attention and low level disruption of a few students, mostly boys. Those teachers do not take advantage of the school's code of conduct and do not assert their own expectations of good behaviour and hard work from all. Secondly, they do not follow sufficiently closely the leadership of the senior managers of the school or of their departments in terms of the teaching methods most likely to produce good student progress and, often, they do not use the materials indicated in schemes of work well enough. Thirdly, they have an insufficiently detailed set of learning objectives, and do not make clear to pupils what has to be learned in that lesson or from that homework.
2. In the good, very good and excellent lessons, teachers concentrate on ensuring that progress is made and students work hard throughout the lesson. There is a clear correlation between the best teaching and the best rates of progress. Many of the teaching skills, present across the board in the very good and excellent lessons, are also present in the good and satisfactory lessons, as in the following examples.

- A Year 11 mathematics lesson on coordinates, vectors and positive and negative numbers: the class was very well controlled, but the teaching was relaxed and there was a wide range of types of interaction between students and teacher. Expectations were very clear of behaviour, organisation and personal involvement. The teacher was a good communicator who used questioning well to draw out the necessary new learning.
 - A Year 9 English lesson on a class novel: the atmosphere in which the lesson was conducted was calm and business-like and time was well managed so that sessions of writing were interspersed with discussion and well-controlled feedback.
 - A Year 13 A level physics lesson: a complex topic was explained through very good use of worksheets and overhead transparencies, and homework was set making good use of past examination papers to reinforce the importance of the topic and make students aware of the depth into which they had to go;
 - A Year 7 PSHE lesson on bullying was conducted in a quiet atmosphere to which students responded maturely. There was a very good relationship between the class tutor and class, which indicated a depth of knowledge on the part of the teacher of the students and their own behaviour patterns. Sensitive but interesting use of question and answer on why people bully others, followed by varied activities reinforced the messages of school policy and increased students' awareness of the moral and social issues.
 - A Year 8 geography lesson: this was taught jointly by the subject specialist and the specialist teacher of English as an additional language, used the overhead projector well, tied into the work sheets which students were using. Teachers made a particular point of paraphrasing, introducing opportunities to build up students' active vocabulary within the subject, and made them familiar with a range of alternative grammatical structures. In skilful question and answer sessions, the two teachers encouraged and explained structures such as 'on the one hand...on the other', so giving all students in the class access to writing, and supporting the school's overall literacy strategy.
 - A Year 9 science lesson: teacher and class were able to celebrate together the wonder of science in studying the uses and effects of yeast. The lesson involved students in following best laboratory practice, when despite fairly cramped conditions, all students were able to participate in very well planned investigations.
 - A Year 8 design and technology lesson: this looked at the uses of paper templates, gave students very good feedback on homework. The tone of the lesson was supportive and based on mutual respect, so that the teacher's demonstrations received very close attention.
 - A Year 11 French lesson: this had a non-stop, no nonsense approach, used extended drills to give students confidence and frequent reinforcement of structures that students had already learned. Students' behaviour was firmly controlled without fuss, and it was evident that the teacher was alert to any lack of attention or breaches of the code of conduct. Every opportunity was taken to assess students as the lesson progressed and give them good feedback on their progress.
1. Teaching on the vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is satisfactory in nine out of every ten lessons, and in some, it is good. Where teaching is effective, the task is well prepared and objectives are clear. This, coupled with good pace, ensures that students know what is expected and understand that timescales have to be met. When teaching is unsatisfactory, there is a lack of match of methods and materials to students' needs, with insufficient challenge for the highest attaining students. Teachers do not always assert their own expectations, for example, by ensuring that all students are listening when instructions are being given. Schemes of work, particularly in business and leisure and tourism do not include clear indications of methods to be used. In sociology, teaching is good with high expectations, good use of a variety of relevant, current resource materials and sound planning. Clear objectives and appropriate pace ensure good progress. Teaching in business studies is satisfactory, however, medium term planning is weak and schemes of work have insufficient detail. In short term plans, objectives lack focus.
 2. Homework is generally set and is relevant to students' development and the reinforcement of their class work. However, from examination of their books and folders, it is evident that parents' concerns about the trivial nature of some homework are correct. Some teachers are still setting some 'time-filling' activities as homework, which do not advance students' knowledge, skills or understanding in the subject. This is despite clear guidance in policies and staff discussions about the purposes of homework.

3. The specialist teachers of students with English as an additional language have provided very good materials. These have noticeable results in history, geography and design and technology, particularly when a second member of staff works with the subject teacher and focuses on key words related to the particular subject and topic. When students with very limited English have no support they do not make progress in the lesson. Teachers try to compensate for the lack of adult support by peer help; this works sometimes, but is not a satisfactory substitute for specialist support.
52. Teaching in the lessons taken by the learning support staff is mainly good. Lesson planning based on specific targets is always appropriate. Teachers have a very good grasp of approaches to specific learning difficulties. They also have a range of strategies to help students who have low levels of reading, spelling and mathematical understanding. Teachers recognise that it is important to encourage and build the confidence of students with special educational needs, and they do this through praise, and by providing activities in which students can succeed, as well as those which are more challenging. For older students, teachers share decisions about some of the work being done with the student and this proves to be productive in increasing interest and willingness to persevere. Homework is often provided and followed up, and on occasions is posted to the student's home so that parents are aware of what has been set. Occasionally, some of the work is not as closely matched to the students' needs as it is normally in individual teaching.
53. When students with special educational needs are taught with the form groups there is a good use of different levels of reading and styles of teaching in geography, history, science, modern foreign languages, art and music. There are examples in English and geography of two teachers working co-operatively in the classroom and providing excellent support. Supporting teachers make good use of individual targets to help students make progress.

53. **The curriculum and assessment**

4. The school provides a generally satisfactory curriculum, improved in some respects since the previous inspection. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced, statutory requirements are met, and students are given a sound basis for moving forward to Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is broader and better balanced than previously, with more account being taken of the wide range of students' needs and interests, a key issue from the previous inspection. The introduction of courses leading to General National Vocation Qualifications (GNVQs) and new GCSE courses, such as the successful one in physical education, is proving beneficial. However, while students receive religious education for half the year only, this does not meet the requirement of the local Agreed Syllabus. Students do not have the opportunity to take a course leading to GCSE in information technology. So few choose a second foreign language that the school cannot afford to teach a course. Further improvements are needed if the Key Stage 4 curriculum is to be a fully satisfactory foundation for further studies in the sixth form, further education or work. All students in Key Stages 3 and 4 undertake a broad-ranging course in personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes statutory sex education, together with health education and education in the dangers of drugs. Planning for this course has been improved since the previous inspection. Some progress has been made across the curriculum in giving greater attention to the development of students' skills in language, literacy, numeracy and information technology.
5. At Key Stage 4, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) programmes are offered in two vocational areas, business and health and social care. The latter was introduced into Key Stage 4 at the start of the current academic year. There are students following the business programme in both Years 10 and 11. A sixth form programme is also offered at foundation and intermediate level in leisure and tourism. However, although the vocational provision within the school meets the requirements of the awarding body, the joint teaching of the two levels available is unsuitable, given the distinct differences between the specifications for foundation and intermediate students.

6. Academic sixth form provision is good, with twenty A level courses available as well as GNVQ and some AS level courses from which students can choose. Some A level courses recruit well but others run with small numbers of students, for example, courses examined in 1999 ranged in size from two students in Turkish to thirty-nine in English. There is no general studies programme for sixth formers although the personal and social education programme offers some of the elements of general studies. This is, nonetheless, limited. No formal additional studies occur and there is no physical education. There is one module of religious education, and this is insufficient to meet statutory requirements. The overall provision therefore, whilst it is satisfactory in many respects, fails to provide breadth and balance and since the time of the last inspection there has been insufficient movement towards planned enrichment. School planning which was underway to provide this enrichment was suspended at a late stage during the last school year as a result of financial constraints.
7. The school provides an appropriate induction course for students who have not learned English previously. The time available is short and inevitably means that students are not able to access subject knowledge at first. The courses which have been developed in history and currently in design and technology, are very well-designed both to help with language and to widen the understanding of other students of the culture and history of students from different parts of the world. The school does not provide many opportunities for students to follow examination courses for their first language, though a number do sit GCSE examinations, with some notable successes. The school maintains a register of students who do not have English as their first language. Progress in English is assessed and information sent annually to the Local Education Authority.
8. A well-established careers education and guidance programme is in place as part of the personal and social education course for Years 8 to 11. Students in Year 8 look at employment opportunities, analysing different styles of job advertisements. This theme, informing students of what their many options are, continues throughout Year 9. Students value sessions related to careers during their time in Key Stage 3 and the programme offers a good grounding for this stage of their education. Interview skills are covered as part of the Year 10 provision, when emphasis is placed on confidence building. Recent changes in the time available from the Careers Company, with which the school has a good working relationship, mean that only students currently targeted will routinely receive one. Preparation for and involvement in work experience forms the main part of the Year 11 programme. There is an extensive careers education and guidance resource base, which supports the good provision for the sixth form.
9. Planning the steps in which students will learn is generally good. A fortnightly timetable has been introduced this term with the intention of making better use of time by having lessons which are 10 minutes shorter than previously. This is to help to address one of the weaknesses on use of time noted at the previous inspection. However, the timetable contains a number of classes, particularly in mathematics and science, which are shared between teachers in the same department, with the result that planning from lesson to lesson and keeping a check on students' progress are made more difficult. Setting of classes by ability is proving successful in modern foreign languages. Setting has recently been introduced as a pilot in mathematics as one of the strategies for raising standards: the early gains from this are yet to be evaluated by the school. The quality of long term planning in subject schemes of work is generally good, and varies from barely satisfactory, as in art where more attention to continuity and progression is needed, to very good in music. No scheme has been written to support lesson planning for mathematics in the sixth form, and teachers are relying too much in some courses on the GNVQ course documentation, rather than on a scheme, which would show how that documentation is to be applied at the school.
10. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, which are particularly good in music and physical education, including team sports. It is working to develop support for trips abroad to provide students with first-hand experiences of modern foreign languages, though with limited success to date. Independent access to the library and its small number of computers is available before and after school and

at lunchtimes, and some of the school's substantial IT resources are well used outside of lessons.

