

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SOUTHGATE SCHOOL**

Cockfosters, Herts.

LEA area: Enfield

Unique reference number: 102047

Headteacher: Mr. Peter Hudson

Reporting inspector: Brian Oppenheim  
2686

Dates of inspection: 15-19 May 2000

Inspection number: 187594

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sussex Way Cockfosters Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Enfield
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Peter Leedham
Date of previous inspection:	29 January 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brian Oppenheim	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well is the school led and managed?
Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development (S)
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? (S)
Thomas Shephard	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed? (S)
Shirley Daniel	Team inspector	Science	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Penny Holden	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	
		Special educational needs unit	
Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology	
Margaret Howell	Team inspector	History	
Rosemary Little	Team inspector	Geography	
		Equal opportunities	
Geoffrey Strack	Team inspector	Information technology	
Charles Whitham	Team inspector	Foreign modern languages	
Janet Dyson	Team inspector	Music	
Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			How well does the school care for its pupils? (S)
Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	Religious education	
		Sixth form	
		Business education	
Gillian Greany	Team inspector	Art	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7-11</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12-14</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14-16</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18-20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20-21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21-24</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26-30</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>31-51</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Southgate School is a large secondary school for 1617 girls and boys aged between 11 and 18. The school is in a pleasant residential area of north-western Enfield and very close to the London Borough of Barnet from where it draws increasing numbers of pupils. It also draws pupils from the large local council housing estate. There are 374 students in the sixth form which is large for schools in England. Nearly 10 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is about half the national rate. Nearly 30 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language but they are nearly all fluent in English and the school does not receive extra money to support their language learning. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds although the great majority are from England and Europe. The school has a unit for pupils with learning difficulties and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is average. The proportion of pupils with special learning needs is lower than average but this still means that over 300 pupils need extra help with their learning. When pupils start at the school their attainment is slightly above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Southgate School is a good and very effective school. The high quality of the headteacher's leadership, and the way all staff work as a team to teach pupils, help to create a civilised school where there is a commitment to high achievement. The high standards achieved by pupils are the result of the very good teaching, the high quality of learning and the effective involvement of parents. The average amount of money spent on pupils, coupled with the high standards means that the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school is very well led and managed: there is a team effort in which all staff promote the high standards achieved by pupils.
- Teaching is consistently very good and ensures that learning is at the heart of the school.
- Pupils achieve high standards in the public examinations and in their school work.
- Relationships are very good between pupils and teachers: pupils are treated with respect and they respond positively by taking their learning seriously.
- Pupils are managed and cared for very well: the way in which all pupils are valued as individuals and encouraged to do their best makes the school a highly civilised place to work.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in information and communication technology are still too low: improvements since the last inspection have had limited impact on standards.
- The school has gone a long way to improve the way it checks its work and the progress pupils make but it does not always use the information sharply enough to identify the impact on standards.
- A few of the very highest attaining pupils do not reach their full potential because they are not set challenging enough work or are given too much unnecessary support.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has been successful in raising standards and improving its effectiveness since the last inspection in February 1996. GCSE results for the higher A\* - C grades have risen from 52 per cent in 1996 to 61 per cent in 1999 and are set to rise further this year. A level results have

fluctuated since 1996: results are now average and the number of students entered for examinations has increased. The school has successfully taken on nearly all the areas identified for action in the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are now more rigorous and the school is in a much better position to know what it is doing well and what it could do better. As a result teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Planning is sharper with just four main priorities and it sets out clearly responsibilities, dates for completing tasks and the resources available. In information technology, improvements have been made to the way subjects use computers, and National Curriculum requirements are now met, but standards are still not high enough and there are still too few computers. The legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form are still to be met in full. The very effective way the school is led and managed, the commitment of all staff to raising standards and the good teamwork mean that the school has both the will and ability to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

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

Southgate School's test and examination results are high. In 1999 pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were above average. Mathematics results were best because more pupils reached the higher levels than in other schools. In English results were average because fewer pupils reached the higher levels. In science: more pupils than in other schools gained the levels typical for 14 year olds. When these results are compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils on free school meals, performance is average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.

Pupils achieve well in GCSE examinations at the age of 16 and in 1999 results were above average when compared with all schools in England and with similar schools. Taking the last three years' results together pupils have achieved well above the average: results are clearly getting better but the rate of this improvement is not quite as fast as the national picture. This is why results in 1999 were above average but in 1997 were well above average. Nevertheless, the school has set quite demanding targets for improving its results over the next few years and is on track to meet or exceed these this year. Standards are particularly strong in English, drama and history and there are strengths in mathematics, science, design and technology, German, geography and music. In religious education standards are better than expected. Only in French and information technology were results below average for top A\* - C grades.

Students' attainment in GCE Advanced level and AS level courses is broadly average with results rising in 1999. Fewer students gain the top grades A and B than is the case nationally but results are particularly high in history, business studies, drama and music, as part of the performing arts course, and are above average in English. Results in the GNVQ courses were also average.

The work seen in lessons confirms the positive picture given by the examination results. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds, girls and boys, achieve well. These high achievements are mainly because the very good relationships create a very positive climate for learning. Teachers' commitment to pupils, whom they treat with respect and as individuals, helps to ensure that work is demanding and interesting. As a result pupils make good progress with their learning.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes which are developed as a result of high expectations, consistent praise and hard work and support from all staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The standard of behaviour in and out of lessons is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good between pupils and teachers. Mutual respect is evident in many lessons and activities and pupils are very tolerant of each other's strengths and weaknesses.
Attendance	The levels of attendance at the school are good: there has been a marked improvement so far this year.

Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are all strengths of the school. A great deal of this is because teachers treat pupils with respect who in turn respond positively by valuing their teachers and what they have to teach.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 11-14 years</b>	<b>aged 14-16 years</b>	<b>aged over 16 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching at Southgate is consistently very good and ensures that learning is at the heart of the school. Ninety-nine per cent of lessons were at least satisfactory. A very high number of lessons, over three quarters, were good, very good and excellent. The quality of teaching in nearly all subjects is good and it is very good in English, mathematics and science across the school. As a result the school meets the needs of all pupils very well. Teachers are particularly good at asking questions and leading high quality discussions: as a result pupils become infected by their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. Thorough planning ensures high expectations: pupils are always stretched and challenged. Teachers are knowledgeable of, and often passionate about, their subjects. These factors have a strong impact on pupils' learning: they make good progress, apply themselves well to their work and, as a result, achieve high standards. In a few cases some of the most able are not pushed quite as much as they could be. They achieve well but sometimes are given too much help which limits their response to the challenge.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that promotes high achievement and enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. It is managed well, staff give good support to pupils who achieve well as a result.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides satisfactory provision for spiritual development, good provision for cultural development, and very good provision for social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for very well: pupils' learning is at the heart of the work of tutors and heads of year and the very good relationships means that pupils receive effective advice and support.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive in their views about the school and this is supported by evidence from the inspection. The school provides very good information for parents and links with parents are established early: for example, parents are invited to an evening before their children start in Year 7 about 'making a success of school'.

The requirement to teach religious education in the sixth form, and design and technology in Years 10 and 11, are not being met at present. The standards achieved by those pupils who do study design and technology and religious education are, however, high.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The example set by the headteacher, and reinforced by senior managers, establishes much of the tone of the school: the positive relationships, the way in which everyone is valued and the commitment to fulfilling each person's potential are very strong features of the way the school is led effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a good understanding of the school and its strengths and weaknesses. Governors work closely with teachers and senior managers reflecting the good teamwork that makes the way the school is led and managed so effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has moved a long way to make the link between checking performance and improving standards clear: but occasionally this is not as sharp as it could be.
The strategic use of resources	The school has clear plans for spending its money and these are linked closely to its plans for development and improvement.

There are enough teachers, with the right qualifications and expertise, to meet both the academic and pastoral needs of pupils. There are also enough support staff who provide good quality backing for teachers. The team of efficient administrative staff ensures the smooth operation of day-to-day routines and the site managers and cleaners effectively ensure the safety, cleanliness and maintenance of the buildings and outside spaces. The buildings are very good and provide appropriate learning environment for most subjects and are used effectively. The school has good resources to support the learning. In some areas the resources are particularly good such as in the design and technology department and this helps to promote high standards. The school, with the governing body, are developing new approaches to meet the need to apply the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commitment and leadership of the headteacher</li> <li>• The respect shown by staff to pupils</li> <li>• The way all pupils are included in the life of the school</li> <li>• The way the school makes the most of pupils' potential</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed</li> <li>• Achievement day</li> <li>• Teachers' high expectations</li> <li>• Communication with the school</li> <li>• The weekly newsletter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number and range of after-school activities offered by the school</li> <li>• The amount of homework</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• The way the school deals with bullying</li> </ul>

In the views expressed in the questionnaire, the great majority of parents agreed that the school is well led and managed, that pupils are expected to work hard and that they feel very comfortable in approaching the school with a concern. In all the areas covered by the questionnaire there was a high level of support.

Of the 218 questionnaires received by the inspection team, some 36 parents wrote with their comments about the school. The great majority of these were positive, particularly about the excellent headteacher, the commitment of teachers, the respect shown by staff to pupils and the way the most is made of their potential. For each weakness raised by parents in these letters there were parents who identified the same areas as strengths: for example, where one parent had said that bullying of their child was not dealt with effectively, others commented that although their children had been bullied the problem had been very quickly resolved. The inspection team support the overwhelmingly positive nature of parents' comments and confirms that bullying is dealt with well, there is a good range of after-school clubs and activities, and homework extends pupils' learning in most lessons. Nevertheless, fine-tuning the way the school monitors its work would help to ensure that homework is consistent from subject to subject. Teachers are very effective at managing pupils and expect them to behave well: indeed, this is one of the reasons why teaching, and hence learning, is judged to be very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Southgate School's test and examination results are high. In 1999 pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were above average when compared with all schools in England. Mathematics results were best and well above average because more pupils reached the higher levels than in other schools. In English results were average. Here, the school did very well in getting about a third more pupils than in other schools to the levels typical for 14 year olds but fewer pupils reached the higher levels. This is why performance is average overall. Results were above average in science: more pupils than in other schools gained the levels typical for 14 year olds and an average number gained the higher marks. During the past three years results have improved and at about the same rate as other schools.

2. When these results are compared with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils on free school meals, performance is average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Again, the reason that the results are best in mathematics is the high proportion of pupils who reached level 6. In English and science only a small number of pupils gained these higher levels.

3. Pupils achieve well in GCSE examinations at the age of 16 and in 1999 results were above average when compared with all and with similar schools. Taking the last three years' results together pupils have achieved well above the average: results are clearly getting better but the rate of this improvement is not quite as fast as the national picture. This is why results in 1999 were above average but in 1997 were well above average. The school has set quite demanding targets for improvement for the next few years and, for example, expects 64 per cent of pupils to reach A\*-C grades. In fact, teachers predict that this is likely to rise to 68 per cent and is confirmed by the work seen in lessons during the inspection. The results in 1999 were particularly strong in English, drama and history but with strengths in mathematics, science, design and technology, German, geography and music. In religious education standards are above those expected and pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of religious ideas. Only in French and information technology were results below average for the top A\* - C grades. Boys' performance is lower than girls' but the difference is very similar to the national picture. The school's efforts to improve boys' results have been successful, particularly in English where this has not been at the expense of girls whose results have also risen.