11. There have been developments in terms of equality of opportunity in the curriculum since the last inspection. Better monitoring of progress has resulted in the development of a number of initiatives to broaden the opportunities available for students. Some work with single sex groups was helpful in raising attainment, and the policies of the special needs and English as an additional language teachers give students better access to a wide range of experiences. The introduction of GNVQ and other accreditation has also enabled students to continue fruitful studies in the sixth form.
12. The school has made significant improvements in its procedures for assessment, a key issue raised at the previous inspection. Most departments have effective systems for keeping a check on students' progress through regular assessments, which are mainly accurate. External examinations results are thoroughly analysed at school and departmental levels and the resulting findings used to plan further improvements. The National Record of Achievement is well established at the school, is highly regarded, and students take considerable pride in preparing their records as they move up through the school. The school is working hard to develop its system for judging students' progress over a key stage. It is strengthening its arrangements for gathering fuller information on students' attainments when they enter the school: this work looks very promising in relation to the information it could provide for the governing body and senior management team when they plan for longer term improvements, including use of the budget.
13. Links between the information yielded by analysis and evaluation of assessments and curriculum developments are yet to be fully made. However, the best departmental action plans do use the evaluations of results, though they lack detail on how schemes of work could be fine-tuned to tackle weaker aspects of the subject. A more developed use of assessments is shown by the cycle of target setting and review undertaken with each student and parents. This work, which involves subject teachers and staff with pastoral responsibilities is a good example of how the school is successfully improving its approach to assessment, using it as an important means of raising standards.
64. In Key Stage 3, the curriculum is supplemented for students with very low literacy skills, with a range of teaching materials, which are used outside the class lesson. The focus on letter sounds to help with spelling and on recognising patterns of words is approached in a variety of ways using appropriate schemes of work and computer based programs. Shared reading when teacher and pupil read a book together works well, since the pupil can enjoy the substance of the story as well as getting practice in decoding the words. In Key Stage 4, the school provides an alternative course to GCSE for some students to increase communication skills. This in itself is a valuable opportunity, but is no longer an accredited course and does not have the same value for students.
65. The school has regard to the Code of Practice for identifying and providing for students with special educational needs. Students needing support are identified early in their life at Highgate Wood, through reading and spelling tests and when available, using the results of the Standard Assessment Tests taken before they leave the primary school. Good liaison with primary colleagues enables the school staff to make early contact with students already getting support and with their parents, or with those who are likely to need it. The special needs co-ordinator and her staff provide subject teachers with plans identifying the particular areas of weakness, strategies to use and targets to be achieved. These give teachers very clear information about students on the school's register of special educational needs. Members of the Local Education Authority's Education Support Service also make a valuable contribution to decisions about the students with statements, with whom they work each week. With the specialist help available from school and LEA staff, some departments have developed very good programmes. In particular, the science department highlights key scientific words and varies the ways in which students record the results of their investigations.

14. The processes for tracking the progress and continuing needs of students with special educational needs are thorough and effective. Progress is checked informally and formally through tests; records are kept of the increases in levels of attainment between the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Annual reviews provide parents and students with a detailed view of the students' improvement, based on information from every subject department, and highlight aspects that still need attention.
15. In the vocational courses the school offers, there is a satisfactory system of assessment of students' progress, but assessment is not always completed within the agreed deadlines. The tracking of students' performance in both vocational and key skills lacks rigour. Earlier identification of students with inadequate evidence in their portfolios would enable more effective remedial action.

67. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

16. Aspects of the provision for students' personal development are good and improvements have taken place since the previous inspection, but overall the provision for spiritual and moral development is not satisfactory, although moral issues are raised in assemblies. Opportunities for cultural development are good and social development satisfactory.
17. Provision for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, though good examples were seen of opportunities to gain insights into values and beliefs in English and religious education lessons. Few occasions are provided for students to reflect on their own and others' experiences, though improvements in this respect are taking place in the weekly assemblies which are held for each year group. The school's new guidelines are a good basis for planning assemblies which include acts of collective worship but these do not take place each day, either in year assemblies or in those held in tutor groups. The school is continuing to fail to meet the statutory requirement for daily collective worship for all students, the position reported at the previous inspection. The place of religious education in the curriculum has improved, but here also the school is failing to meet the statutory requirement fully at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
18. The school has clear and appropriate written expectations of students' behaviour, and endeavours to support achievement of the school's aims for their development as responsible people by means of its system of rewards and punishment. However, provision for students' moral development is unsatisfactory as not enough is done consistently to teach and to demonstrate courtesy, consideration and respect for others, and the rights of others to work without disruption. Expectations of the courtesy that students are to show as they move around the school are not consistently high enough. Sometimes, students are allowed to slow down the pace of teaching and learning in lessons by distracting conversation, even where teaching is otherwise generally satisfactory or better. While most adults at the school show high standards of courtesy to students, to colleagues and visitors, there are occasional lapses.
19. The school is working hard to develop students socially, with a growing number of useful strategies. These include the recently introduced mentoring scheme, modules on relationships in the PSHE course, citizenship conferences, the well-organised lunchtime in the canteen, and fund raising for charities. The successfully managed starts and ends to assemblies in the hall and the lunch arrangements show what can be done in this respect, but levels of supervision are sometimes not sufficient to support students' social development in the less formal settings outside the classroom.
20. Provision for students' cultural development is good. Cultural diversity features well when teaching the National Curriculum in subjects such as art, food technology, music and geography. It underpins much of the work in religious education. The school has a positive attitude to the rich variety of cultures represented at the school and in the local community, as shown by involvement in local, national and international events, such as 'Black History Month', and references to different religious festivals at assemblies. Effective use is made of visits to galleries and museums to teach students about the national and other cultures. Attempts

have been made to develop a tradition of visits to Europe for the study of modern foreign languages, but these have been largely unsuccessful so far.

72. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

21. Arrangements for monitoring students' academic progress are good. Parents appreciate detailed reports, giving a breakdown of students' progress in National Curriculum areas, and attitude and effort grading for students' work and behaviour in each subject. A very good feature, is the setting of individual targets for improvement in each subject. Appropriate careers guidance is provided to all students and the school's work experience programme for Year 11 students is well organised and monitored. Mentoring is made available to a targeted group of students, and the school is seeking to extend this provision.
22. The school has worked hard to establish clear rules of behaviour supported by a system of rewards and sanctions. Although students understand these, with younger students particularly keen to earn merits, certificates and an awarded pen or earn similar recognition for older students, they are not currently fully effective in promoting good discipline throughout the school. Some teachers are reluctant to challenge the minority who is off task in lessons, and some are overly tolerant of unsatisfactory behaviour outside their classroom. At times, the unsatisfactory behaviour of a few students on the stairwells makes these areas unsafe. The school's "keep to the left" policy is largely ignored. Highgate Wood has an effective anti-bullying policy, and students and parents express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any incidents which arise.
23. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are sound. Rewards have been introduced for good attendance, and the school links closely with the Education Welfare Officer where a student's attendance gives cause for concern. Registers taken in each lesson prevent undetected post-registration truancy. Not all form registers are properly totalled however, and few tutors maintain an adequate running total of each individual student's absence through the term. On days when there is a morning assembly, tutors complete form registers during assembly. This is unsatisfactory because it does not enable them to hold conversations with students who, for example, may have just returned from a period of absence. In the sixth form, where there is a consortium arrangement with Hornsey School, students are able to register at either site but records are appropriately passed between the schools via fax.
24. Form tutors and most heads of year remain with their forms and year groups as they progress through the school and get to know the students well. Students indicate that they feel there are staff that they could go to if they had a problem. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is taught by form tutors in a weekly lesson. Lessons are planned across year groups and heads of year are involved in monitoring the teaching, but the quality of teaching of PSHE continues to be inconsistent between different tutors. Although the majority of lessons seen were satisfactory, they varied between very good and unsatisfactory within the same year group. In the most effective lessons, the teachers' friendly relationships with the students enable the class to explore topics with sensitivity while reinforcing orderly classroom routines. Inconsistency between tutors was identified as a key issue in the last inspection. Although there has been some improvement, the school needs to ensure that best practice is shared throughout the school.
25. The school has satisfactory arrangements in place to deal with child protection issues. Office staff, who maintain satisfactory records, administer first aid. There are appropriate health and safety policies in place.
26. There are close links between the Heads of Year and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo). Through meetings with year heads and with form tutors, the SENCo is able to get and give information about individual students and to focus productively on targets and strategies.

78. Partnership with parents and the community

27. Although some parents would like more information about what is taught in school, the information which is provided to parents about the school and about their children's progress is good. The school's prospectus and regular weekly newsletters home are clear and informative. Reports are very good. They are personal to each child, and include comments and grades which provide details of the student's attainment as well as helpful feedback to parents on their child's attitude, effort and behaviour in each subject. A particular strength is the inclusion of specific targets for improvement in each subject. Parents value the reports received and the opportunities which parents' evenings give them to discuss their children's progress with staff. All students have a school journal which enables parents to monitor their children's homework and which can be used for home-school communications. A small but active parent teacher association organises activities and events, including fundraising events. Parents also support musical and other events in school.
28. There are good contacts with local and national companies which are used for Year 11 work experience and in the GNVQ courses, but business links are not otherwise used to enhance or extend students' experience in individual curriculum subjects. Good use is made of visiting theatre groups and students benefit from a range of visits and trips, including those to London museums and galleries. Visitors to the school have also been used to support the school's pastoral education, with, for example, the visiting school nurse assisting with sex education.
29. For sixth form provision, Highgate Wood works as part of a consortium with nearby Hornsey School. This inter-school partnership enables sixth formers registered at each of the schools to benefit from a broader range of A-level and GNVQ options than would otherwise be available. The link between the schools is well managed and there is effective curriculum consultation.
30. The school values the support of parents and does its best to keep them informed at all stages about the students on the register of special educational needs. There are examples of teaching staff contacting parents about homework and jointly agreeing on strategies to support the child. Staff are well-qualified and knowledgeable about specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and the concerns of some parents about this were not substantiated in the work seen during the inspection.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

31. Highgate Wood School is well managed and has a good ethos with which the majority of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector are very pleased. The headteacher, in post for the last two years, has changed the tone of the school and provides good leadership, clear policy directions and is identifying clear priorities for the school's development. Her planning is of high quality and in order to put it into place, she has had to initiate and take forward discussion and debate about change which has not always been welcomed by all staff. She is well supported by an able senior management team. This team has been developed since the appointment of the headteacher and shares the headteacher's views of directions and methods. The school is now well placed to sustain its improving course and build on existing strengths.
32. The headteacher, senior team and governors work well together. They have a shared set of aspirations about the school and are now, together, taking active part in discussion of long-term strategies for the development of the school in such important areas as student attainment, equality of opportunity and solving the long term accommodation problems of the school. Governors are linked to individual departments and this involvement and interest is welcomed. Their committee structure, revised in the last two years, is increasingly effective and Governors have produced for themselves an exemplary governor handbook of guidance.