4. Students' attainment in GCE Advanced level and AS level courses is broadly average with results rising in 1999. The school encourages students to remain in the sixth form reflecting its commitment to equality of access to education. This means that some students begin the sixth form with slightly lower GCSE grades than the school would like. As a result a smaller proportion of students gain the top grades A and B than is the case nationally: that is why results are average overall. However, results are particularly high in history, business studies, drama media studies and music, as part of the performing arts course, and are above average in English. Again, the evidence from lessons and students' work confirms these standards: high expectations and teachers' good understanding of their subjects ensure that work is mostly demanding. However, in a few subjects pupils who have a flair for the work are not being challenged as much as they could: as a result these high attainers are not reaching their full potential. Results in the GNVQ courses were also average: the proportion reaching the Intermediate level was similar to the national figure as were the results of the Advanced courses.

5. The work seen in lessons confirms the positive picture given by the test and examination results. Pupils of all ability and ethnic background, and girls and boys, achieve well although the school has identified that Turkish-speaking boys are less likely to reach the highest grades at GCSE. The high achievements of the great majority of pupils are mainly because the especially

good relationships create a very positive climate for learning. Teachers' commitment to pupils, whom they treat with respect and as individuals, helps to ensure that work is demanding and interesting. As a result pupils make good progress with their learning across all subjects except in information technology. Indeed, comparing the results of pupils who took the GCSE examination in 1999 with their 1996 test results shows that they made good progress between the ages of 14 and 16 years old. Lower and average attainers make good progress with their learning: for example in English where pupils develop a good range of relevant language skills. Most higher attaining pupils also do well: in history, for example, work is carefully structured and this helps to ensure that all pupils learn and make progress. Here, the teachers' skills promote high levels of attainment and understanding for all pupils. Another example is music, where learning is fun and, as a result pupils make good progress and achieve their potential. Similarly in religious education pupils build upon their knowledge and skills and tackle effectively all that is demanded of them. Achievement in personal and social responsibility lessons is also high and pupils develop good skills in discussing controversial topics and ideas. For a few of the highest attaining pupils, however, progress is not quite as good as it should be. This is the case in mathematics, where fewer pupils achieve the A\* grades at GCSE, and grades A and B at A level. Similarly in science, a few high achievers are capable of attaining the very highest grades that better reflect their potential.

6. Literacy is one of the school's targets for development, with reading a priority. All subjects make a feature of key words, which are displayed in classrooms, and encourage accurate spelling and presentation. Literacy is still being developed but the commitment of teachers means that pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory and rising. Pupils' number skills are generally good and some find it fun. They are confident in using these skills in a range of subjects to measure length, weight and volume; use scales; calculate forces and draw three-dimensional objects.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their work. Support teachers and assistants support them in lessons and in well-focused support groups and this contributes effectively to their progress. The adults supporting pupils in class know their needs well and ensure these pupils are given work at a variety of levels to stretch all abilities.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Relationships are very good between pupils and with their teachers. Planned good management of pupils in lessons ensures pupils work in mixed gender and ethnicity groups to promote good behaviour. Mutual respect is evident in many lessons and activities and pupils are very tolerant of each other's strengths and weaknesses. They work well together in groups, for example in science when pupils are carrying out investigations. Other examples include games, music, drama and art where they share tasks and support each other well. In religious education and personal and social responsibility lessons pupils demonstrate respect for each other's beliefs, values and feelings. Many watch out for the safety and comfort of their classmates reminding them to wear goggles and eager to help those with special needs. These positive attitudes are developed as a result of high expectations, consistent praise and hard work and support from all staff.

9. The school code is another reason why pupils' attitudes to the school are very positive. The code is at the heart of the school's discipline structure and is displayed prominently. It was drawn up with the help of the school council and sets out clearly the ethos of the school, and the responsibilities of pupils, teachers, parents, the year councils and school council.

10. Consistency in the way this code of conduct is put into practice is another of the main reasons why the ethos and life of Southgate are so positive. Pupils and students respond very well to the high expectations of behaviour and work established by the school. They enjoy coming to school and participate well in all activities with enthusiasm. They are highly motivated in many subjects; for example, in physical education and science they participate eagerly in

lessons and in after-school activities. Particularly impressive is the attitude of Year 11 pupils, who were still keen to come to lessons just days before their GCSE examinations in the confidence that the work their teachers were providing would be worthwhile. The high level of attendance and the response of parents and pupils fully reflect the value they place on their education. The number of pupils taking advantage of opportunities for drama, music, sports, and after-school support, in many subjects and in the sixth form, is very high.

11. The school code contributes significantly to the very good standard of behaviour in and out of lessons. Consistent use of praise and rewards develop self-esteem and was seen in the challenge to stereotypes when discussing opportunities for higher education. Pupils and students are helpful and courteous and movement between lessons is orderly and quick with the majority being punctual. Pupils handle equipment with care and appreciate the facilities, for example in design and technology, media studies, drama art and science. The number of exclusions remains low. Aggressive and unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with promptly. Pupils understand the bullying policy and agree that any instances are dealt with effectively. They work in a safe and happy environment.

12. Pupils express their views openly and confidently. A good example is in the personal and social responsibility course where, for example, pupils discuss the pros and cons of abortion in a mature and sensible way. The support they get from their teachers helps to maintain their interest and enthusiasm. Pupils apply themselves well when given opportunities to take responsibility and to show initiative; for example in the work of the year and school council and in producing good course work. All GNVQ students develop good independent learning skills because the way courses are structured. In media studies, for example, students are given considerable autonomy to work at their own pace. Through a scheme called "Study-buddy" many sixth formers give valuable support to younger pupils in the reading and spelling clubs. They learn to work with younger pupils and through this develop initiative, responsibility and parenting skills. Presentations in Year 7 art lessons are particularly good examples.

13. The previous inspection reported good standards of behaviour. The school has made significant improvements since then through implementation of the excellent code of conduct which has firmly established a positive culture of learning.

14. The levels of attendance at the school are good. Last year the figure for attendance was broadly in line with the national average but there has been a marked improvement so far this year. At the time of the inspection the figures for Year 7, 8 and 9 were over 95 per cent and in all years figures are currently over 90 per cent. The figures for unauthorised absence are below the national average reflecting the great amount of work undertaken in this area. Few pupils are late and their punctual arrival at lessons, noted as an area of concern in the previous report, is no longer an issue.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

15. Teaching at Southgate is consistently very good: right across the school, in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form, teaching is very effective and ensures that learning is at the heart of the school. Ninety-nine per cent of lessons were at least satisfactory. A very high number of lessons, over three quarters, was good, very good and excellent. High quality discussions between teachers and pupils within lessons are a significant feature of good teaching. These discussions ensure full participation by pupils and develop their strong interest in their learning. Teachers' particularly good questioning and dynamism drive these discussions. Pupils become infected by their teachers' enthusiasm. In a Year 12 drama lesson for example, following a visit to the play "Mother Courage" by the playwright Brecht, the enthusiasm of pupils and of teacher pushed the debate about the play on and everyone listened to each other intently. The excellent questioning of the teacher helped the pupils organise their thoughts and extended their understanding. Many teachers have these effective questioning skills and use them well in lessons. Pupils are very well informed about what they are to do: they quickly become involved

and because of this know exactly what is expected; and how much time they have got. For example, in a geography lesson looking at the possible uses of derelict land, pupils were given time targets for paired work, which ensured they worked at a very productive rate.

16. Teachers' thorough planning ensures they structure lessons well which allows them to engage and stretch pupils consistently and also is why they can brief their class so meticulously. This is frequently true in science lessons such as a Year 10 lesson about the electrolysis of copper chloride where the plan clearly detailed how the lesson would proceed. Teachers identify a range of different activities within lessons, which build up well, one from another, to keep the momentum of learning and the interest of pupils going. This also ensures time is very well used so that all the lesson is used for learning and pupils make good progress. Linked to this good use of time is the efficient and effective way teachers manage pupils. Strategies such as seating plans, where pupils sit in a regular place organised by the teacher, rather than with a friend, have improved the involvement and behaviour of pupils in lessons. It also means that pupils readily work in pairs or small groups with any pupils in class focusing on the task the teacher has given them. They concentrate well on what they are set and produce good amounts of work.

17. Teachers are knowledgeable of, and often passionate about, their subjects. They understand how to present and discuss subject material in a way that helps pupils really understand. This is one of the major reasons why pupils learn so well. In a Year 9 science lesson looking at adaptations for survival, the teacher had selected a recently broadcast programme on video to use with the pupils. The content was extremely challenging but the teacher had prepared an excellent linked work sheet and the pupils were spellbound by the science.

18. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers treat pupils with respect. Pupils respond positively by valuing their teachers and what they have to teach. In a Year 7 art lesson tackling the difficult topic of abstract art, the positive way pupils related to the teacher ensured that they listened closely so that they understood about how to use words to describe moods and emotions in their own paintings. Teachers expect a great deal of their pupils, both in work and in behaviour, and ensure they apply effort to their studies. Pupils in turn expect to work hard and to contribute fully in lessons. This is true of pupils of all abilities and learning needs, indeed pupils with particular needs such as those who are visually impaired, are expected to do as much work as everyone else. The school works hard to ensure materials are prepared to support such learning, for example, work converted into Braille.

19. These good relationships, alongside effective checking of what pupils can and cannot do during lessons also help teachers build up a very good knowledge of their pupils. They use this knowledge during lessons to help pupils understand what is taught either through asking specially chosen questions or by offering additional explanations. Often teachers plan tasks to support pupils with their work, for example in history, pupils are given prepared sheets which give them structured help with their writing. When this is done skilfully as in a Year 8 history lesson evaluating different sources of history, all pupils in the class are given activities that stretch them. On a few occasions prepared work sheets are given to all, which helps those in the class who find the work difficult, but has the opposite effect on the brightest pupils who do not need the structure. This limits their opportunities to find their own way of answering questions and solving problems.

20. Teachers care for pupils in thoughtful and practical ways, for example, a teacher rushed away from her office to see that a pupil with a physical disability was able to move safely from one lesson to another as it was a particularly complicated room change over.

21. The unsatisfactory lessons are few in number and are linked to a lack of subject expertise or inexperience in managing pupils. There were also weaknesses in a few otherwise satisfactory lessons where a few of the very highest attaining pupils do not reach their full potential. In mathematics, for example, those who have a flair for the subject do not always get

demanding enough additional work and in history, where the very good teaching leads to high standards, a few pupils are given extra support for their work which they do not need. In some subjects, such as design and technology and art, pupils have quite good opportunities to use computers but in others, for example, mathematics, there has not been much improvement since the last inspection.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

22. Since the last inspection the school has spent a great deal of time and energy on reviewing the management of the curriculum. All the points relating to curriculum raised in the report have been addressed with the exception of the lack of provision for religious education in the sixth form and design and technology for all of Year 10 and 11 pupils. The standards achieved by those pupils who study these subjects are, however, high. Apart from this the curriculum offer is broad and balanced in all key stages.