33. The school has developed effective and comprehensive practices for ensuring equality of opportunity. The initiative to develop this further comes jointly from the senior managers and the governors and deals with both the attainment of girls and boys, those with special educational needs, and the needs of pupils from ethnic minorities. Policy-making, curriculum development, monitoring, identification of needs, and liaison with parents and the home, are aspects of the school's work which are well managed and benefit from clear leadership.
34. Senior managers have line management responsibility for groups of subjects and this responsibility is effectively discharged, so that school priorities are followed through. Heads of subject are held effectively to account for examination and test results, and participate in setting numeric targets for improvement in results in their subjects. These targets are realistic and heads of subject are increasingly involved in development planning to ensure that these targets are delivered in 2000 and beyond. The school has taken on the question of the attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups with sensitivity, and has set differential targets and planned different ways of involving students and their parents in raising students' attainment.
35. Internal monitoring and evaluation is beginning to be an effective tool by which the school can measure the extent to which it is successful in meeting its aspirations. The target-setting cycle is clearly and authoritatively laid out and staff are familiar with it. Governors are also beginning to review their roles in relation to the quality of key developments within the school. However, there is insufficient mutual classroom observation to ensure that best teaching practice is shared, so for example, heads of year do not have a programme of observation to check on the consistency of delivery of the PSHE programme. The school development plan has recognised this deficiency and one of its current aims is to establish systems for regular monitoring with departments and year teams in the forthcoming year.
36. Heads of year and heads of subject mostly make good contributions to supporting the implementation of policy such as the code of conduct to develop students' commitment to work and attainment. They do not consistently make good use of the wide range of performance data, which senior management is generating, to assist them in targeting their efforts. Indeed, there has been some resistance to a systematic use of data in some departments, a resistance which a new generation of middle managers seems well placed to overcome. Particularly good use of data is made in English and science and there is improved use in modern languages. In English, there is growing awareness of the importance of assessing the value added by the department to the students' attainment. Heads of departments have not yet all successfully tackled the implementation of marking policies and the effectiveness of feedback to individual students.
37. Many school policies and approaches have been re-written or reviewed in the last two years. The process of policy revision has involved a wide and representative cross section of governors and staff and has had the side effect of influencing the targets the school has set itself, enabling it to face issues such as the under-achievement of boys from particular ethnic groups. However, neither governors nor teaching staff have tackled adequately the issues relating to statutory breaches in provision of religious education in the sixth form, or the lack of a collective daily act of worship. The headteacher recognises fully the curriculum possibilities of extending the contribution of subjects to students' spiritual development, but her middle management colleagues do not match her understanding.
38. A representative of the governing body and a member of the senior management team oversee the provision for students with special educational needs. The department is well-managed and led by an experienced teacher. She is efficient and expert in providing usable information for all teachers and in organising the complex allocation of time for individual and support teaching. She is familiar with the Local Education Authority's requirements and systems. She effectively blends together the team of teachers appointed by the school and those from the LEA's Education Support Service who work in the school regularly. Although not wholly effective at present, because of time constraints, subject departments have identified teachers to link with the special educational needs team.

39. The co-ordinator of work for students for whom English is another language, has very limited resources. She uses these very well, being clear about her philosophy and skilled in finding appropriate resources and approaches. She has to make choices which are not always ideal about where to allocate staff, but her focus, to work intensively with a small number of departments, is seen to be having success.

91. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

92. The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. The quality of staffing benefits standards in English, design and technology (DT), geography, history, modern languages and physical education. Recent difficulties in staffing mathematics have exacerbated problems of low attainment in the subject and temporary post-holders are currently covering a number of other posts. There is very good support from the technicians in information communications technology (ICT), design and technology and science. The science technicians work under considerable pressure as the number of students and laboratories increase, and their practice is unusually good. They have produced on computer an inventory of videos, cross-referenced by topic, and lesson by lesson details of equipment and risk assessment. Teachers of students with special educational needs are suitably qualified and are well supported by the coordinator. Staffing for the needs of students on the leisure and tourism course is insufficient.

40. The two teachers supporting students with English an additional language are well-qualified. It is an advantage that one member of staff is able to communicate in Turkish. However, staffing for this aspect of the school's work is inadequate. Whilst it is possible to provide some support for the most needy, a large number of students are unable to make as much progress as they might because of the lack of specialist support in the classroom. The school has well-qualified and experienced members of staff supporting students with special educational needs. The school's provision is supplemented by teachers from the LEA's Education Support Service and by two support assistants. The high level of expertise and specialism contribute greatly to the good quality and planning which characterise the work done in the special needs department and in some subject departments.

41. The staffing structure adequately reflects responsibilities, although the governing body recognises the need to create more flexibility in senior posts as opportunities arise, and has recently produced a shadow structure to meet projected needs. Job descriptions have improved since the last inspection and are now specific to post-holder responsibilities.

42. Arrangements for professional development are satisfactory, and some aspects are good. In-service training needs of departments and the staff as a whole are identified appropriately in the school development plan. However, departmental bids for funding for relevant training can be met only in part because of limits on the budget. This has resulted in reduced opportunities for many staff to keep up-to-date in their specialism, for example in design and technology, modern languages, and the humanities. The range of activity is narrow and limited mainly to updates on examination syllabuses. Whole-staff training days are coordinated by senior management and are used effectively on school and curriculum area priorities. Centrally coordinated systems for the induction and support of the newly qualified staff are good. A number of departments have developed a scheme of mutual classroom observation which helps teachers share good practice. Appraisal is not operating, pending new government orders.

43. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school is situated on an attractive site, with playing fields on three sides, and is secure and free of vandalism. Accommodation in the main classroom block is adequate, although some rooms have inadequate blackout. Room usage is high but there are enough classrooms for general use, and specialist facilities for physical education, science and drama are very good. The science laboratories in the pavilion, the sports hall, despite inadequate heating, and all-weather surfaces, are of a high order and students' standards benefit accordingly.

44. Elsewhere in the curriculum, some specialist facilities for design and technology (DT) are unsuitable, and for art and information communications technology (ICT) inadequate. The DT area needs refurbishment, there are only three art rooms for four staff, and there are only two rooms with enough computers for class teaching. This does not give sufficient access to computers to allow students to practise newly acquired skills enough, or to an appropriate level those skills of which they already have command. Increase in the number of forms of entry has added further pressures on space which, despite the recent addition of further temporary classrooms, will increase as the school continues to grow.
45. Much accommodation is temporary and in a poor state of repair following years of neglect. As was reported at the time of the last inspection, maintenance of the external fabric is poor, particularly that of the temporary classrooms housing music, modern languages and the sixth form. No action has been taken by the appropriate authority to remedy the serious faults reported then. The flat roofs in these areas leak rain frequently and many of the wooden door and window-frames are rotten. Conditions for learning are inappropriate in music and modern languages. Despite a depressing external appearance, the rooms are welcoming and promote a positive ethos. The site manager and his staff work hard on internal decoration and day-to-day repairs, but much fabric is in need of major attention. Space for dining is adequate, but still inadequate for preparing and serving food. Health and safety concerns are kept to a minimum, but some stair treads are worn dangerously in places, and stairwells in the main block and modern languages are inadequate at lesson-changes. Pupil movement needs closer supervision at these times.
46. Because of these inadequacies, the governing body with the local education authority is considering applying to become part of an externally funded project which would help finance the necessary work. Repairs to the roof of the main building, a performing arts studio, further science laboratories and one technology workshop are all planned. The local authority has conducted a feasibility study and appears to agree with the school that these developments are necessary. A decision on the bid and necessary action are required urgently.
47. Although expenditure on resources has fallen to well below average figures, the school has managed to sustain an adequate level of resourcing for the curriculum as a whole. There are enough books and materials of sufficient quality although the range is limited in DT and ICT. Departments have a better stock of textbooks than at the last inspection but there are still some which do not have enough for students to take home. There is an unusually good range of artefacts in religious education, and resources are good too in science in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form. In ICT, computing equipment is of good quality but is insufficient. The library and learning resource centre is managed effectively by a teacher librarian. It is bright and welcoming and provides very good opportunities for independent study, for example, through access to CD-ROMs. There is a good range of reference books, exceptionally good for art and food technology, and sections are clearly and helpfully labelled. There is not enough suitably attractive and interesting fiction for Key Stage 4 readers.
48. The accommodation for individual work with students with special educational needs is pleasant and appropriate, although at times, over-crowded for students who need privacy. Storage of resources, in particular for the six visiting teachers, is limited.
49. Resources are satisfactory for the work planned to improve students' reading, writing and spelling. There are some outdated books, but also some appropriate modern stories and plays. The four computers in the learning support base provide additional and attractive resources for different approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy and to enable students to present their work well through word processing.

102. **The efficiency of the school**

103. The school plans its budget carefully and makes more use of longer-term development planning than was reported to be the case at the previous inspection. It has been hampered, however, by difficulties which are not of its own making. These include notification of an indicative budget by the LEA which then had to be revised, and failure to receive the budget under the National Grid for Learning provision when the school had spent a substantial sum on improving its information technology equipment in anticipation of its grant. Further shortfalls in expected income have contributed to the school having a budget deficit, with little opportunity to bring about major developments for the foreseeable future. Plans to remove this deficit over a four year period have been put in place by the governing body after due consideration of a range of options. The grant from central government for teachers' professional development is used appropriately.
50. The coordination of sixth form consortium arrangements is sound, with regular contact between staff at all levels. Senior managers maintain effective supervision of sixth form costs, and although some classes are very small, the school manages overall both to maintain an economic provision and respond to parental wishes about provision.
51. The school provides well for students with special educational needs. Decisions about where to allocate support which is not specifically provided for students with statements are difficult. The school gives priority to new entrants and to providing an additional teacher in English and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 3. However, the school might need to revise the balance between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, since the progress of lower attaining students in lessons in Key Stage 4 is less than for similar students in Key Stage 3.
52. Teaching and educational support staff are mainly suitably deployed. Teachers predominantly work within their subject specialisms so that students receive teaching based on secure subject knowledge. However, the current school timetable has resulted in some classes which are shared between two teachers in a department, especially in mathematics and science. This makes it harder for teachers to achieve continuity of learning and to keep a check of students' progress. Late changes in the budget anticipated, and the resulting constraints prevented the school from implementing its original staffing plans. Support staff in science, art, information technology, design and technology and food technology, special educational needs, English as an additional language and the library play a valuable role in supporting teaching and learning.
53. The accommodation is fully used throughout the day, and parts of it are well used to facilitate extra-curricular activities for students and for community use. The library, for example, is accessible for students before and after school and at lunchtimes, as well as during lesson times. Resources for learning are readily accessible in departmental areas and good use is made of them during lessons. The system for allocating budgets for learning resources to departments is clear. Use of these budgets is based upon departmental action plans which are integrated with the school development plan: this leads to efficient spending of the relatively small sums that the school could devolve to departments this year.
54. The finance committee of the governing body meets regularly to monitor the use of the budget. It has suitable terms of reference and receives reports from the school on the state of the budget. These reports are not as helpful to governors as they might be as they consist only of figures, without any explanatory text to point out any unusual features of the monthly statements. The school has not had the benefit of a Local Authority financial audit since that published in January 1996, now almost four years ago. The school's own fund also has not been audited for some years: the accounts had been sent for audit at the time of the inspection. This unsatisfactory situation should not be allowed to recur. The staff in the school office support the work of the school in an efficient way: they quickly attend to the needs of students, staff and visitors, and present a very favourable first impression of the school to visitors.
55. The school provides good value for money: this judgement is based upon the progress students make, the quality of teaching, students' and parents' responses about what the school provides for them and, finally, the relatively low amount the school receives to educate each student.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

109. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

109. English

56. Attainment in English at the start of Key Stage 3 is below the national average. There is wide variation in the knowledge and standard of English that the students bring when they enter the school in Year 7. A small but significant number are very familiar with the vocabulary and structures of formal English; they read well and their writing is fluent and competent. Many others are far more limited in the range of language at their disposal; their writing lacks technical accuracy as well as variety, and their competence in reading is below - in many instances well below - that expected for their age. Some do not speak English at home; some have learning difficulties, including dyslexia.
57. The English course through Key Stage 3 does much to redress these problems. For instance, an early writing assignment at the beginning of Year 7 requires comparison of two poems as a formal essay. Students learn to structure their writing by working through carefully focused questions; appropriate vocabulary is suggested, and there is close guidance on paragraphing. Skills in speaking and listening are developed through the regular use of group and whole class discussion. In addition there are specific units, such as the task in the Year 8 scheme, in which students write and deliver speeches based on a news article on drug trafficking. Reading aloud is a regular part of most lessons, and all students spend one period in the timetable with the teacher librarian, developing reading skills and learning to use the library. For those with greater difficulties, there is extra help from the learning support departments, sometimes through intensive individual tuition and often within the English lesson. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in national tests is in line with national averages. In comparison with schools with a similar intake, results are above average.
58. Progress through Key Stage 3 is good for students at all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs. Evidence from the inspection shows that speaking and listening skills are sufficiently developed across the age range for productive discussion to take place; some students among the higher and average attainers are very skilled speakers. Competence in reading now meets national expectations for age, and students are ready to cope with the demands of their GCSE texts. Writing skills are more varied: although higher attainers are producing work of very good quality, in content and in expression, some students continue to have problems with technical accuracy and are still writing within a narrow range of vocabulary and sentence structures. For a large number of students, poor presentation of written work prevents them from reaching their own best standard.
59. Progress through Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall. Reading and writing skills acquired earlier now develop to become more critical and analytical. Students learn to compare novels with similar themes – such as styles of schooling in Dickens’ ‘Hard Times’ and ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ with Barry Hines’ ‘A Kestrel for a Knave’. They gain deeper perception of the treatment of character in novels, plays, and poetry, considering, for instance, the isolation of characters in Steinbeck’s ‘Of Mice and Men’, or the effect of prejudice and racism in John Agard’s poetry.
60. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national averages, although there are variations in results at GCSE between the two subjects, English and English literature, and in the results achieved by different years. The proportion of grades at the higher levels compares well with national averages, and there are fewer students than average reaching only the lowest grades. Nearly half those taking the examinations exceed the level predicted for them at the end of Key Stage 3.
61. Attainment at the end of the sixth form, in the GCE A level examination, is below national averages. The department accepts students with lower than usual GCSE grades in English. It is evident that while a small number of students produce work of high quality, others are not able fully to meet course demands. In lessons

seen during the inspection, students were diffident in discussion; although some of the written work was of very high quality, some was well below expectations for this course. Individually the majority build on the knowledge and understanding they bring to the start of the course, and progress is therefore satisfactory.

116. Attitudes to work are satisfactory overall. All classes seen in Key Stages 3 and 4 contained a majority of students who were enjoying the work and who sustained concentration and kept to the task, as well as a small number with poor staying power. In the early years of the school, such students are attention-seeking, sometimes intentionally disruptive. A lesson seen in Year 9 was spoiled for the whole class by a small group of students who refused to cooperate with the teacher. In Years 10 and 11, in some classes, individual students sometimes make it difficult for teachers to achieve the goals they have set for the lesson. For the most part, students take their work seriously, but presentation of written work often lacks care.
62. Teaching is almost all at least satisfactory; almost half is good and at times, very good, but a very small proportion is unsatisfactory. There is a good balance between the recently qualified and those teachers with long experience. Teachers have high expectations of what their students are capable of achieving, and courses and lessons are closely planned to reach short-term and long-term targets. There is always a variety of activities, and the resources, such as writing frames, are appropriate and clear, giving very good support to students who have difficulties. There is very good liaison with support teachers, who work effectively within the classroom. In some lessons, time is less well organised and effort slackens in the last ten minutes. The department has a strong and efficient approach to long term assessment, with very good use of data to raise attainment. Marking policy is very sound, but the practice varies across the department, and comments are sometimes bland and over congratulatory, even when work is carelessly presented.
63. Management of behaviour is good. Teachers are skilful in avoiding confrontation and in establishing a sense of purpose, when students arrive – often noisily – at the lesson. Occasionally, teachers are too tolerant of unsatisfactory behaviour by individual students, and this was the cause of the unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection.
64. Leadership of the department is strong. There is a sense of coherence in the teaching of the subject, and this is the result of a sharing of responsibility and of collaborative course planning across the team. Two post holders efficiently take responsibility for much of the internal organisation of the department. This enables the head of department to attend to the wider aspects of literacy across the school – which he does intelligently and effectively. The curriculum is planned to provide not only examination success but also a rich experience for the students, based on positive relationships and a strong commitment to equal opportunities.

119. **Mathematics**

65. Attainment of students on entry to the school is below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in national tests remains below the national average, but is above the average for similar schools and has improved since the last inspection. Attainment in GCSE examinations is also below the national average and, though there is no clear trend over the last four years, there was a marked improvement in the results of lower attaining students in 1999. There is no consistent variation between the performance of boys and girls. Standards of attainment in A-level are significantly below the national average and have declined over the last three years.
66. Attainment in Key Stage 3 lessons is broadly satisfactory. Some higher attaining students are developing good mental arithmetic skills though some lower attainers make too many errors and have fundamental misunderstandings in subtraction and division. Standards in Key Stage 4 lessons are, on average, below national expectations. Higher attaining students have satisfactory algebraic skills, though their understanding is less developed and they have difficulty using fractions in algebraic formulae. Average attaining students

have good knowledge of basic number and shape but have trouble with algebra and more complex numerical skills. Lower attainers have some success with simple equations, but have difficulty understanding fractions. In A-level lessons, students can follow the teacher's explanation and use their knowledge in familiar exercises, but some students' understanding is too weak to be able to solve unfamiliar problems.

67. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 but is dependent on the quality of teaching. In mixed ability classes in Key Stage 3, progress for all students is satisfactory when there is a range of tasks to suit students of varying attainment. However, in some groups, where all students are given the same work, higher attainers make little progress because they are repeating work and lower attainers struggle. In Key Stage 4, higher attaining students make good progress when they are carefully taught and monitored, but in some lessons they make poor progress through unsatisfactory planning and communication. Some lower attaining students also make good progress through very assertive and well pitched teaching, though in some lessons small groups make poor progress through lack of effort.
68. There are no consistent variations in progress made by boys and girls or between ethnic groups. Students with special needs make satisfactory progress through additional help from their teacher, and occasionally have specialist support. Students with English as a second language make satisfactory progress with mathematical calculations and teachers help with language difficulties.
69. In the A-level course, students make satisfactory progress in coursework but for too many, their knowledge and understanding is insufficiently secure to be able to apply it in examinations. Students make satisfactory progress in the GCSE resit course.
70. Most students focus on their work, listen well to the teacher and are willing to answer questions, though many classes contain small numbers of students with poor attention. In well managed classes, the majority work hard and enjoy a sense of progress though, in some Key Stage 4 lessons, the disruption of a few students slows the progress of others. Students' presentation of their work is in some classes unsatisfactory. In higher attaining classes, students are able to discuss their work with each other, though in general speaking and listening skills are not well developed and the department has planned an initiative to improve these.
71. Teaching is satisfactory or better in four out of every five lessons and somewhat better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 or the sixth form. Teachers' knowledge is mostly sound though there is some poor use of notation in A-level and GCSE lessons. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations for work and behaviour, though sometimes these are difficult to achieve because of a few disruptive students and in the weakest lessons, expectations are too low. Most teachers plan adequately, and, in the best lessons, have a carefully timed sequence of activities. In the sixth form and some other lessons, they rely too much on textbooks instead of using resources imaginatively to achieve their objectives. Teachers use a range of methods, with good practice growing in the use of mental arithmetic, resources to suit students' needs and extended pupil discussion, though all of these need further development. Very occasionally, teachers enliven lessons by applying concepts to real life situations.
72. Teachers' skill in managing students varies widely. Some are highly skilled, treating students firmly but with respect and their classes make good progress. Some others are insufficiently organised to get the best out of students. Homework is set regularly from a well-organised bank of homework tasks. Marking is regular, though not all teachers follow the departmental policy and only a minority gives constructive comments. There are plans to improve the monitoring of marking.
73. A new scheme of work has been written over the last year, with targets for students at different levels of attainment. Though still under development, the scheme has partially addressed the inconsistency in teaching criticised in the last report and, together with a good revision programme, has provided increased rigour in teaching. Attention needs to be given to widening the range of teaching methods to include regular use of problem-solving and practical work in order to increase students' interest in mathematics. The progress of

higher attaining students in Key Stage 3 has been enhanced through recently introduced setting in Years 8 and 9. The scheme of work for the A-level course is inadequate and provides no advice on resources or teaching methods.

74. There are newly introduced procedures for assessing students' attainment, which include good practice in devising individual targets for students preparing for examinations. A-level students are assessed regularly but the monitoring of progress is not sufficiently rigorous to identify underachievement and provide intervention needed to raise standards.
75. The leadership of the department is good. The head of department has been in post for one year and has made significant progress in raising standards. There are clear policies and guidelines and a sense of direction to the development of the department, though the process is still at an early stage. The consolidation of improvements in mathematics is a priority in the school's strategic plan and there is a good quality action plan. Planned reforms have still to impact fully on the quality of teaching and there is as yet insufficient classroom monitoring. The department now has a full team of qualified teachers, after a period of extensive turnover, and this more settled team is helping to raise standards. Only a minority, however, are graduate mathematicians, which restricts the teachers available to teach A-level.
76. A key issue in the last inspection report was to "address the inconsistent teaching and learning and underachievement of students in mathematics". There has been considerable progress over the last year in particular. Standards of attainment have improved in Key Stages 3 and 4 though they remain below national expectations and have deteriorated at A-level, in line with predictions based on students' prior attainment. A number of strategies have been put in place to raise standards further. The curriculum is no longer fragmented and some of the shortcomings in the quality of teaching have been removed. Teaching still needs to be improved, though there is now a solid foundation of good leadership, clear policy and a more stable staff, on which to achieve this.

Science

77. Attainment in science is close to the national average at all key stages. Attainment in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests was in line with national averages in 1998, having decreased slightly from 1997, but maintained an upward trend overall and particularly at the higher levels. Results were well above those attained in similar schools. Girls and boys attain equally well. By the end of Key Stage 3, students know the difference between elements and compounds and high attaining students can explain where elements are deposited when salts like copper chloride are electrolysed. Students understand the process of fermentation and know the word 'equation'. They know that machines make work easier. Higher attaining students understand that distance is increased when force is decreased in machines, such as when a jack is used to lift a car. Investigative skills are satisfactorily developed through practical work, for example finding out which factors affect dissolving of sugar.
78. All students were entered for the science double award at GCSE in 1998. Results were below national averages. The subject has maintained the same steady level over the last few years. Boys and girls perform equally well. Intermittent attendance, a minority of unsatisfactory behaviour and failure to complete homework contribute to this low attainment. All students have a satisfactory understanding of human reproduction and the role of hormones in this process. High attaining students understand how to use formulae in electricity to calculate power, energy and current and use this to choose correct fuse ratings. Most students appreciate the importance of crude oil and know about fractional distillation. Many have difficulty in understanding the terms 'cracking' and 'fractions' when applied to this topic. Students have satisfactory practical skills. They investigate the factors that affect resistance in a wire. All students carry out fair tests, obtain evidence and, to some extent, analyse data. Only high attaining students evaluate their experiments thoroughly.