23. Meetings of the senior management team, reports from departmental meetings and the views of the governors' curriculum sub-committee inform discussions about whole-school curriculum planning. The two-week timetable works satisfactorily and the 25 hours of teaching each week matches national recommendations.

24. The curriculum promotes a good level of attainment and enables pupils to make good progress. It provides a broad range of opportunity at all key stages. It is well balanced, includes all subjects for the national curriculum and is enhanced in Years 10 and 11: nearly all pupils study a modern foreign language and also have the opportunity to choose drama, sociology and business and economics. Most pupils take a balanced range of subjects with much care being taken to guide their choices.

25. The provision for personal and social education is good. The personal and social responsibility course covers a wide range of topics, including information technology, health-related fitness and drugs education, in an unbiased and helpful way. The activities are well matched to the age and understanding of the pupils so that they get a lot out of the course and make good progress with their learning. In the Year 10 and 11 information technology course, however, pupils can only be awarded a mark equivalent to a grade G at GCSE. The governors' agreed sex education policy is taught as part of this course. Part of the reason for the success of the course is that teaching is highly effective.

26. As part of the personal and social responsibility course there is a well planned programme of careers education which includes events at significant points to assist pupils' subject and career choices. The programme includes visits from the career service staff. A well-planned work experience course for Year 10 pupils takes place towards the end of the summer term.

27. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Activities include competitive and non-competitive games and involve a large number of staff. Regular trips abroad and the extra-curricular classes that are held in many subjects extend pupils' learning opportunities effectively. Many pupils benefit from the wide range of musical and dramatic opportunities and also take part in well-organised fieldwork trips.

28. The sixth form provides good opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning: media studies is a good example. The curriculum provision is extensive. There is a wide range of A level and GNVQ courses which are complemented by a general studies course. Students are very involved in the life of the school with many of them assisting in the education of younger pupils and also being involved in a range of extra-curricular activities.

29. The school has expended much effort in the last twelve months preparing for the forthcoming curriculum 2000 and is in the highly satisfactory position of being both informed and ready for its introduction.
30. The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are taught very well by learning support staff and pupils with learning needs are given good opportunities to practise and refine these skills. Pupils are sometimes taken out of class for small-group teaching. This is often to teach more appropriate skills than are to be covered in the lesson or to teach skills such as study skills in a particular subject before examinations. For example, Year 9 pupils in a study support lesson had an excellent opportunity to revise for their history examination whilst learning good revision skills.
31. The school provides satisfactory provision for spiritual development, good provision for cultural development, and very good provision for social and moral development.
32. Spiritual development is well provided for in many curriculum areas but it is absent in several others, such as business studies and physical education. Some opportunities are missed in history but visits to First World War battlefields are effective in promoting an awareness of the horrors of war. Opportunities are provided in English, where texts that deal with religious concepts such as vocation and the significance of names are studied, poems that consider death are explored and plays (such as *Macbeth*) that examine the supernatural and the nature of evil are given due attention. In science, there are opportunities to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world. In the performing arts, questions of personal identity are explored in depth through the media of music and drama. This was demonstrated, for example, through a moving performance about the breaking down of the Berlin Wall. In religious education, not only is a range of beliefs considered, but also their application to problems such as poverty and pain is examined. Spiritual issues feature in some assemblies, for example, a Year 8 assembly about the journey through life used religious ideas about faith to give a powerful spiritual emphasis to the talk. This does not happen in all assemblies and they do not, as a rule, contain an act of collective worship, nor are they provided daily for all pupils, but as in the Year 8 example they often make reference to religious ideas.
33. Moral development is encouraged in many subjects. In physical education, playing to the rules is encouraged, as is tolerance of the weaknesses and strengths of others. Respect for the work and performance of others is also encouraged in music. Moral issues are discussed and explored in history, English and drama. The ethics of profit making is considered in business studies. In science lessons, due consideration is given to moral and ecological dilemmas that result from scientific and technological developments, such as in farming or industry. Similarly in geography, the impact of tourism is analysed. Moral issues feature in some of the assemblies held for year groups, for example, a Year 7 assembly introduced the work of Amnesty International and in Year 13 ethics and decisions were explored appropriately.
34. The teamwork that is a feature of many subjects, such as English, drama, music, science and physical education contributes to the social development of pupils, as do a range of school visits. Social issues are treated in English and drama; in business studies, issues such as equal opportunities in the workplace are discussed. In history, the social contexts of historical events are explored, such as the role of women in Nazi Germany. The social context of media forms is examined in media studies.
35. Although there is little provision for cultural development in some areas, such as physical education and business studies, the cultural heritage of this country features strongly in English, art, music and drama. Art and architecture feature in history where portraits of past monarchs are studied: a visit to the National Portrait Gallery has recently taken place. Visits to plays and concerts are common. The effects of science and technology on everyday life are faced in science lessons. Pupils are introduced to a very wide range of music from different periods and cultures; for example pupils in Years 7 to 9 study Reggae, Gershwin, Klezmer and music by Purcell and Britten. Aspects of other belief systems and cultures are considered in music and

religious education, and poems from other traditions are studied in English. The school encourages local community groups to become involved in the education of their children: for example, it is working with the Turkish community group to support pupils' work at home.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

36. The responsibility to look after pupils' welfare is central to the work of the school and its close link to teaching and learning means that it has a very positive effect on the standards achieved. At year team meetings the welfare of pupils is discussed alongside their academic progress: all those involved in the pastoral work of the school are fully aware of pupils' achievements in subjects. Pupils' learning is at the heart of the work of tutors and heads of year and all staff know individual pupils well and respect and listen to their views. The headteacher and all staff provide very good role models. Because of the very good relationships, the advice and support offered to pupils is appreciated and is effective.

37. All procedures in this area are well established and applied consistently. As a result the school functions very smoothly and because of these well-organised routines, time and effort is freed to enable the concerns of individual pupils to be addressed thoughtfully and fully. For example, the school takes time to work on a variety of strategies with those pupils at risk of exclusion and as a result the permanent exclusion figures are very low. Similarly, the Star and Shoestring schemes for pupils in Years 10 and 11, where part time college or work places are found for pupils who refuse to come to school, encourage these pupils to improve their attendance, gain some qualifications and reduce the number of unauthorised absences.

38. Attendance is promoted and monitored very well. Pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern are reviewed regularly and appropriate action taken; for example, the school operates a system of same day call for these pupils and in many cases this has increased their attendance. Links with the educational welfare officer are effective. Few pupils are late; those that are, are challenged appropriately.

39. The code of conduct is well known by all pupils and parents. Since the last inspection, in which behaviour was judged to be generally good, a behaviour working party has collated the various policies, increasing behaviour management strategies and the rewards available. These are implemented consistently and as a result behaviour is very good despite the fact that the staff are working with a number of pupils whose behaviour can be very challenging. Such pupils are dealt with firmly, quietly and with understanding. The supportive role undertaken by parents assists the school well in this. The school now operates a senior management call out system that operates smoothly and was seen to be effective. Behaviour management strategies, such as the adherence of all teachers to classroom seating plans, are also effective and there are a variety of 'on report' procedures that by being tailored to individuals are more beneficial in modifying behaviour. Pupils with poor behaviour are monitored closely and reasons for such behaviour sought carefully. The work of the learning support department is crucial in this area. In addition to providing support and advice to both pupils and staff about the handling of behaviour, they provide practical support in the form of homework and spelling clubs and offer a 'safe haven' to those who are more vulnerable within the school community.

40. The school has consulted staff and pupils about behaviour. Pupils reported that they felt the school is a safe and secure place and that although there are incidents of bullying, tutors and senior staff deal with these quickly and such problems are resolved. The school has close links with Childline in Partnership with Schools (CHIPS) and uses its ideas and materials to promote awareness of bullying while also doing much to fundraise for the charity. There were no incidents of either of bullying or racial tension seen during the inspection.

41. The school has a reward system that is appreciated by pupils particularly in the lower years. In Year 7 and 8 the school operates a merit system linked to certificates and in Year 9 there is a tutor group points system. Both schemes end in a presentation evening for these year

groups where academic success, behaviour and effort are rewarded formally. Parents and pupils enjoy this evening.

42. The school has good induction procedures for new pupils and relationships between pupils and tutors are established early and are good. Many tutors are very experienced in this role. Within year groups the tutors support each other well and work as a team. They, together with the head of year, stay with the same group of pupils as they progress through the school and this has a beneficial effect and ensures that despite the size of the school, pupils feel valued and well known by staff. In addition, the school has recently introduced a buddy system between Year 7 and Year 12 pupils, which benefits pupils from both year groups.

43. The procedures for health and safety and child protection are good. A full policy is applied consistently and risk assessments carried out. The school is thoughtful about its responsibilities; for example, a list of pupils' accidents is produced each month and analysed for trends with action taken, where necessary. An experienced member of staff administers first aid and good, comprehensive records are kept. The school is supported well by a school nurse and counsellor for one day each week.

44. The school has responded very positively to the comments in the last report concerning assessment and monitoring and considerable debate has taken place on how this aspect of the school's work can be improved. This has raised the profile of assessment throughout the school and improved practice.

45. The school's assessment working party has assembled a system that demonstrates their good understanding of assessing and recording each pupil's attainment at significant points during the school year. The results of internally administered tests are combined with subject assessments to provide a good basis for monitoring progress and making career decisions, such as subject choices for GCSE and the sixth form. These assessments contribute much of the evidence for the annual report to parents which are generally well written and meets statutory requirements.

46. All departments have assessment policies which reflect whole-school policy. These policies are detailed and in the main implemented consistently. In history well-structured procedures are in place and provide teachers with good information about attainment. In design and technology regular meetings take place where attainment throughout all key stages are discussed. In business studies assessment feedback is extensive, focused and forms an effective basis for future planning. At the time of the last inspection the school did not meet the statutory requirements for information technology in Key Stage 3. Whilst legal guidance is now followed, standards in information technology are still too low because the curriculum is not demanding enough.

47. The school has a clear marking policy which is published and which is generally implemented by staff. Most marking is thorough and the best provides useful written comments which help pupils improve the standard of their work. Heads of department are responsible for monitoring the marking within their departments, and for the moderation of the work. They carry out these duties well, although there is, as there was at the time of the last inspection, some inconsistency of practice across the school.

48. The relatively new Achievement Day is proving a valuable aid to raising pupils' attainment. Much careful and productive work is done in assessment but the various elements of the school's practice are not yet co-ordinated or monitored closely enough to ensure that they are consistent. For example, the information used on Achievement Day, to discuss pupils' progress with parents and set targets for the next year, is not the same for all subjects. As a result pupils' individual targets are not always sharp enough.