79. A level biology and chemistry are taught in the school but physics is shared in alternate years with Hornsey School. Attainment in 1998 was in line with national averages for A to E grades, but below average at the higher grades. This is a continuing pattern in performance over the past three years. All students have a satisfactory understanding of appropriate terminology. A level biology students understand and can explain synaptic transmission of nerve impulses. Physics students understand inductance, capacitance and reactance but have some difficulty in linking these to the frequency of waves. In chemistry, students apply oxidation number to balance redox equations well but have difficulty in using this in calculations. They can carry out investigations beyond GCSE level. For example, students investigate the action of saliva on starch.
80. All students have a good understanding of the applications and implications of science as in the study of pollution, global warming and deforestation. Graphical skills are used well to display data. All students in Key stage 3 use information technology (IT) to log data for example when cooling a substance to find its melting point. Many word process investigations well and there is increasing use of IT to obtain and store data. Mathematical skills are used confidently by high attaining students to solve problems.
81. Students come into school with attainment below national averages. They make good progress in Key Stage 3 to reach standards in line with the national average. For example, they progress from using simple separating techniques such as filtration and evaporation, to applying the kinetic theory to changes of state. Girls and boys and students from a wide range of cultural traditions make satisfactory progress.
82. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Students generally start the A level courses with average GCSE grades. A significant number has to develop literacy and numeracy skills to meet the demands of the courses. Progression through A level is often slow but many are successful, occasionally taking three years.
83. Students with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3 because of the well-planned support, guidance and range of materials that are in use and being produced. Students thrive and succeed in lessons. Those with English as an additional language use good material with an emphasis on key words and phrases. They use dictionaries and support from other students to help in their learning. This support is less effective in Key Stage 4; however, many students on the register of special educational needs, and with English as an additional language achieve good grades at GCSE. The initiative to raise achievement of African Caribbean students in Key Stage 4 is already having a positive influence on the progress of many students.
84. Response is very good in the sixth form, almost always good in Key Stage 3 and mostly satisfactory in Key Stage 4 where a small minority is either bored or disruptive. Almost consistently good behaviour of boys in Key Stage 3 deteriorates quickly in a few Key Stage 4 lessons. Students are interested in most lessons where they enjoy practical work and participate by helping with demonstrations and making presentations at A level. All work with increasing competence and pay regard to safety when carrying out investigations. Collaborative work is good. Students in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form mostly hand in homework promptly, but the speed of completion of homework and course work is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 and some students do not develop skills of independent study. There are very limited opportunities for students to show initiative within science activities, as there are few extra curricular activities.
85. Teaching is a strength in the science department. It is good or better in seven out of ten lessons and very good in one out of four. Very good features include enthusiasm, high expectations, pace and effective use of investigation to teach the "wonder" of science through, for example, the action of a tiny organism, (yeast), fermenting sugar, to make bread, wine and beer. There is very good planning of practicals in Key Stage 4 with calculations and different work for all abilities, which keeps boys and girls concentrating on their work. The majority of teachers manage students well but this good practice is not discussed and shared effectively. Homework, which both consolidates and extends learning, is set regularly, and there are rigorous procedures for follow up. Work is marked but comments are perfunctory. A few teachers use students' response in

lessons, homework and tests to inform and plan their teaching effectively. A well-knit team is led effectively, particularly in pioneering partnership with external support staff to improve teaching and materials. The department is working very hard to improve standards. The support given by the technicians is outstanding in providing guidance on risk assessment and efficient use of learning resources such as videos.

86. Since the time of the last inspection, there have been some significant changes. Entry to Key Stage 4 examinations is monitored and only those with long term absence are not entered. Use of information technology skills has improved but still remains inconsistent. There continues to be reduced progress in some lessons due to lack of effective management of some boys' behaviour and chatter. Objectives are consistently shared with students at the start of the lesson but not always checked during and at the end of lessons. There are good oral presentations in the sixth form but not in other years. Teachers monitor students' progress well against National Curriculum levels and examination grades. Good extension material for higher attaining students is available for all lessons but where it is optional, a significant number in Year 9 and beyond do not complete work of which they are capable. Teachers spend considerable time supporting students through extension classes and revision clubs.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

87. Overall standards of attainment are mainly in line with national expectations and meet national standards for Key Stage 4. Performance at GCSE over the past four years matches that of similar schools although the school reports lower results this year. Girls are achieving significantly higher standards than boys, whose results this year are below the national average. Results in 1999 for students entered for A level are below the national average, but A level results for previous years were average. However, with a comparatively small entry, meaningful comparisons at this level with the national picture are not easy.
88. At the end of Key Stage 3, the standard of most work meets national expectations. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 also indicate that students are achieving levels of attainment that match national expectations. Standards, however, are not consistent across parallel classes and the work of some students' in Years 7 and 8 is of a higher standard than that seen in Year 9. Knowledge and understanding in art is well developed throughout the school and many students are able to relate their work to that of artists. Knowledge of context is less secure and there is little historical overview. Gallery visits are arranged in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form; this has a positive effect on standards.
89. By the end of Key Stage 3, students have worked in a range of two and three-dimensional media, including ceramics, and are familiar with working from direct observation. Not all students have developed research skills and most can recognise some artists' work; a few are able to analyse paintings. In Key Stage 4, students continue to work with a variety of media. Many are able to paint with sensitivity and use the inspiration of other artists' work to develop their own work. Students at this stage are expected to develop more individual work; this works well only for the most self-motivated. Others would benefit from greater structure. In the sixth form students, continue to experiment with a variety of materials, they work on larger scale projects and are capable of highly imaginative work in three dimensions. Students take more responsibility for their work and arrange gallery visits.
90. Progress is sound in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students maintain this progress in the sixth form. Progress is not consistent across all years. Some Year 10 students who show good motivation and, in some

cases, considerable individual research into early twentieth century art movements to support their work on portraits, are making greater progress than older students in Year 11. Not all high attaining students are making progress commensurate with their ability. The curriculum is generally accessible to all and, in both key stages those with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. Students for whom English is an additional language would benefit from work which is matched to their learning needs and previous experience of art. Girls are making better progress than boys are in Key Stage 4.

91. Numbers of students electing to take art in Key Stage 4 vary from year to year but have fallen slightly this year. There are gains in the number in the sixth form. Relationships are positive and students work well with each other. Many come to extra art classes. Behaviour is generally good and students are able to sustain a high level of concentration, once they have sufficient stimulating work.

92. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, ranging from very good to poor. In the majority of lessons, the standard of teaching is at least satisfactory and good or better in almost a half. Staffing changes since the beginning of this school year mean that there is temporary leadership of the department and two new members of staff. Teachers are enthusiastic and up to date in their knowledge and expertise but need greater support to develop consistency of expectation. The current situation of shared rooms and split classes does not help to improve standards or develop a cohesive art ethos.

93. Planning is sound and properly linked to the National Curriculum. Much of the curriculum is drawn from cultures represented within the school and other worldwide cultures. This is a particular strength. Schemes of work in Key Stage 3 have been recently reviewed but not evaluated for progression and continuity. Statutory requirements are met except in the use of information technology. Homework is well established but could make greater demands on students.

94. Appropriate procedures for assessing art have still to be developed. There are no central records, which make it difficult to monitor individual progress. Students' self-evaluation sheets are good and form a useful part of an assessment system. Marking is good and students appreciate the constructive comments. The department is well managed in terms of resources and the school environment is improved by the display of students' work throughout the building.

95. Since the last inspection levels of attainment have been maintained, there has been more emphasis on direct observation and a small increase in sixth form numbers. There have been no improvements in provision for information technology, assessment procedures have still to be developed and storage remains poorly organised.

150.

Design and technology

96. Standards of attainment are in line with the national average at all three key stages. Teacher assessed levels at the end of Key Stage 3 indicate an improvement over the past three years and proportionately more girls than boys reach average and above average levels. By the end of Year 9, students have sound practical skills and use a range of tools and processes to make artefacts that match their design briefs. They understand about the direction of movement and use this in an effective mechanical toy project. All students make a toy, some of which are good quality, well finished and with some interesting and amusing designs. In food technology, students make dishes such as apple pies well and know about nutrients contained in common foods. They can change recipes to reduce fat consumption and make recommendations about a healthy diet. The quality of graphics is satisfactory and students make good use of colour and drawing techniques to design a logo which they print on a T shirt to encourage recycling. They use IT competently to produce three-dimensional graphics and some students word process their project work to improve presentation. The mathematical skills of measuring accurately, calculating and estimating are weak. Students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language attain appropriately with the support

of adapted worksheets and additional help from teachers. Higher attaining students show their ability through good quality evaluation of their work, well written notes to support design choices and an attention to detail in both designing and making.

97. At the end of Key Stage 4, students choose a GCSE in graphics products, resistant material or food technology. Results are below national averages but in line with those for similar schools and with the school's average, and there is an upward trend since the last inspection. By the end of the key stage, students know about product design in food technology and apply this to designing a new pasta based product. They understand that time and cash constrains food choices and see this demonstrated practically when visiting the school meals kitchen. Students have a sound knowledge of the design process and research thoroughly before beginning to choose a design and develop it. The quality of GCSE course work projects varies widely, particularly in presentation, the level of graphical skills, quality of annotation of design work, analysis and written commentary. Higher attaining students produce good portfolios to support their practical work. Average and below average students make products to a satisfactory standard such as children's toys, cooked meals or greetings cards and many generate good ideas for their products and modify their designs in response to problems encountered in the making process.
98. A small number of students take A level design and attain satisfactory standards but group sizes are too small to compare with national averages. The quality of course work is sound to good and initial work on prototypes is well used at an early stage of designing to understand potential manufacturing problems.
99. Students come in to Year 7 with very little experience of using tools, processes and materials. They make sound progress across the key stage through a series of focused modules which introduce them to a full range of skills and knowledge. In a graphics module in Year 7, students learn drawing techniques and begin to understand the impact of colour and font style when making a poster which will capture people's attention. Students learn good habits of workshop safety and the skills of using tools and machinery to shape wood and plastics. Year 8 students use computer aided design to draw 3 dimensional shapes and learn how to represent their designs carefully so that they provide sufficient information to guide the process of making. Progress through Key Stage 4 is sound in terms of developing practical skills. Average and above average students support this with written and graphical work. A significant number of students find it difficult to write a reasoned argument to support their choice of design or to explain the characteristics of different materials which govern their use. Students in Key Stage 4 who have literacy problems are helped to make sound progress by well designed help sheets on how to conduct a questionnaire for example, or set out the key points in a piece of research. Students learning English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported by EAL and design and technology teachers using word prompts and writing frames and they make satisfactory progress. The department also supports A level students who are learning English and past results demonstrate that the pace of their progress is sound and in line with that of their peers.
100. Students enjoy making things whether to eat, to look at or to use. They nearly always behave well and respond positively to teachers. They take a pride in their work and want to talk about what they are doing and show the things they make. All students, including those who have special educational needs, are well motivated by the success they achieve in making things they can take home. For example, Year 7 made a fresh fruit salad and thoroughly enjoyed what was a good social as well as a learning experience. Only in a tiny minority of lessons is behaviour of small groups of boys unacceptable. They are immature and in seeking attention by rudeness and silly behaviour, prevent the progress of others. Younger students often complete their homework and bring it to school on time, whereas many older students do not. The management of this becomes cumbersome and time consuming.
101. The overall quality of teaching is good. Two thirds of lessons have good or very good features and the great majority is at least sound. Particularly good features are the involvement of students in their own learning, for example in a Year 10 lesson when students began to design a leaflet to advertise a club by evaluating completed designs and pointing out good features. There is good use of question and answer

sessions, for example in analysing the mechanics of automata, or the techniques of isometric projection. Homework is well-used and marking criteria made clear to students. A Year 7 lesson began with excellent feedback about marks awarded for design work with clear guidance about how to improve. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and set good examples in their attention to safety, the quality of the work they demonstrate and their relationships with students. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The management of students including those whose behaviour is challenging is nearly always good.

102. The department is very well led and teamwork is an important factor in the improvements evident since the last inspection. Both technicians are assets to the department and support the staff and students well. The accommodation has improved in its decorative state and there is a new roof, but the workshops are in urgent need of refurbishment and the low level of funding prevents replacing old machinery and tools and restricts the breadth of work students can undertake.

157. **Drama**

103. All students follow the drama course in Years 7, 8 and 9. During this time, they acquire skills in whole class teacher-directed activity and in group planning for presentation. Progress through the course is good. Students acquire knowledge of use of space and time, mime and movement, and dialogue in drama; they also learn to share ideas productively, to create presentations and to apply critical judgement as audience. A class in Year 8 showed good knowledge of drama technique as they suggested ways of depicting a battle scene involving the whole class. Classes in Year 9, working on the conventions used in soap opera, analysed group presentations perceptively, with clear focus. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations, and the students who decide to continue with the subject in the GCSE course do so from a strong position.

104. In Key Stage 4, students continue to make good progress and, at the end of Key Stage 4, attainment of all students is in line with national averages overall, with the attainment of girls being better than that of boys. The sample of lesson observation on the inspection confirms this. For instance, in a class in Year 11 working on the role of women during World War I, girls worked very well in preparing their presentation, which was of high quality; the boys found it harder to stay on task and did not have the confidence to present their work on this occasion.

105. Only a small sample of work was seen in the sixth form. Results in the GCE A level examination are below national averages in the higher grades, but there is a hundred per cent pass rate.

106. Students throughout the school gain a great deal from drama. They involve themselves strongly in the tasks they are given, putting pressure to co-operate on those who find concentration and self-control difficult. Relationships are good, and there is effective collaboration in group work.

107. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in drama, and half the teaching seen on the inspection was good. Lesson planning is supported by a clear and logical scheme of work. Tasks are structured to meet the needs of the classes, with account taken where necessary of students with limited literacy skills. There is an appropriate balance at all stages between whole class and group work, with opportunities in every lesson for presentation of work, and with it, audience response. Oral assessment by teachers in lessons is clear, and it involves students, as they judge their own work and that of others. Management of behaviour is skilful, although there is some tolerance of poor behaviour by individual students.

108. The curriculum is broad, with a good balance of units of work which explore issues, such as men and women in society in the World War I unit, and dramatic forms, such as the unit on the convention of the chorus. Students experience scripted drama and improvisation. There are many opportunities for work

outside the classroom, notably in the drama club and in the school productions. Higher attaining students are encouraged to apply for places in the National Youth Theatre.

163. **Geography**

109. Attainment at Key Stage 3 on entry is below that found nationally. As pupils pass through Key Stage 3 good gains are made through extending geographical vocabulary, selecting and using secondary sources of evidence, graphicacy and the reinforcement of knowledge and understanding through strong support for the development of literacy and English as an additional language. As a result, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 and above in National Curriculum tests by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils show satisfactory mapping, diagrammatic and graphical skills. Higher attaining students have greater communication and enquiry skills and are able to work independently. A significant number of pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of global issues and a 'sense of place' and are able to select appropriate information and sources for plausibility and relevance. The absence of some higher graphicacy skills, depth of knowledge and independent study opportunities affect the highest attainment. Lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, are limited by the absence of appropriate communication skills and literacy skills (in particular speaking). At the end of Key Stage 4, results indicate an upward trend since the last inspection with some fluctuation and results are broadly in line with national averages.
110. At Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils makes good progress. Key Stage 4 and 'A' level progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. As pupils pass through Key Stage 3, their progress is influenced by their growing ability to interpret, re-organise and display information in a variety of forms and share and exchange information effectively. At the end of Key Stage 3, Year 9 pupils make progress through problem solving exercises, decision making and the evaluation of evidence. At Key Stage 4, good progress is made through enquiry and independent learning skills across all ability levels, but particularly amongst the higher attaining students. 'A' level students progress through higher levels of enquiry and statistical techniques and consolidate their knowledge of polar graphs, bi-polar analysis, Lorenz curves, Spearman rank correlation coefficient in their coursework assignments.
111. Pupils' very good behaviour in the majority of lessons enables secure teaching and learning. All pupils have their basic equipment and planners. They are willing participants and take up for geography GCSE is high. At Key Stage 4 there is some poor listening and concentration lapses, which affects progress overall.
112. Teaching is satisfactory to good in the majority of lessons seen. A percentage is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 3, lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives in the majority of lessons. At Key Stage 4 lesson planning and organisation are not always strong enough to promote high standards of progress. However at Key Stage 3, teachers employ an impressive range of different, varied material, most notably, literacy support programmes, including building vocabulary, grammatical structures, key words, writing frames, map notation) and excellent examples of team teaching using support staff to dynamic effect. This is all driving forward the rates of progress for all ability levels but in, particular, for students with special education needs or with English as an additional language. Subject command is good and reflects current knowledge. Expectations are high in the majority of lessons. There is less evidence of teaching range and approaches at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Planning is not always strong enough to provide fast progress. Assessment is well planned at Key Stage 3 and recording marks centrally enables progress to be monitored. Assessment is less rigorous at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, where pupil data is not sufficiently used to inform curriculum planning. There is little evidence of academic monitoring, pupil self-assessment and target setting.
113. The curriculum is broad, balanced and supported by well-revised schemes of work since the last inspection. There is a clear development plan with appropriate aims and priorities, which reflect whole school

issues. Schemes of work satisfactorily cover all aspects of the National Curriculum. At Key Stages 3 and 4 there is too little monitoring of teaching and sharing good practice. Schemes of work include appropriate information technology programmes of study, numeracy and most notably literacy, a strength within the department. Timetabling constraints at Key Stage 3 affect the progression and continuity of lessons, knowledge consolidation and teacher assessment opportunities. Key Stage 4 and sixth form option procedures further deny some pupils equality of access and affect the cohort ability level on a yearly basis.

114. The geography department makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural and social development through the study of contrasting cultures such as in the work on shantytowns in Rio-de-Janeiro. However there is a lack of a coordinated approach to fieldwork and to a departmental contribution to students' spiritual and cultural development. There is an effective and supportive style of management that permeates throughout the faculty. The departmental development plan is not directly linked to professional development needs. Resources have improved since the last inspection. The department provides good value for money.

169.

History

115. Attainment at Key Stage 3 on entry is below average. In Key Stage 3, good gains are made as a result of developing chronological understanding, the recognition of similarity and difference between periods of history and historical interpretation, using dates, historical vocabulary and conventions. The percentage of students achieving level 5 and above in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with that found nationally. Most students have achieved satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding, and are able to recall and select historical information using substantiated explanations. Students' factual knowledge and recall are good across all ability levels as a result of the emphasis placed on re-visiting skills and knowledge and building on grammatical structures using writing frameworks. Limited use of extended historical enquiry and range of sources of information such as ICT, documentation, artefacts, contemporary paintings and photographs reduces students motivation to extend themselves and this has an impact on standards. Lower attaining students are affected by lack of reinforcement of personal organisation, and by their reduced ability to concentrate for extended periods.

116. Key Stage 4 GCSE results over the last four years have matched the national average for A* to G grades with some fluctuation indicating an upward trend. In 1996, 52 per cent of students gained A* to G grades compared with 61 per cent in 1998. Results for 1999 are above last year's national average and all students entered gained at least A* to G. This is also significantly better than schools with similar intakes. There is a significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. A level results have shown some variation since the last inspection but are generally close to national averages. In 1999, the group studying history was too small for fair analysis.

117. At Key Stage 3, progress is slightly better than national test results indicate. Most students make satisfactory to good progress as a result of skills reinforcement and an impressive literacy programme which is built into schemes of work and well supported by special needs staff. Year 9 students make good progress through examination and analysis of data, historical interpretation and study of the effects of change on society. They consolidate knowledge and understanding by studying original sources. Progress is good across all ability levels, including students with special educational needs, when students practise and revisit skills and when literacy content is strong through effective lesson planning and effective deployment of support staff.

118. Progress is affected by the absence of fieldwork to support classroom knowledge and the lack of independent study and research projects in each year group. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 4, and most successful when students work collaboratively and independently on open-ended coursework tasks such as the study of the impact of Franklin D Roosevelt, Stalin and Trotsky. Progress is good in the sixth form when coursework is reinforced with fieldwork.

119. Students' behaviour at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory to good in all lessons seen. Students are positive about their work and good pupil teacher relationships secure a responsible and enthusiastic working environment in the majority of lessons. Students at Key Stage 3 and 4 are sensible and co-operative in their approach to group work and independent tasks, and they come to lessons ready for hard work.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both Key Stage 3 and 4 and in a significant number of lessons good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and teachers employ an impressive range of differentiated material in particular when they plan to advance students' language and literacy, building vocabulary, increasing their range of grammatical structures and key technical words, and using writing frames effectively. Subject command is good and reflects current knowledge. There are high expectations in the majority of lessons and teaching methods are appropriate. There is, however, less evidence of a breadth of teaching approaches. Planning and organisation across Key Stage 3 and 4 is not always strong enough to ensure fast progress. Assessment is well planned and recording marks centrally enables progress to be monitored at Key Stage 3. Assessment is less rigorous at Key Stage 4 where pupil data is not sufficiently used to inform curriculum planning and pupil target setting.
121. The curriculum is broad and balanced and supported by well documented schemes of work including IT, numeracy and, most notably, planned literacy development, which is a strength within the department. Timetabling constraints at Key Stage 3 affect the progression and continuity of lessons. The history curriculum makes satisfactory provision for students' social and cultural development through taught elements. The department is well led and the head of department has vision. Management is efficient. Educational developments are supported through careful financial planning. The department gives good value for money.

Information technology

122. Attainment in information technology (IT) is below average in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in line with post 16 course requirements. Students in Key Stage 3 have no discrete IT lessons, but almost all subjects make a contribution to IT capability when classes use computers as part of teaching and learning across the curriculum. The reason for their lower than average attainment is that students do not have sufficient time to practise the skills they are taught nor to become independent users of IT. By the end of the key stage, the majority of students have good text processing skills. They write poetry, essays and letters and use word processing well in modern foreign languages. Students have used a range of software applications and are able enter and manipulate data. They interrogate a database of historical data, make a chart of comparative weather data from a spreadsheet and draw geometrical shapes using LOGO. A minority go beyond the stage of following instructions to apply their knowledge in different contexts and to assess the value of using IT tools.
123. In Key Stage 4, students have IT lessons for half the year. By the end of the key stage, all students have completed one or more of a series of skills based modules which lead to an accreditation. They use a word processor well and some go on to use a mail merge program to create personalised letters from a template. Other modules available, but not seen during the inspection, include the skills of using a spreadsheet, graphics and a data base program. These modules are not intended to reach a standard which equates to GCSE and students do not therefore reach the higher levels of capability which they demonstrate in other subjects.
124. Students come into the school with varied experiences of using computers. The school reports that levels are improving year by year. In Key Stage 3, they learn basic IT skills in several subjects each term and consolidate these skills in Key Stage 4. In most lessons where IT features, students make sound progress in achieving the objectives set for them. The IT co-ordinator has a support timetable for most lessons each

week and often shares the teaching with subject staff. Students, therefore, often have several adults to help them with their work and this ensures that students needing more guidance, such as those who have special educational needs or are learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. There is limited provision of more challenging material for higher attaining students or those who have more experience of using computers. These students generally work more quickly, help their peers and complete the task set to a better standard. The limited time and resources do not allow students to progress to higher levels of capability. Progress across the key stages is unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to a lack of time but also to the fact that learning is not sufficiently well planned to assure progression of knowledge, skills and understanding.