49. The care given to pupils with learning needs is good, particularly where there is an adult supporting in class. Pupils' needs are extremely well identified by the learning support department and appropriate plans are made for their support. Some pupils have help from specialist teacher-tutors who write detailed and useful learning support plans. These are shared with form tutors and others who work with these pupils to ensure teachers are clear about the most appropriate way to work. Other pupils needing extra help have individual education plans, which vary more in quality and are not always as frequently used by subject teachers to plan work.

50. Some of the pupils have quite profound and multiple difficulties and the school does its very best to find the best possible support for them. Specialist help is used very well both to give advice to teachers and to give specialist support to pupils. For example, a specialist teacher for the visually impaired works with pupils and helps a support assistant produce a considerable quantity of work in Braille. The school investigates and researches the best way of supporting pupils with sometimes quite rare and unusual syndromes and puts the advice into practice. The school works very effectively with the support teacher for travellers' children and provides innovative and sensitive help. Consequently pupils with a wide variety of needs receive practical help and are extremely appreciative of the care and support they get.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

51. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive in their views about the school. At the meeting they agreed that standards are good, that Achievement Day is very positive. They liked the good charity involvement and felt that teachers have high expectations. They thought that communication between school and parents is very good, that the reports they received on progress are comprehensive and that parents evenings are well run and useful. They particularly praised the headteacher. They appreciate the weekly newsletter and the headteacher's annual report on the school's achievements and felt that in answering complaints or suggestions the school always gives a response and usually this is quick.

52. In the views expressed in the questionnaire, the great majority agree that the school is well led and managed, that pupils are expected to work hard and that they would feel very comfortable in approaching the school with a concern. In all the areas covered by the questionnaire there was a high level of support.

53. The inspection found these views to accurately reflect the positive aspects of the school. In the questionnaire some parents raised concerns about the number and range of activities offered by the school, about the amount of homework and about behaviour but none of these views were found to be valid by the inspection team.

54. In addition to the 218 questionnaires received by the inspection team, some 36 parents wrote with their comments about the school. The great majority of these were positive: areas such as the respect shown by staff to pupils, the way the school includes all pupils and makes the most of their potential, the commitment of teachers and the excellent headteacher were commented upon. One parent wrote, "building relationships is a real strength"; another, "The success of the school is certainly due to the dedication of the staff and in no small way to the enormous efforts of the headteacher." It is a very caring school which values all its pupils". For each weakness raised by parents in these letters there were other parents who identified the same areas as strengths: for example, where one parent had said that bullying of their child was not dealt with effectively, others commented that although their children had been bullied the problem had been very quickly resolved.

55. The school provides very good information for parents. There is an attractive prospectus and a detailed handbook. A home-school student agreement is in place which was produced after consultation with parents, staff and pupils. Parents are kept up-to-date with the curriculum and other school issues with a weekly newsletter which is written in a friendly and readable style

and is enjoyed by both pupils and parents. In addition the headteacher writes a comprehensive report each year for parents on the achievements and activities that have taken place. Communication with parents is very good and of a high quality but the written complaints procedure needs strengthening to ensure that everyone understands it.

56. Parents are involved well in the education of their children, for example, literacy in the Year 7 has been enhanced by the Sizzling Stories programme where parents supported pupils in their reading during the summer holidays. Parents are expected to support homework and sign the planner each week and the high standards achieved by pupils in their homework show that parental support in this area is very effective. They have opportunities to discuss progress at parents' consultation evenings which they stated are well organized and useful to them. Progress reports are full and meet requirements. They are invited to an annual Achievement day when targets for individual pupils are reviewed and set and also to presentation evenings when effort, behaviour and good work are recognised. They are supportive of other events such as plays, and through the Friends of Southgate School (FOSS) participate well in fundraising and social events such as the Bazaar or a popular international evening. Funds raised support many areas of the curriculum and a school minibus.

57. Links with parents are established early: for example, parents are invited to an evening before their children start in Year 7 about 'making a success of school'. Once pupils have started at the school the tutor system is a very effective link and planners are used as a part of this communication. Parents are kept aware of matters or concern such as attendance and behaviour and the great majority are supportive of the school in the way these are handled. Parents concerns are dealt with quickly and efficiently and the headteacher's surgery, which operates one evening each month, is well received.

58. Parents of pupils who have special learning needs have good information about their child's educational targets and their progress in achieving them. A good number of parents are very involved in helping to decide the appropriate management of needs and learning strategies to be tried. Many parents keep up an informal and friendly dialogue with the special needs co-ordinator, ringing with information and checking progress. All parents are encouraged to play a full part in their child's yearly learning reviews. The vast majority of parents whose children receive extra assistance feel extremely well supported by the special needs department.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

59. One of the reasons for the success of Southgate School and its high standards is the way the headteacher leads and manages the school. The inspection team was struck with the number of parents, pupils and staff who felt that one of the strengths of the school was the headteacher. For example, one parent wrote, "I cannot commend the headteacher's leadership highly enough. He is such a good role model for young people in his school," whilst another, "the headteacher is very approachable and well thought of by both children and parents." A sixth former commented that the school was like it was because of the headteacher. In the same vein, a poem written by two Year 11 pupils about the headteacher, and presented during their leaving assembly to mark his retirement, begins by saying, "You will be missed dearly when you retire".

60. These very positive comments are supported strongly by the evidence from the inspection. Indeed, the example set by the headteacher, and reinforced by senior managers, establishes much of the tone of the school: the positive relationships, the way in which everyone is valued and the commitment to fulfilling each person's potential are very strong features of the way the school is led effectively. There are many examples of this throughout the day: the very good relationships that teachers have with pupils; the ease with which pupils, staff and parents can talk with the headteacher; the concern to ensure that experienced teachers are encouraged to develop their careers even where this means moving to another school; the commitment to high standards for all pupils regardless of ability, including those with particular learning

difficulties. What is most significant is that when all these daily, and seemingly everyday, ordinary, events are put together they have a very positive impact on the life of the school and on pupils' achievements. The high standards at GCSE are examples of this impact as is the achievement of the boy and girl with Downs Syndrome, who gained a GCSE in English, and the 82 per cent of sixth formers who went on to higher education last year. This commitment to all pupils is illustrated by the way the equal opportunity statement not only sets out clearly the school's aims but is displayed on walls around the school.

61. One of the significant characteristics of the way the school is led is that it is a team effort in which all staff play an important part in promoting high standards and improving the quality of education. The deputy headteachers, for example, are closely involved in ensuring that those subjects for which they have management oversight are performing properly: where there are weaknesses, they work with teachers to support improvement. Modern languages is an example: despite staffing difficulties, there is a noticeable improvement in standards and although not yet high enough in French, this year's exam results for 16 year olds are set to be better than last year's. This team approach is apparent in many subjects: in science, mathematics and history, for example, the very effective leadership gives a clear direction, and helps to ensure that all staff understand and carry out their assigned responsibilities. This strong leadership is one reason why standards are high in these subjects. There are some weaknesses in information technology where not enough progress has been made in improving standards. This is because the school has not had a clear enough vision about how it wants the subject to develop, despite doing everything identified in the action plan. However, senior managers are aware that information technology lacks purpose and direction and are taking steps to ensure that teachers' expertise is better deployed.

62. The way the heads of year work with their form tutors also shows how well the school delegates responsibilities such as monitoring pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. One head of year, for example, is developing a system to track pupils' achievements as they move through the school so that teachers are able to identify those who need extra support. Again, the example set by the headteacher, and his great respect for everyone at the school, is powerful in creating a strong commitment to the school in which all strive for success.

63. The learning support department is very well managed. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, are very clear about their roles and understand the important part they play in pupils' education. Everyone is committed to pupils' progress and actively seeks new and better ways of working. No pupil's difficulties are taken as a reason not to strive for excellence. The department works effectively right across the school: for example it has devised a literacy programme to support the development of basic skills more widely and made a major contribution to the school's effective behaviour policy.

64. The school has improved the way it checks its performance well since the last inspection. There is now a more thorough system of looking at lessons and the work of departments; heads of departments meet with senior managers each month to discuss performance and progress. There is also a greater emphasis on analysing test and examination results as a way of judging how well the school is doing and whether it is adding value to pupils' education. In mathematics and science there are rigorous systems for observing lessons: here teachers are given clear feedback about what went well and how they might improve. This has a strong impact on standards and in science; for example, the information showed that performance in Years 10 and 11 was better than Years 7, 8 and 9 and was used to develop strategies to raise standards. Another example of using information about what works well, and where improvements are needed, is the way the new behaviour policy has been used to help teachers manage pupils more effectively. Here, part of the policy has been about every teacher insisting that all pupils sit in preset places rather than where they like. This has had a very positive effect on the quality of teaching, behaviour in classrooms and on standards.

65. The school has moved a long way to make the link between checking performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses and in using this information to improve standards. In a few cases, however, this is not as clear as it should be. A good illustration is the use of examination and test data: careful analyses of results give the school useful data and information about its performance and an indication of strengths and weaknesses across and between different subjects. The school knows, for example, that Year 9 English and science test results are not as high as GCSE grades, particularly for the brightest pupils, but does not always identify the reasons for these differences sharply enough. The school does take action to raise standards, for example boys' results have improved significantly over the past two or three years because of the way the school has focused its work. But occasionally this sharp focus on strategies is not so clear.

66. Similarly, the school has improved its procedures for monitoring teaching: the induction programme for new teachers and the way many heads of departments regularly observe lessons illustrate this well. The school has come a long way in being able to identify the best teaching and to help individual teachers improve. This is borne out by the high quality teaching seen during the inspection. What the school has yet to do, though, is put this individual information together to identify the characteristics of the best teaching and the impact on standards. This, of course, links to checking performance: the school is close to being able to link its data analysis of examination results with information about teaching but has yet to take this relatively small but vital step. In essence this is about fine-tuning what the school already does and pulling together the different strands so that the impact of teaching on standards, and what does and does not work well, are clear.

67. The plans the school draws up for the future are mostly effective: areas for development and improvement are linked appropriately to the most important priorities. The four main priorities of the plan are all directed at improving pupils' achievement. For example, the behaviour target is concerned with ensuring that there is a secure atmosphere where all are able to do their best. An important feature of the plan, particularly for the behaviour target, is the way responsibilities are delegated to those with the expertise rather than seniority. This shows how well the leadership creates a team of committed professionals. The school plan also includes tasks for the governing body and shows clearly how governors monitor the work of the school and expenditure. Overall, the plan is clear, identifies appropriate targets and sets realistic and specific tasks and timescales but the way these are measured is often more about the 'how' rather than the 'what'. This is one of the reasons why the link between monitoring and action is not always clear. Nevertheless, the plan does help the school to improve: pupils' good behaviour bears this out. The review of the previous year's plan is good and in some cases very good: for example the literacy working party and the strategies to improve the attainment of boys lead clearly to the next year's targets.

68. The governing body has a good understanding of the school and its strengths and weaknesses. A particular feature of the governing body is the way it works closely with teachers and senior managers. This reflects, again, the high levels of teamwork that makes the way the school is led and managed so effective. The governing body has been particularly careful to establish an effective appraisal system for the headteacher. In fact, the system is used for the deputy headteachers too, and the targets that are set are both rigorous and realistic, and linked to raising standards. Another example of the governing body's effectiveness is the thorough arrangements for appointing the new headteacher. In most respects the governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities but the school is not meeting the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship or religious education in the sixth form. National Curriculum requirements for design and technology are only partly met because not all Year 10 and 11 pupils study the subject.