125. Students enjoy using computers and are well motivated, concentrating for long periods of time. Behaviour is nearly always good in the IT rooms and students respect the rooms and equipment. The computers are well used outside lesson time by students who want to use IT to present their project work or to find information from the Internet. A significant number of students have computers at home and some use them for completing homework and GCSE coursework.

126. Teaching of IT is at least satisfactory and is good in one fifth of lessons. Teachers have a good command of IT skills and understanding, and the depth of knowledge of staff from many subjects is strong. Lessons are well planned and team teaching is effective. The IT technician provides excellent support for staff and students during lessons. Management of students and of resources is sound and time is generally well used. Assessment could be strengthened by less heavy reliance on tick sheets, which record activities rather than evaluation of quality or secure command of a skill. Outcomes of assessment are used in some lessons but, overall, are not sufficiently used to plan future learning.

127. The school has improved some aspects of its IT provision since the last inspection, including the appointment of an IT technician to take the network management role away from the co-ordinator. In addition, access to the Internet and e-mail for all pupils and extended staff training have had an important impact on provision. The provision of cross-curricular teaching of IT is well-organised and is a strength. The school has only two rooms with enough computers for teaching full classes and this is insufficient to allow every pupil regular access. The computers are of a high specification and the network is new. The fact that because of this level of investment no National Grid for Learning funding was made available to them has delayed their plans to expand the facilities. Despite this disadvantage, the use made of the computers to teach IT through almost all subjects of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and makes a good contribution to many subjects.

182. **Modern languages, French and German**

128. Overall standards at Key Stage 3 are average. In the 1999 Key Stage 3 teacher assessments, attainment was correctly assessed at the national average figures for 1998. Current inspection evidence indicates a similar picture. Listening is the strongest of the skills and standards are above average. Most students understand instructions and requests promptly, and many extract relevant detail, and some deduce meaning, from extended recorded dialogues. Many higher attaining students in Year 9 in both French and German are of above average standard nationally, on course for National Curriculum Levels 5 and above by the end of the key stage. Many of them have fine aural sensitivity and good accents. Some show flair in open-ended tasks, confidently adapting previous learning in writing extended paragraphs about themselves and others. Others are more concerned with originality than accuracy. Reading and speaking have improved since the last inspection, especially in German. In speaking, many students can perform simple dialogues, usually with the support of text. They do not, however, memorise or recall easily. Writing is the weakest of the skills. Below the highest level, too much writing is limited to the practice of disconnected statements. The average pupil does not say or write enough from memory.

129. Proportionally, girls do better than boys in French but standards are similar in German. Students across the ability range produce a high standard of word-processed writing, from simple prose description to imaginary school report pages and illustrated weather reports.
130. At Key Stage 4, overall standards are at average levels when compared with similar schools, although, most recently, results in German have been much better than in French. Direct comparison with the last inspection is misleading. In 1996, when standards at GCSE were adjudged to be above average in French and below in German, only half the students chose to study a foreign language in Key Stage 4. Now nearly all students are entered – as many as in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In the provisional figures for 1999 the proportion of students in the higher (A* to C) grades, as expected, in French fell significantly from average levels the previous year. These standards are now not high enough, especially when compared with those in German which have risen significantly over four years, at a faster rate than the national improvement, to well above average. Results across the whole A* to G range have consistently been at the national average in both languages.
131. As at Key Stage 3, girls outperform boys in French by a greater margin than nationally. In German, in contrast, there is little difference. In class, standards in Year 11 remain at average levels overall, with more students in the A* to C range in German than in French. Listening is the strongest and writing the weakest of the skills in each language. Nevertheless, in the sample of work seen, some higher attaining students reach the highest standards. In French, students write imaginatively and at length about their ideal school, and in German many students show a sound knowledge of word order and agreement in extended pieces about personal interest and ambition. In French, there is still a significant number of students below the highest attaining students with a very limited knowledge of vocabulary and undeveloped skills. Transferring and adapting memorised language both orally and in writing is a major weakness. In both languages, much work is presented untidily in exercise books.
132. Standards at GCE Advanced Level have met average course expectations over the past three years, albeit from very small entries which make comparisons unreliable. German standards have improved to average levels with some students in the B/C range. In 1999 all students in each language achieved at least an E grade. Current standards in Year 13 French and German are similarly in the average range. Much grammar is insecure, and some students still struggle with complex ideas, needing much support, especially in French. All students learn to access a range of sources, from song to literary text.
133. Students make satisfactory progress overall through Key Stages 3 and 4 in both languages. Progress in French over Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory in writing, because many students do not persevere when challenged. In lessons progress is often good when students, including those with special educational needs, consolidate well in listening and speaking. Higher attaining students progress as expected in all skills when they are provided with tasks which really challenge their creative skills. Where progress is most marked in lessons, students are well managed, active in the language and know what they need to do to improve. Where progress is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3, higher attainers do not always make expected gains in mixed-ability classes. Some students in Key Stage 4 have low levels of interest and self-confidence and have not memorised enough vocabulary and patterns in the past. Although knowledge and application of structure are still generally insecure throughout the key stage, progress is better in Year 10. Students are building more effectively on their prior learning, showing more initiative in using the spoken language and starting to memorise short statements and descriptions. The redrafting of coursework and the use of word-processing are beginning to address the issue of careless presentation. In the Year 10 and 11 Certificate of Achievement classes, good teaching ensures that the lower attaining students sustain interest in understanding and using everyday vocabulary, for example when using shopping phrases and talking about their pastimes. Regular oral assessments are helping improve standards. Progress in the sixth form is good. Some students struggle to make the transition from GCSE, but gradually become more independent in all skills.
134. Attitudes are satisfactory overall, but there is wide variation. Whilst many students in Key Stage 3 are

enthusiastic, the attitude of a minority at both key stages is unsatisfactory. It is symptomatic that planned foreign exchanges were cancelled due to minimal response, and that no pupil has chosen a second modern language in Key Stage 4 since the option became available. In most classes, most students listen and respond according to agreed rules, concentrating well in practice drills. Students with special educational needs persevere and enjoy success in understanding and speaking. Most students make good use of opportunities to practise in groups although some are less good at maintaining their work-rate when not directly supervised.

135. Behaviour is good or very good where teaching is good, and most students behave well. Many are able to sustain concentration even when a small minority disturbs learning conditions. Students in Years 8 and 9 are beginning to use dictionaries independently, and occasionally use the spoken language voluntarily. Where attitudes are unsatisfactory, it is often the legacy of disaffection with French in Year 9 and Key Stage 4 which resulted from poor teaching and changes of staff; this situation has now stabilised. Too many students waste time, needing to be reminded of agreed rules for listening. A small minority at each key stage behaves unacceptably: they interrupt, ignore instructions, and do not respect either each other or adults. Presentation of work in exercise books is poor. Too many exercises are left incomplete or tackled only half-heartedly. Students thus have an inadequate reference-point for future learning. Some students lack the confidence to try to memorise and reproduce what they practise. Some students in Key Stage 4, boys especially, are reluctant to be pushed into extending limited answers, self-conscious in a peer-group culture which is not used to this degree of challenge. Sixth form students respond well to challenge. Some are learning to become independent users of the language across a range of contexts.
136. Teaching is satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons and is good or very good in a half. It is more consistently good in German, and it is good in Key Stage 4 Certificate of Achievement classes and in the sixth form. Some teaching of French has weaknesses in management of behaviour, pace and challenge. There are common strengths. Objectives are clear and students are helped to understand them by referring to National Curriculum criteria at the start of the activity. This helps students in both key stages to assess their own progress. Planning for different ability levels in Key Stage 3 is good. Many worksheets indicate clearly the National Curriculum levels of graded activities, especially helpful for higher and lower attaining students. Very effective use is made of computers, and home-produced cards to support speaking activities. Class time is usually used well, with a range of activities practising all skills. The management of students is usually secure. In nearly all lessons, the teacher's command of the spoken language conveys suitable expectations and sustains a lively pace. Occasionally in French, however, uncertainty in the language slows the lesson. This teaching is unsatisfactory when oral questioning and links between activities are laboured, and strategies for dealing with pupil inattention and misbehaviour are ineffective. In the lessons observed in both languages in Key Stage 3, where students are not grouped by ability, teachers did not often use the spoken language at a level which was both challenging for the higher attainers and realistic for other students. The tendency to use English unnecessarily, particularly in translation is unsatisfactory. Occasionally, teachers do not require sufficient urgency of students starting a task or are ineffective in ensuring that students do as requested. Expectations of standards of presentation and accuracy of written work in exercise books within the middle and upper attainment ranges are not high enough. Much work is very untidy and marking inconsistent. Teachers follow the agreed grading scheme but comments are rarely specific enough to be of real help.
137. The department is led very well, with vision and rigour. Levels of accountability are high and team unity is a strength. Accommodation is unsatisfactory but, despite this, staff create a purposeful learning environment. Planning and evaluation processes are good, and teachers are well supported. There is a valuable system of regular classroom observation, for both monitoring of teaching and sharing good practice. Since the last report successful steps have been taken to raise standards in German and to begin to use data from assessments and examination results to improve teaching and learning. Teachers of German, for example, have planned together, examination results are analysed thoroughly by gender and ethnic origin, and teachers account for variations between predicted and actual grades. However, standards in French at Key Stage 4 need to be raised and it is a source of disappointment to the school that students reject the offer of study of a second modern language. There are currently no links with foreign schools.

138. The department provides a good quality of education. Its sound ethos and good teaching offset the disappointing outcomes in French, and it gives good value for money. It has correctly identified areas for new and continued development. Amongst these, the most important are to raise standards in French at Key Stage 4 and to monitor both students' progress and teaching more effectively. The department has the capacity to sustain the progress it has made.

Music

139. A wide span of achievement is evident across year groups and key stages reflecting students' very varied background of musical experiences. By the end of Key Stage 3, though overall attainment is somewhat lower than average, about half the students are nevertheless achieving the national expectation in performing and composing and there are some who demonstrate achievement beyond that expected of their age group. A fair proportion, however, find it difficult to sustain concentrated listening and make any depth of response in this aspect of the subject. Accordingly, this lowers the overall level of attainment.

140. GCSE results are below the national average, mainly due to the policy of accepting students of all abilities on to the course. The take-up is high in comparison with similar schools. Though a wide spread of attainment is evident within the large groups of present Key Stage 4 students and the much smaller groups in years 12 and 13, some skilful work in composing and performing is already in hand suggesting that targets for improved examination results are realistic.