69. The school has clear plans for spending its money and these are linked closely to its plans for development and improvement. This is evident, for example, in the plans for a rolling programme of redecoration and repairs: this is one of the governors' school plan targets and some of budget surplus is being used to fund the work. Evidence from lessons, and school plan

budget, indicates that money is targeted well to those areas that need most support to improve pupils' achievements. For example, modern languages, information technology and management training, all priorities in the school plan, receive additional resources. As yet, the school is making only limited use of information and communication technology, although in media studies, music and art the technology is being developed well. The school spends some of the money its gets for the sixth form on main school, in effect subsidising it. However, evidence from lessons indicates that sixth form students are getting a fair deal and that provision is not being unduly compromised.

70. There is a good match between the number, qualifications and expertise of teachers and what the school needs to cater for the both the academic and pastoral needs of pupils. Most teachers are well qualified to teach their own subjects. In French, though, a high turnover of staff, absence and difficulty in filling posts with properly qualified teachers have all had an adverse effect on standards.

71. There are enough non-teaching staff who provide good quality support. For example, in design and technology, science, art and information technology good quality support helps teachers to concentrate on teaching. Learning support assistants, who work with pupils who have extra support for their particular learning difficulties, are experienced, well trained and effective. This is one of the main reasons why these pupils achieve well. The team of efficient administrative staff ensures the smooth operation of day-to-day routines and the site managers effectively ensure the safety, cleanliness and maintenance of the buildings and outside spaces.

72. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are improving with a recent appointment of an in-service training co-ordinator and with additional resources being provided to support this work. The school has established an effective system for professional development interviews: for example, teachers are encouraged to evaluate the past year's strengths and weaknesses, successes and difficulties so that effective training and support can be identified. What is impressive about this system is that it encourages self-evaluation and enables teachers to contribute to school development. Significantly, too, it is a good point from which to develop the government's new performance management arrangements.

73. The accommodation is very good and provides an appropriate learning environment for most subjects and is used effectively. There are particularly good features which include the provision for drama, design and technology and for pupils with special needs, offering good access for pupils with mobility problems. The provision of social areas for the year groups is also good. There is still a shortage of accommodation where sixth form pupils are able to study peacefully during the time they are not attending formal lessons. There are some areas that are showing signs of wear due to poor initial finishing and to normal wear and tear. The school actively encourages the use of the school premises for a wide range of community groups.

74. The school has good resources to support the learning. In some areas the resources are particularly good such as in the design and technology department. The library also offers a good service supporting individual pupil's learning and by providing specific resources to support departments and courses of study. The provision of computers across the school is unsatisfactory. Many are old and slow. The present provision inhibits the school's ability to develop the use of information and communication technology in many subject areas and limits achievements. Resources for use with pupils with special educational needs are good in quantity and quality. The facility to provide Braille text for pupils with sight impairment is a valuable asset which is well used in the school and for the wider community.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

75. The school should now:

- Improve the standards achieved in information and communication technology by:
  - establishing a more demanding course for Years 10 and 11 so that pupils can achieve higher levels;
  - increasing the number of computers so that pupils have better opportunities for access to information technology;
  - establishing a structured plan for improvement with clear targets, timescales, costings and implications for professional development;
  - building on the present planned improvements.  
(paragraphs 3, 5, 21, 25, 46, 61, 74, 85, 101, 109, 121, 135, 148, 150 – 154, 163, 167, 191.)
- Use the information it collects from monitoring and evaluating its work more sharply to identify the impact on standards by:
  - linking the analysis of examination results with information about teaching so that the impact of teaching on standards, and what does and does not work well, are clear;
  - co-ordinated the various elements of the school's assessment practice to ensure that pupils' individual targets are sharp and focused on raising standards.  
(paragraphs 7, 19, 44 – 49, 64 – 67, 109, 138, 148)
- Ensure that the highest attaining pupils are able to reach their full potential by:
  - setting additional work that is suitably challenging;
  - giving additional support only when it is necessary.  
(paragraphs 5, 19, 21, 106, 146, 198)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Ensure that the legal requirements for design and technology and a daily act of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form are met.  
(paragraphs 22, 32, 68, 133, 182)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	278
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	23	50	22	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,243	374
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	117	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	37	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	319	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	478

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.35
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	133	124	257

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	96	99	78
	Girls	112	90	87
	Total	208	189	165
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	81	74	65
	National	63	62	55
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	10	49	22
	National	28	38	23

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	102	103	87
	Girls	113	97	82
	Total	215	200	169
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	83	78	66
	National	64	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	51	54	27
	National	31	37	28

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	114	124	238

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	65	104	110
	Girls	79	121	124
	Total	144	225	234
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	61	95	98
	National	46.6	90.9	95.8

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43
	National	38

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National	n/a	n/a

### ***Attainment at the end of the sixth form***

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	86	100

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	15	16.2	15.6	2.9	3.5	3.3
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National	n/a	82.5

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	32
Black – African heritage	13
Black – other	25
Indian	55
Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	9
White	1,378
Any other minority ethnic group	88

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	12	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	73	2
Other minority ethnic groups	16	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	100.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	701

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spent in contact with classes	76.3
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	
Key Stage 3	23.7
Key Stage 4	19.9

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	4,128,078
Total expenditure	4,124,785
Expenditure per pupil	2,517
Balance brought forward from previous year	175,183
Balance carried forward to next year	178,476

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,617
Number of questionnaires returned	218

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	47	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	44	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	58	14	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	50	15	4	2
The teaching is good.	33	60	3	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	43	8	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	39	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	49	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	53	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	39	16	4	20

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

76. Pupils' attainment in English is in line with national averages at the end of Key Stage 3. It is well above national averages at the end of Key Stage 4 and above average in the sixth form.

77. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or higher last year was well above the national average. The percentage reaching Level 6 or above was, however, well below the national average. The scores overall show that performance in these tests by pupils at the school is declining to a level somewhat close to the national figure, although boys perform better in relation to their national average than do girls.

78. The GCSE results for 1999 show that pupils achieve a significantly higher proportion of A\*-C grades than pupils do nationally on average. This is true for both boys and girls, and in both English and English literature. There has been a sharp improvement in results in both subjects over the past three years, especially by boys. Almost all pupils are entered for both English and English literature.

79. In 1999, the percentage passing A level English with A-E grades was above the national average, but fewer reached grades A-B than nationally. Girls achieved better grades than boys, although more of them take the subject. The pass rate has exceeded the national average for the past three years at least.

80. Standards seen in lessons and in work samples confirm these patterns of achievement. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 achieve standards that are broadly in line with national standards. They have a good understanding of texts and good speaking and listening skills. They can make notes and produce pieces of extended writing of some quality. They can discuss in class with confidence. There is a range of ability amongst the pupils, although only small numbers are very low or very high achievers. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have developed a good range of relevant language skills and can discuss and write about books with confidence. Lower attaining pupils do well, although some struggle with presentation skills. Most pupils can make useful notes quickly and effectively. Year 11 pupils were seen revising some of their literature texts, and in several lessons had a confident knowledge and understanding of the works in which they would soon be examined. One group, for example, were able to comment on the use of symbolism in "Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry", drawing parallels with similar uses of thunder in "Macbeth." Students in the sixth form show a range of skills, knowledge and understanding that would indicate a similar level of achievement to that of their immediate predecessors. They are able to discuss complex ideas emerging from a range of texts, and are equally at home with Shakespeare, Austen, Joyce, T.S. Eliot and contemporary authors. Pupils were seen working on "Othello," devising questions and mark schemes as if they were examiners and trying them out on each other. All sixth formers are able to work well in groups and present their findings clearly, enabling others to make effective notes.

81. Progress has been made since the last inspection. It is least obvious at Key Stage 3, but this may be partly due to the way pupils of all abilities are grouped together in classes in Years 7, 8 and 9. This policy is intended to assist the progress of boys: its success is apparent, to a small extent, at the end of Key Stage 3. It is more apparent at the end of Key Stage 4, where the progress of boys is quite marked. The previous inspection report spoke of standards in line with national norms. They are now well above these norms. The increase in the percentage of A\* - C grades in GCSE English and English literature over the past three years, amongst all pupils, shows the excellent progress made since the 1996 inspection. Progress has also been made in the sixth form: at the time of the previous inspection, A level results were below the national

average, but over the past three years they have exceeded the national averages in the percentage of passes.

82. Standards of teaching and learning in English are good including the support given to pupils with learning difficulties. At Key Stage 3, teaching is good overall. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and plan their lessons well. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, allowing a variety of activities to take place. A Year 9 lesson on news bulletins, for example, involved pupils listening to recordings of news items, timing them, and analysing them using both discussion and note making to consolidate their learning. It built on previous work on newspaper presentations. Several Year 7 classes were seen working on a 'desert island' project, which helped them to develop a range of oral and written skills, including narrative and letter writing.

83. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is also good. Sometimes it is very good. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils and use imaginative methods that enhance learning in a variety of ways. Pupil presentations are used to particular effect: in a Year 11 lesson on "Roll of Thunder," pupils (including one with a statement of special educational needs) were able to demonstrate what they had learned in their homework, sharing their findings with the whole class. Those presenting were able to quote from and refer to the text intelligently; the others were encouraged to take notes. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the texts. This is even more apparent in the sixth form, where a wide range of literary texts is studied. Some very effective approaches to difficult texts were seen. A Year 12 class was given the task of constructing a collage based on a reading of "The Waste Land" by cutting out pictures from old magazines and newspapers and mounting them in a way that reflected Eliot's use of contrasting images. Much use is made of group work, with students presenting their findings clearly to the whole class. The high level of critical awareness achieved by the end of Year 13 was demonstrated in a lesson where students were able to discuss and analyse various critical positions on Shakespeare as a result of a well-planned and executed lesson that prepared the students well for a timed essay that they were set.

84. Pupils throughout the school respond well to the good teaching they receive. Positive attitudes were found in Key Stage 3, where pupils work well with each other. Misbehaviour is rare, and is never allowed to disrupt lessons. Relationships are good, between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves: pupils readily work in pairs or groups chosen by the teacher, often in mixed gender and ethnic groups. A similar picture is presented in Key Stage 4, where attitudes are, if anything, even more positive. Particularly impressive is the attitude of Year 11 pupils, who were still keen to come to lessons just days before their GCSE examinations in the confidence that the revision work their teachers were providing would be worthwhile. The attitudes of sixth formers are uniformly good, often very good. This enables good discussion work and productive group activities to take place, such as the Year 13 lesson on "The Dubliners" where the good rapport between teacher and pupils created excellent participation and very good learning opportunities.

85. The department is well led and managed, with responsibilities being shared by a highly qualified team who provide a range of age, experience, personalities and teaching styles. They are slightly hampered by the number of rooms available, but these rooms are adequate in size. Information and communication technology is still underdeveloped, because there is insufficient access to computers during lesson time. Other resources, including videos, are used well.

## **Literacy**

86. The school is making good progress in improving the teaching of literacy skills, although literacy hours will not be introduced until September 2001. Reading has been identified as a priority and appropriate progress made. A summer reading programme involving parents has been successfully implemented: 'Sizzling Stories'. The school library is making a good contribution to this key skill, with very helpful advice and resources to encourage reading being

provided. A 'buddies' scheme has been introduced, in which Year 7 pupils are supported in their reading by sixth formers.

87. Each department is making a feature of key words, which are displayed by subject in their various teaching rooms. Technical vocabulary is discussed in lessons, for example in design and technology, geography, history, science and art, to good effect. All subjects encourage careful note-taking, and accurate spelling and presentation. Writing frames are often provided to assist pupils. An excellent example was seen in a Year 7 art lesson. Often differentiated frames are provided, as in the mixed ability groups such as those in Key Stage 3 English. They contribute to the amount of extended writing that is possible in many subjects which is found right across the age range; for example, in geography.

88. The wide use of paired and group work in the school contributes much to the development of speaking and listening skills, as do class discussions and pupil presentations which are a notable feature of many English lessons.

89. Implementation of the literacy policy is still at an early stage. Decisions have still to be made, for instance, about whether the literacy hour will be taught as part of the English curriculum or not. However, there is a commitment from all staff to raise standards by focusing on key literacy skills.

## **Drama**

90. Standards in drama are high throughout the school. They are often very high. This is borne out by examination results. Over 95 per cent of the 72 candidates for GCSE drama in 1999 achieved grades A\*-C. This success rate represents a steady improvement over the past three years: achievement was above the national average in 1997 – it is now well above. The 19 candidates for A level theatre studies all passed with A - E grades in 1999, maintaining the 100 per cent pass rate that has been achieved for the last five years.

91. These achievements are reflected in the work seen in lessons. Key Stage 3 pupils are able to plan, present and evaluate work of a good quality. Year 7 pupils can already improvise well and use voice and body movements to convey meaning effectively. Key Stage 4 pupils work confidently in groups and produce sensitive monologues. Sixth formers can reflect on and discuss work seen in performance at a very sophisticated level.

92. Teaching is of a very good standard and is a major contributory factor to pupil learning. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject and high expectations of pupils, whom they organise well. Lessons are stimulating and well-paced. Some excellent lessons were seen in which sixth form students discussed a performance of *Mother Courage* they had just been to see. The way in which the teacher conducted the discussions, involving every student, resulted in learning of a high quality.

93. The department is well led and managed, and is coping well with a recent change in staffing. It benefits from excellent resources and accommodation. Staff and pupil commitment to the subject is most impressive, with much out-of-school time being given to both curricular and extra-curricular drama. An A level performing arts course has recently been introduced, in co-operation with other departments. The co-operation is also reflected in the fine range of public performances that is regularly given.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. The overall standard of attainment of the pupils entering the school is broadly in line with the national average. In 1999 the attainment in mathematics of pupils of 14 years of age in the National Curriculum tests is above the national average. Seventy-four per cent of the pupils reached Level 5 or above compared with 62 per cent nationally. While a higher percentage of pupils reached Level 6 than did nationally, the percentage attaining at Level 7 is in line with the

national position. The current results show an improvement on those reported in 1996. Boys are performing better than girls but the difference is less marked than it was at the time of the last report.

95. The percentage of 16 year old pupils gaining a GCSE in the A\* - C range in 1999 is 57.7 per cent which is above the national average of 45.6 per cent and a significant improvement on position reported in 1996. Boys obtained a higher percentage of passes in the A\* - C range than girls. This is in contrast to the national trend. Boys are particularly dominant in obtaining A and B grades. There are fewer A\* grades obtained than in the national profile. The mathematics department has a very positive policy of entering a high proportion of pupils for GCSE examinations: 98.3 per cent of the year was entered compared with 94.7 per cent nationally and 98.7 per cent of those entered gained a grade.

96. In 1999 the percentage of pupils in the 16 plus groups obtaining A - E grades in A level mathematics examinations is below the national position, with the percentage gaining A and B well below average. Again, the school's policy is to offer access to the courses leading to A level and AS level to those who would benefit from the experience. The results for 1999 are better than the previous year. Pupils who gain a low grade in the GCSE examination at 16 are given the opportunity to re-sit the examination in the sixth form with the aim to improve their grade. Many achieve this objective.

97. Pupils' achievement, as assessed during the inspection through lesson observations, looking at work and talking to pupils, reflects the results of the external tests and examinations. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 show skills in numerical work which allow them to work competently at the basic processes. They have a good knowledge of maths vocabulary. They involve themselves in investigative work with increasing confidence and are gaining understanding in a wide range of mathematical concepts. One Year 9 class of high achieving pupils illustrated that it could interpret and analyse data and then present results in a number of ways. In another class pupils were involved in a practical activity to develop their understanding of volume. Pupils with additional learning needs make steady progress and those with extra support in the classroom perform well.

98. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards entry in the GCSE at foundation, intermediate and higher tiers according to the progress they make in the subject. Pupils at all the levels of entry are achieving appropriately including those with additional learning needs. The pupils aiming at foundation level entry have work which reinforces the basic elements of all strands of the syllabus and are given opportunity to apply the knowledge they acquire in investigations and other practical activities. Pupils entered for the higher tiers are given opportunities to apply and extend their understanding of the subject to more difficult examples, where such as, the relationship between volume and linear scale is considered or the formula to determine the next number in a given sequence is derived. Pupils in the sixth form following the statistic, mechanics and pure mathematics courses are attaining appropriately.

99. Pupils' numeracy levels are generally good. They are confident in using and extend their numeracy skills in a number of subjects. In design and technology, for example, they measure length, weight and volume; use scales; calculate forces and draw three-dimensional objects using a number of conventions. In science too, a range of formulae is used to determine results of practical experiments. Some find it fun. In a Year 9 lesson pupils enjoyed revising numbers in Spanish.

100. A significant strength of the department is the consistency of the quality of the teaching. About eight out of 10 of the lessons observed are good or very good. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. There are good relationships in the classroom and a positive learning environment in which the pupils respond very well. The teachers' skills in asking questions are particularly strong. In some lessons the theme being taught is developed from the interchange between the teacher and members of the class. Pupils learn from responding to

teachers' questions and discussing the points which arise; as a result they are able to confirm their understanding of the topic being taught.

101. Teachers plan their lessons well. A range of activities is offered and time allocated well to ensure strong pace. Work on investigating stimulating mathematical topics has improved and now offers good opportunities to apply earlier learnt knowledge imaginatively. Homework is regularly set in order that the lessons can be extended or the learning of a process can be reinforced. Work is marked well and pupils' progress is appropriately monitored. While in general the setting work is at an appropriate level for the group being taught, pupils who have a flair for the subject would benefit from more demanding additional work. Pupils' opportunity to use information technology within the mathematics lessons has not shown enough improvement since the last report.

102. The mathematics department is good. It has strong leadership and is given firm direction by a department head who is respected, and is in control. The overall planning is good, priorities have been identified and agreed and put into practice. There is good delegation and careful monitoring. The department has a stable staff of well-qualified teachers who work well as a team and are effective.

## **SCIENCE**

103. Attainment is above national averages in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in line with national averages in A level biology, chemistry and physics. Attainment in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests was above national averages in 1999. By the age of 14 pupils have a good understanding of how animals adapt to different habitats and can link this to their understanding of food chains. They know that concentration of acid affects the rate of reaction with marble chips. When carrying out investigations pupils set out their predictions, method, procedures for fair testing and results well. Higher attaining pupils use their understanding of scientific theory to explain their hypothesis. Girls and boys do equally well and results were above average for similar schools using test levels. However, they were close to similar schools using National Curriculum points.

104. In 1999 all pupils were entered for the double award GCSE science and results were above national averages. GCSE results decreased slightly from 1998 but reflect an upward trend over four years. Girls and boys do equally well. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils understand the chemical reactions of alkenes. High attaining pupils can explain how a transformer works. The attainment of pupils in investigative skills is good as 80 per cent gain A\* - C grades. Good examples are investigations into factors which affect the rate of a chemical reaction or those that affect pulse rate. Evaluation skills are satisfactory.

105. Students have the opportunity to study three A level sciences. Attainment in biology, chemistry and physics has decreased since 1998 but has shown an upward trend since the last inspection. Pass rates were in line with national averages but below averages at the higher grades. Girls and boys do equally well in biology and chemistry, but girls, although much fewer in number are better than the boys in physics. In biology students understand the principles of land reclamation when studying ecology. They can describe novel ways of how plants gain nitrogen. A level chemistry students can describe the full range of nitrogen chemistry in relation to the demands of the synoptic paper. In physics they have a good command of the technical terms and understand the mathematics of electrical current.

106. Achievement in lessons is good at the end of Year 9, Year 11 and in the sixth form. Average and low attaining pupils often achieve above national expectations but a few of the higher achievers are capable of attaining better grades that reflect their potential more closely.

107. Mathematical and graphical skills are used well across all years to ensure that formula work, complex graphs and data interpretation are carried out successfully. By the end of Year 10

most pupils can draw lines of best fit. In Year 11 they carry out calculations involving efficiency of transfer of energy. In A level physics they tackle complex problems related to mechanics.

108. Literacy skills are given a very high focus through planning and implementation as set out in the document "Raising Attainment in Science through Attention to Literacy." This is playing a significant part in Key Stage 3 in providing activities and material to suit needs of pupils. Use of key words, spelling and interpretation of text and of examination questions play a major part in raising attainment in science.

109. There is insufficient information technology in terms of resource and staff expertise. As a result pupils do not use information technology for data logging, storage retrieval and display in all years. Teaching is a strength in this science department. It is always satisfactory with good features in nearly eight out of 10 lessons and very good or excellent features in nearly four out of 10. Commitment, good relationships, discipline and learning are features of all lessons. Very good features include inspirational teaching of adaptation where a very recent television programme on unusual predators was used with an excellent worksheet to share the awe and wonder of science in seeking out the particular features of special animals. Very good pace using rapid questions, investigations and modelling was used to teach electrolysis to Year 9 who grasped the principle of electron transfer from the negative to the positive ions. Very good subject knowledge is a common feature of A level lessons as shown in the clear explanations and sequence of questions to maintain attention and learning. In biology lessons very good use is made of pupils to prepare and make presentations. Marking follows departmental procedures but frequency, quality of comments and its use to inform teaching is variable. Tests are now used well in Key Stage 3 to measure pupils' attainment but the good range of available assessment data is not yet used to track pupils and set individual targets in Key Stage 3. Target setting is good in Key stage 4 and in A level.

110. This quality of teaching is reflected in the effectiveness of learning. All pupils acquire good experimental skills by predicting, planning, fair testing and analysis by using writing frames initially. They develop and apply their scientific understanding through well-focused long and short investigations. In many lessons pupils' effort is challenged through discussion and presentations. References to current scientific research such as oxidation states of nitrogen and applications of electrolysis develop pupils' understanding of applications of contemporary science. Pupils know how they are doing through frequent tests and intensive use of written problems at all levels.