141. In Key Stage 3, progress within lessons and across year groups is generally satisfactory, though rather slow, especially in the development of listening and appraising skills. Progress improves noticeably in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form both for the higher attaining musicians and the lower attainers who are able to consolidate basic practical skills and apply them to composition work. Students with special educational needs are fully integrated into all the tasks and make satisfactory progress in line with that of their peers.

142. Students clearly enjoy their music lessons and their attitude to work is mostly good. Very occasionally, group and class work is marred by some students' inability to settle quietly between tasks and to sustain concentration. Discipline is generally good however and markers are laid or being laid with regard to the high standard of behaviour expected within a basically informal environment. Relationships are good between students themselves and the teaching staff, especially in Key Stage 4, the sixth form and extra-curricular activities. Collaborative work is generally good and students respond in a relaxed but workmanlike fashion when encouraged to take responsibility and care of equipment and respect others' ideas and opinions.

143. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, more than often good and can be very good. It is consistently good in the tutorial-type approach in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Lessons are usually presented in a confident but relaxed manner giving students a useful sense of purpose and direction. Successful lessons combine expectations pitched at an appropriate level, a good sustained pace and suitable questioning upon a variety of activities which gives all students opportunity to respond at varying levels. Less successful are lessons which are intended to support other practical sessions and call for a much wider variety of musical activities and content to maintain students' interest and concentration as well as to develop and enhance critical listening skills and a more secure knowledge and understanding of the rudiments of the subject.

144. Curriculum time has increased since the last inspection but group sizes are larger. The constraints of accommodation and resources and continuity of work for split teaching groups are already beginning to impact on the delivery of the curriculum. The scheme of work satisfactorily covers statutory requirements but will need to be reviewed and adapted to manage the revised timetabling arrangements to the best advantage. Procedures for assessment are apt and manageable. A good feature is the individual listening

diary which acts as a self-assessment procedure and positive reinforcement of routine classwork. Assessment will also be important in ensuring that present standards are sustained and improved when monitoring and evaluating the new timetable organisation.

145. Classroom resources are barely adequate in range and sufficiency and much equipment is now well worn, some in need of urgent replacement. Accommodation, though spacious, is really not fit for purpose and is in a somewhat depressing state structurally and poor in decorative order despite the effort to brighten it up with display materials.
146. As at the last inspection, regular singing does not feature in class lessons. The use of music technology in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is a significant strength in composition work and its expansion into Key Stage 3 as a whole would help raise standards and interest among the younger students. There is good provision of instrument lessons on a range of instruments involving some 12 per cent of students, who make good progress. There was no evidence of students using their instrument playing skills in class or group work during the inspection, except in examination classes. A most successful programme of extra-curricular activities involves some 13 per cent of students in orchestras, bands and choirs, which both motivates and improves attainment.
147. The department functions satisfactorily both in its curriculum work and in the extra-curricular programme. There is a purposeful character to its activities promoted by a staff committed to promoting involvement in and enjoyment of the subject which continues to make a major contribution to the life of the school and the community.

Physical education

148. In 1997 the department began offering its Key Stage 4 students the opportunity to take a GCSE examination in physical education which was taken up by a large and enthusiastic group of students. In 1999, fifty one percent of those who were entered gained A* to C grades in the examination which is above the national average. The levels of attainment of students at the end of Key Stage 3 continues to be in line with national expectations. Students are able to demonstrate their skills and understanding in a variety of contexts and groupings. In games activities, they are confident performers and display a range of skills which are executed with accuracy and understanding. Most arrive at the school with only a very limited experience of dance but quickly become involved in the activity, so that by the end of the key stage they are able to take responsibility for choreographing and developing a story line which are then performed with fluency and control. In gymnastics, students demonstrate a satisfactory level of skill and are beginning to construct good quality sequences. The overall standard of swimming is good with very few non swimmers by the end of the key stage. Most students are able to swim 25 metres using a variety of recognised strokes.
149. The level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is better than national expectations with many students displaying a good standard of skill and understanding in a variety of activities. The large groups of students who have opted for the GCSE examination are improving both their theoretical and practical knowledge in a wide range of activities. Students with special educational needs are well integrated, are given much support and encouragement by both the teaching staff and fellow pupils, and reach a very satisfactory level of attainment. Teaching is sensitive and supportive and there are no instances of students with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the provision that is offered.
150. The school has a justifiably good reputation for the performances of its many school teams and gains much success in local competitions. Many students have represented Haringey in a range of sports, and some have gone on to gain Middlesex honours.

151. Across all year groups, students generally make steady progress and are consolidating their skills, knowledge and understanding in most of the lessons. This is particularly the case when teachers allow sufficient time for students to practise and refine their work. There is often clear evidence of students building directly on practice activities from a previous lesson, and, in general, the best progress is seen when teachers require students to evaluate their work. Students have a positive attitude towards physical education both in their lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They are well motivated and make progress by devising, practicing and repeating sequences of movement and skills and performing them with increasing competence. Students are able to follow instructions, maintain practical activities and apply the techniques that are being taught. They display great enthusiasm for the subject and derive much pleasure from taking part.
152. The quality of teaching is at least good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they provide clear demonstration and explanations. In lessons, aims are made clear, content is appropriate and the relevant resources are well organised. There is a constant demand for hard work and quality performances which in most case is achieved. Practical work is purposeful and vigorous. Teachers show a care and concern for their students, whilst encouraging the best in fair play, co-operation and competitive experiences.
153. The physical education curriculum is broad and balanced and covers the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Key Stage 4 students are now able to opt for a GCSE course in the subject, and this option has been taken up by enthusiastic groups of students. The department's development plan has recently been reviewed and identifies a range of priorities and indicates appropriate progressions within the curriculum provision. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements have been reviewed and are in line with statutory requirements. The department now needs to extend the target setting, which it has recently introduced for its examination students, to all other students. Many teachers, including non-specialists, give very freely of their time to provide a range of extra-curricular activities, which are taken up by enthusiastic students. Students have the opportunity to take part in visits to the authorities outdoor pursuits centre in South Wales and to visit national sporting events.
154. The onsite accommodation for the subject is supplemented by the use of the nearby Park Road swimming pool and the New River athletic track. Since the last inspection, one of the large playing areas has been resurfaced and there is now a need for the other one to receive attention. The time allocation for the subject is satisfactory and enables the requirements of the national curriculum to be met. The capitation allowance for the department is not generous but the money is being wisely spent and the equipment being well looked after. There is a supply of subject related books in the school library which are well used, but there is a need to supplement these with books of a more technical nature so that students in the GCSE groups can use them for reference purposes.
155. The department is well managed and benefits from strong leadership. Schemes of work, which meet national requirements, are in place and ensure that all pupils benefit from a wide range of physical education experiences. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other and show a very strong commitment to the students.

210. **Religious education**

156. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the expectation of the local Agreed Syllabus as students are not provided with the opportunity to prepare for at least a short course GCSE in religious studies. In relation to the school's own curriculum, which occupies only half of Year 11, attainment is average overall. Current work on Judaism and on social issues shows that the majority of students have sound knowledge and understanding of some key facts, such as the significance of the Passover and of religious views on justice. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with Agreed Syllabus expectations. For example, most students have satisfactory understanding of the Christian celebration of baptism, though students whose

reading and writing skills are not well developed struggle to express themselves clearly in writing. Religious education has not been sufficiently provided for students in the sixth form, as is statutorily required.

157. Progress over time at Key Stage 4 in relation to the Agreed Syllabus is unsatisfactory, as too little time is allocated to the subject, though progress in the school's own course is satisfactory. Progress in lessons varied from unsatisfactory to good, and was mainly satisfactory or better. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall, and was mainly good in the lessons seen. As at Key Stage 4, a clear scheme of work which supports lesson planning, attractive textbooks, and a very good range of religious artefacts, together with teaching which is good overall, enables the majority of students to progress. Because of the demands which the course places on students' reading and writing skills, higher attaining students make better progress than the least able: suitable modified work is not always planned for these students. Despite this, students with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Students in the sixth form do not progress beyond what they had learnt by Year 11.
158. The attitudes of the great majority of students to the study of religious education are good, and show a clear improvement on the position reported at the previous inspection. This improvement is the result of mainly good teaching which maintains a good working ethos in most lessons. Most students work hard, though even in productive lessons, which are the great majority, some students lose concentration and begin to waste time, particularly towards the end of lessons. Almost all students behave well, though occasionally a few boys disrupt teaching and learning by thoughtless and, sometimes, provocative comments. Students make good use of resources: textbooks, artefacts and videos.
159. The teaching seen varied from unsatisfactory to very good, and was mainly good or better. The main strengths are clear explanations which are based on thorough subject knowledge, enthusiasm for teaching religious education, excellent use of artefacts, mainly sound lesson planning, good relationships, and an expectation that students will make progress during lessons. Students' work is thoroughly marked in most cases so that they are given effective guidance on how to improve. Weaker aspects of teaching are: occasional loss of time through allowing the pace of learning to drop towards the end of lessons; students' work in some classes not corrected thoroughly enough or on time; and, less frequently, ineffective management of the behaviour of a small number of disruptive students.
160. Religious education is making a valuable contribution to students' personal development, particularly the spiritual and cultural. Teaching sets an example of respectful attitudes to religion and religious believers. Students have the opportunity to think about issues, such as death and suffering, on which religion can provide answers. They learn about the central place which religion plays in cultures represented in this country, including their own and that of fellow students.
161. The head of department, appointed since the previous inspection, has been effective in bringing about improvements in religious education, especially in students' attitudes to the study of the subject. This has been due to a commitment to raising standards, sound planning, regular assessments, a very good and well used range of religious artefacts, and much good teaching. However, the school is still not meeting the statutory requirements at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Other improvements that are needed to raise standards further relate to the weaknesses in teaching.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

162. A team of 14 inspectors who saw a total of 209 lessons, representing almost 160 hours of observation inspected the school. Seventy-eight parents attended a pre-inspection meeting held a week before the inspection, and 124 parents returned a questionnaire, showing their views on aspects of the life of the school. About twenty parents wrote comments or letters in addition to their questionnaire returns. Inspectors read a large amount of material which the school had prepared, before and during the inspection. The registered inspector made three visits to the school prior to the inspection to meet staff and governors.
163. During the inspection, inspectors spoke to representatives of the governors, teaching and non-teaching staff and students. Over 40 scheduled interviews took place, in addition to informal discussions with staff and students. A formal discussion took place with about 25 students, who had kindly made all their work available for the inspectors' scrutiny.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of students on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of students with statements of SEN	Number of students on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1229	35	199	393

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	76.1
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.12

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	79.5

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	73.2
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Average teaching group size:	
KS3	23
KS4	23

Financial data

Financial year:	1999
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	£
Total Income	3,097,633
Total Expenditure	3,199,498
Expenditure per pupil	2664.03
Balance brought forward from previous year	107,187
Balance carried forward to next year	-124,173

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

1229

Number of questionnaires returned:

124

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	23	54	11	8	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	33	53	8	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	42	24	7	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	10	44	19	20	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	26	44	14	9	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	17	41	18	15	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	55	10	2	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	11	49	11	19	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	19	56	16	1	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	10	43	29	9	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	35	53	6	5	1

1.

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year