111. Pupils' attitudes to science are always very good. Many remarked on the enjoyment and challenge in their science lessons. A major strength is their enthusiasm and willingness to listen to the teacher and to each other. Pupils co-operate very well in group work working in mixed gender and racial groups and sharing tasks. Concentration is very good in the majority of lessons. In Key Stage 4 and at A level pupils work confidently on their own on their course work and revision. Many attend the revision and homework clubs to improve their attainment. The majority complete their homework and handle equipment with increasing care and competence. The number of boys in A level biology and chemistry has increased. However, the number of girls in A level physics remains very low and there is no real push to attract girls into physics.

112. Leadership is very good in science. Progress since the last inspection is significant in a range of initiatives to raise attainment. For example, monitoring of teaching and marking is well established through observing lessons and looking at pupils' books against clear agreed criteria. Assessment data at A level and GCSE are analysed well and effective strategies have been used to improve standards in chemistry. Teachers meet informally on a regular basis to share good practice and many are confident in reflecting what they are good at and what needs attention. Technical support continues to be excellent and well organised contributing significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. Development plans are very good reflecting school and departmental priorities and a well-knit team works well toward their success criteria.

## ART

113. The 1999 GCSE results of 16 years old are above average with 74 per cent of pupils gaining A\* - C grades. Results have improved every year since 1994. The number of pupils taking art at GCSE has dropped significantly because more are choosing design and technology. The high standards in Years 10 and 11 are confirmed by the lessons seen. Progress is good because the wide range of work in Year 10 often leads to very individual and confident work in Year 11.

114. 'A' Level results are also good with some students gaining outstanding results. There is confidence and individuality in the work. Students are encouraged to work on a large scale producing some excellent life drawings and sculptural work.

115. GNVQ courses have become very well established and numbers on the two-year advanced course have steadily grown. Results have improved and this year all students are predicted at least a merit or a distinction, and all are progressing to further or higher education to follow art and design related courses.

116. By the time pupils are 14 years old they achieve standards that are above the national average. Pupils can explore and develop ideas and creative skills. They use a range of starting points and work collaboratively on 2D and 3D projects. Pupils understand the art theory, which is built in to each project. The majority of pupils can use a variety of drawing and painting materials as well as clay, textiles and print. Pupils are willing to and capable of describing and discussing their work, showing an interest and pride in their achievements. In Year 7 projects are set around the theme of emotions and pupils work on portraiture, colour and landscape, considering the formal elements of line, colour, texture and pattern. Pupils are able to present their work to the rest of the class and are able to discuss and question each other critically. In Year 8 the theme is natural form and pupils develop 3D skills using clay and papier mache considering the formal elements of space, form, tone and shape. Pupils are able to describe the work of individual artists. Year 9 pupils build on their knowledge of the formal elements, further develop their drawing, painting and printmaking skills and some are learning how to manipulate images using the computer.

117. Teaching throughout the department for pupils of all ages is very good. At Key Stage 3 it is very good and at times excellent. Targets for learning are clearly set, the whiteboard is used in all lessons to highlight learning objectives and teachers question very well. Teachers promote interest and enthusiasm and create good relationships with the pupils which promotes learning. Expectations are high and pupils of all abilities are challenged by the work, which reflects their knowledge and raises their creative and visual awareness. The good teaching ensures that most pupils make very good progress and can talk knowledgably about their work and make perceptive video presentations. Pupils with special needs are integrated in mixed ability groups and given help advice and encouragement. Pupils work with enthusiasm and respond well to challenges, often problem solving in lessons and using specialist language. Classroom management is good and there is a consistent approach in all lessons to using seating plans. Pupils are generally well behaved and co-operative.

118. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is also very good. Teachers give pupils experience of a very wide range of work including 3D textiles work developed from natural form, papier mache sculpture developed from portrait work and observational studies of shells. Pupils are encouraged to develop individual work. Homework is set regularly to support the work that is done in class and is marked regularly. Consequently, progress is very good and the work produced shows good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding improving from Year 10 to Year 11.

119. Sixth form teaching is very good. The students understand the requirements of 'A' Level and GNVQ because they have been well taught and are able to work independently. Life drawing

skills are a strength. Sixth form students are given a range of opportunities to develop individually. At least 3 teachers work with each group of students so that a range of expertise is available. Learning is enhanced by visits to galleries and exhibitions, visiting lecturers and artists in residence.

120. The department provides enrichment through its varied extra-curricular provision including a life drawing class, an art club, a photography club and a GCSE recovery club which is targeted at students who are not achieving their full potential as well as an opportunity for those who want to extend their work.

121. The department is well managed. Resources are used very effectively and organised by the resources technician. There are shortages of some materials due to limited capitation: sugar paper is used extensively at Key Stage 3 rather than cartridge paper which tends to detract from the work, and although sketchbooks are used regularly and creatively to develop research skills they are also of poor quality. Sixth form students are beginning to develop their information technology skills and there is a trial digital imagery project with Year 9 but this work is hampered by a lack of computers in the department.

122. The quality of work of the pupils on display in the classroom and around the school is very good; it promotes interest in the subject and celebrates achievement.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show that standards are above the national average. The results show that more than half of the year group are attaining the higher levels. The GCSE results for grades A\* - C in 1999 were above the national average for those pupils who took the examination. When the pass rate is compared to other compulsory subjects they compare favourably. The GCSE results continue to improve. There were no A level examinations in 1999.

124. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is above the standard expected nationally. The concentration on developing skills in designing and making has ensured good quality results in different aspects of the subject. Pupils understand designing and ways to present their work to show clearly their ideas. Standards of technical skills are good. Pupils understand the working characteristics of a range of materials and how to use tools safely and accurately. The good quality of finished products shows an attention to detail, accuracy and precision. When making a mechanical toy, for example, pupils fit their design to very specific criteria, select suitable materials and use construction processes confidently and with some accuracy. They are familiar with the way different mechanisms work. In textiles, pupils have good technical skills, contributing to high quality products as seen for example in a project making cushions. In food technology lessons pupils are able to write a specification for sweet and savoury foods and produce a product to a very high standard. Pupils are able to make decisions about suitable ingredients and have an understanding of what constitutes a healthy balanced diet.

125. From the evidence of pupils' design work and practical projects, their attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is above national expectations and reflects the examination results. Current work with resistant materials, graphic design, electronics and food technology is above the expected standard and pupils pay particular attention to accuracy, quality of finish and the selection of ingredients. In their design work, they develop an understanding of construction techniques and presentation of work is of a high quality. Pupils have limited experience of control technology and computer aided design.

126. In the sixth form their work in A level graphic design is of the expected standard. Their projects provide sufficient detail and they are able to make informed decisions on the choice of ideas. They give consideration to form, function and style. Their project work shows attention to accuracy and they work to a rigorous specification.

127. During Key Stage 3 all pupils make good progress in their learning. Their knowledge of design technology increases steadily because they have opportunities to solve problems and work independently or in groups to develop their practical and design skills, and their skills of investigation and research. Pupils' skills in designing and making develop through a range of activities in different areas: examples include food, electronics, graphics and food technology. In a lesson on making a pasta dish, for example, pupils made good progress because they were briefed about what they had to do in detail, listened to instructions carefully and worked in teams to specific time limits. They are making good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils enter in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are above average overall. In their early lessons, pupils make good progress in learning practical skills and the underlying theory on tasks that are precisely structured with clear learning objectives for each week. The department emphasises good standards of graphical skills and presentation of work. By the end of Year 9, all pupils gain experience of a range of activities in the different aspects of the subject and begin to develop information technology skills.

128. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. Their knowledge of designing and making improves steadily because pupils are able to consolidate their learning satisfactorily and build on their skills of designing, their practical competence to solve more complex problems of design and their knowledge of food preparation. They know how their work is assessed and quickly learn how to judge their standards and how to improve. Their practical skills develop through a range of projects, for example, manufacturing a food product for special dietary needs.

129. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can design and make packaging for different products, and use mechanisms and control systems to solve problems as seen in a project for an electronic door opening system. In graphics lessons they can design and produce models to demonstrate their ideas. They can prepare snack meals using a variety of basic ingredients. Pupils develop design briefs for their projects and can communicate their ideas verbally, graphically and in writing. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when extra support is provided in class.

130. Pupils make good progress in the sixth form. As part of the course in graphic design, they develop their skills and improve their techniques in the design of products to meet specific needs.

131. The behaviour of pupils and their attitude to learning is always good. Pupils show an interest in their work and maintain good levels of concentration to work to their best standards. They listen attentively and watch carefully to understand what they must do and show pride in their achievements. They respond well to teachers and they are able to work without close supervision. They take responsibility for their areas of work and in organising their tasks.

132. Teaching throughout the department is always good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and plan well to ensure that lessons have suitable pace. Practical activities are well organised and the supervision of lessons effective, with appropriate interventions: this supports and sustains pupils' learning effectively and maintains appropriate expectations. Teachers' expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour are high and this has a strong impact on standards. Learning objectives are clearly stated and work is flexibly planned to provide for pupils' different levels of attainment and interests. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and teachers give helpful oral and written comments. Assessment concentrates upon tracking experiences and outcomes and individual targets are used to inform pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The department is involved in a project to improve literacy across the school and is helping to develop technical vocabulary in the area of electronics as an authority wide initiative, providing teaching resources.

133. The leadership and management of the department are good: the clear vision and direction leads to effective strategies that promote improvements. Not all pupils take a design and technology subject in Year 10 and Year 11 and as a result the school is not fulfilling the

statutory obligation to provide the subject for all 14 to 16 year old pupils. Accommodation is generous and there is a good level of tools and equipment but the lack of resources for newer technologies and information technology limits what is taught and the standards that pupils can attain. The technician staff make a significant contribution to the organisation of the department: for example they may work with specific groups of pupils to support practical work or provide advice and guidance. The department has made good progress with the areas identified for development in the last inspection. There is a very good scheme of work that covers all aspects of the subject and tasks help pupils develop their research skills. As a result the work is challenging and advances learning well. The department still has to develop projects relating to systems and control.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

134. By the age of 14 standards reached by the majority of pupils exceed the national expectations of Level 5/6. Pupils' work seen during the inspection confirms the accuracy of teacher assessments. Since the last inspection the overall trend in GCSE results has been upward and standards are now above average. In 1999, 99 per cent of pupils gained A\* - G grades and 68 per cent gained A\* - C grades. Both are above the national figures. In 1999, geographers performed well relative to their other subjects. Girls achieve better grades than boys but this difference mirrors the national picture. At A level standards are broadly in line with the national percentages for each grade, A - E.

135. Across Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils develop good knowledge and understanding through studying places such as Kenya, Italy and Brazil. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress. In the best investigative studies pupil focus on answering key questions and use a wide range of sources to understand differences and similarities and explain them very thoroughly. Pupils develop a good grasp of the causes of natural disasters such as the Kobe earthquake in Japan and the floods in Mozambique. Moral issues are considered by pupils in lessons where the impact of tourism is analysed. In Years 7 and 8 pupils enjoy the fieldwork and the opportunities to practise vital geographical skills. Year 9 pupils are denied similar opportunities. Since the last inspection some progress has been made in the application of information technology. For example, the Internet is used in work on Antarctica in Year 8 and on Brazil in Year 9. However, opportunities to use information technology are still too limited.

136. At GCSE pupils make sound progress. They develop their understanding of processes and patterns through learning about the ways in which people seek to manage the uses of the Brazilian rainforest and the Norfolk Broads. Fieldwork is undertaken effectively where pupils investigate the results of suburban development. At A level pupils make good progress. In one lesson the experiences of fieldwork in Norfolk were drawn upon to inform pupils' thinking about a decision-making exercise on Lyme Regis Bay.

137. Teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good in three-quarters of lessons observed and sound in the remainder. At GCSE teaching is sound in three-quarters of the lessons and good in a quarter. In good lessons teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils and ensure they are thoroughly reviewed at the end. Resources are used imaginatively to challenge pupils' thinking. Examples include the creative use of a film on Antarctica without the sound and the focused use of the Internet to investigate a key question. Other teaching strengths include the practice of paired reading which proved to be effective in promoting discussion and joint decision-making when studying coral reef systems. The display of key words in classrooms is helpful in expanding pupils' vocabulary. Detailed guidance about writing is used successfully to structure work on the Nile Valley in Year 10. Teaching at a brisk pace happens where time limits are set on activities. Pupils quickly settle to the tasks and work hard. Positive attitudes to geography are seen throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations and pupils behave well. Where marking is effective it explains what pupils have achieved and what they need to do to make further progress in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding.

138. The progress of pupils up to the age of 16 is less marked where they are not given the opportunities to become independent learners and where marking is not precise enough to pinpoint how pupils can improve in geography. At A level teaching in two-thirds of the lessons was good. In one lesson it was excellent. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and are able to give full and detailed responses to pupils' questions. In all lessons pupils show very positive attitudes towards their teachers and their work. The strengths of teaching at A level include the imaginative use of an overhead projector to promote high quality thinking and perceptive questions in relation to Lyme Regis Bay. In another lesson the discussion ensured that all were involved and contributed ideas and comments. Regular self-assessments, with targets specifically relating to geography skills and knowledge, provide pupils with clear routes to make further progress.

139. Teachers know what needs to be improved and good leadership has created a climate of trust and openness in which these aspects of work can be developed.

## **HISTORY**

140. This is a good department that has a commitment to developing pupils' learning. A high proportion of pupils enjoys history and many attack their work as though it were a refreshment to them. The large numbers of pupils who study history to GCSE and advanced level GCE is a testament to this. Pupils of all ages achieve well in lessons and attain high standards in examinations.

141. By the time they are 14 all pupils have a good understanding of the periods they are studying. They are all able to use sources of evidence to extract information and to form views about the past. Pupils have a good understanding of change and of the reasons for historical events. Most pupils are able to understand different points of view and the highest attaining pupils are able to evaluate the usefulness of different historical sources with some confidence. Tasks are set which allow pupils to achieve different levels and ensure that appropriate demands are made of all pupils. This supports pupils' learning and progress, contributes to the high standards reached by pupils by age 14 and lays a sound foundation for further work.

142. Pupils attain standards at age 16 that are well above national averages, particularly at the higher grades. The GCSE course has carefully structured activities that support attainment and progress in lessons and contribute to these high examination grades. Standards are very good at advanced level GCE. Students develop the skills required to investigate and evaluate sources of historical evidence, which support their understanding of the history being studied. A Year 12 discussion about the power relations between Queen Elizabeth 1 and her parliament demonstrated growing confidence and understanding in this area, as did work on Mussolini's rise to power.

143. Teaching is one of the department's strengths. The quality of teaching makes a significant impact on pupils' learning, progress and attainment. Teaching is often good or very good and is sometimes excellent. It is always at least sound. Relationships are excellent and good order is maintained in all lessons. Teachers expect a lot from pupils' behaviour and their work and generally get what they expect. Learning is well planned and supported by a good range of resources. This is the case for pupils at all stages of their education.

144. A great deal of care is given to ensure that tasks and activities challenge pupils to think, to improve their standards of literacy and to build their skills and confidence in interrogating sources of historical evidence. The activities provided and the range of teaching strategies teach pupils how to learn. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' needs and are carefully structured to make sure that all pupils can approach the work at their particular level and move forward from there. This helps to ensure that all pupils learn and make progress.

145. A good example of this is the work where pupils in Year 8 have to use a range of sources of evidence to determine whether Richard Arkwright was a hero or a villain. The teachers' skills in creating structures to help pupils understand the sources and in teaching them how to evaluate the sources promoted high levels of attainment and understanding for all pupils.

146. There has been progress since the last inspection in the ranges of strategies and activities which support learning. The activities are generally well used, but some teachers provide pupils with additional support for their work which they do not need. This can have the effect of inhibiting their learning rather than enhancing it.

147. National Curriculum requirements are met and the curriculum is planned to balance historical content with the understanding of sources of evidence and other historical skills. This balance provides a thorough foundation for GCSE and contributes to the high standards at 16 and 18. The curriculum is enhanced by a well-chosen series of visits to historical sites, museums and galleries.

148. Pupils' involvement in independent enquiry has improved since the last inspection. Other improvements have been made in the use of information and communications technology, although this is still rather limited, as computers are mainly used for finding information and for some word processing. The small computer network in the department is fairly new and is contributing to improvements in this area.

149. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' attainment and their future needs. The department has a lot of information about pupils' attainment but is not, as yet making much use of this in tracking the progress of individual pupils or in setting individual targets for them.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

150. Teacher assessments of Year 9 pupils for 1999 show that 41 per cent attained Level 5 with no pupils doing better than this. When compared with the national average of 59 per cent it can be seen that Southgate pupils are attaining levels that are below average. There are no significant differences between the standards attained by boys or girls, or for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a course that restricts the level of certification to an equivalent of a grade G at GCSE. This is below the capability of the vast majority of Southgate pupils and consequently standards in the sixth form are also below average. There has been no improvement in standards since the last report.

151. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is continuing to develop. Subject areas including design and technology, history, art, geography, music and English and special educational needs have access to computers in their teaching areas. In science and mathematics pupils use computers to support learning, for example in a Year 7 class where pupils made shapes using a software program. This is enabling information and communication technology to enhance these subjects. However, pupils have too few opportunities to use information technology, partly because there are not enough computers and partly because not all teachers have the right expertise. This is an improvement since the previous inspection but there are still too few computers to give pupils good access to information technology.

152. Teaching throughout is no better than satisfactory because of the low demands made on pupils and information and communication technology lessons are not underpinned by the national curriculum. Until the end of Year 9, the amount of time in which pupils are taught information and communication technology is less than half the 5 per cent of curriculum time recommended. Pupils can search CD ROMs such as encyclopaedias for information, use word-processing to produce letters and combine text and pictures to produce a theme-park poster. Spreadsheets are used for example in calculating the income from selling ice-creams and to

produce graphs. However, there is insufficient time to construct databases or use control and modelling software. There is also a lack of resources in the form of scanners and digital cameras, which would enable pupils to attain the higher national curriculum levels. The information and communication technology teachers have been on courses related to the teaching and examining of information and communication technology, but their lack of training in the use of regularly used software including Word and Excel means that it is more difficult for them to teach pupils to use these programmes at an appropriate level. The impact of these weaknesses is that they limit pupils' opportunities to acquire new knowledge and make good progress.

153. There are aspects of lessons where teaching is good. Pupils show a high level of autonomy and are able to come into the lessons and immediately get on with work on the computers. Word-processing skills learnt in information and communication technology lessons are used to produce homework for subjects including science, history and geography. All pupils use the information and communication technology workbooks that have been produced by the information and communication technology department until the end of Year 9. Together with the printed copies of work produced on the computer, they provide a good record of pupils' work. After Year 9, pupils maintain a satisfactory record of work for their certificated course. At the start of each lesson, teachers review the previous lesson's work and make clear what pupils are expected to achieve. This results in pupils being confident about what they have to do and they quickly become engaged in their work, show interest and when asked, are aware of what they have learnt.

154. Management of the department in ensuring that the recommendations of the previous inspection were met has been unsatisfactory, as has been the overview of the department by the senior management team. An information and communication technology technician has been appointed since the previous inspection who makes a useful contribution to the school by enabling the teaching staff to focus more on teaching and learning. There is now a more consistent scheme of work for Years 10 and 11. There is no scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 and together with a lack of assessment procedures results in a course that is inconsistent in process and outcomes. Homework, too, is not an established aspect of the course in Years 7 to 9 and consequently pupils miss the opportunity to spend more time on the subject which could lead to higher standards.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

155. In the Year 9 teacher assessments in modern foreign languages in 1999, a higher proportion of pupils achieved Levels 4 and above than nationally, although up to a fifth of pupils were under-performing in languages in comparison with mathematics, English and science. Attainment in German in the GCSE examination was very good, with 93 per cent of entrants in 1999 gaining a pass in the range A\* - C. Spanish results improved greatly in 1999 over the previous year: with 61 per cent of entrants gaining A\* - C results were also significantly above the national average. French GCSE results were significantly below the national average, with only 31 per cent of entrants gaining A\* - C. Whilst French A level results were good, those for German were below the national average.

156. Standards in lessons observed were in line with the national expectation in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Standards in French in Key Stages 3 and 4 were much better than those indicated by last year's GCSE results and similar to those in German and Spanish lessons. There was greater consistency in the quality of learning across the department than in the last inspection as a result of the increased range of appropriate activities planned and taught. In particular, a firm foundation has been laid in Years 7-10 in all three languages to ensure that pupils achieve in line with their potential. By the end of Year 9 most pupils are able to understand and answer basic questions about themselves and their world in the target language. They can use numbers and discuss prices, carry out transactions, ask for and give information, write and speak about the past, present and future, and express opinions. The most able can

also adapt language to deal with unprepared situations. In nearly all lessons pupils behave and concentrate well, work hard and make at least satisfactory progress.

157. During Key Stage 4 pupils build successfully on their prior learning. By the time they are 16 the majority of pupils are able to undertake extended writing tasks using a variety of tenses, give and justify opinions, carry out increasingly challenging listening and reading tasks, and give increasingly complex and confident answers to questions asked in class. They speak with a high level of accuracy and confidence. However, pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make little use of the target language to meet their routine needs for information and explanation. In the sixth form there is a wide range of attainment in German. The majority of students speak fluently, accurately and with confidence about a wide range of topics. Written work is of a high standard: students are able to write at length on a range of topics, developing and justifying their ideas. The weakest students lack confidence and still only manage to give short answers to questions asked in class. However, the evidence of this inspection is that the work of the department to improve pupil attainment in French will result in better results this year in the GCSE examination, and that pupils taking French in Year 10 are on course to achieve results in line with their potential next year.

158. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is nearly always at least satisfactory and often good. In Key Stage 4 teaching is often good and always at least satisfactory. In the sixth form teaching is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is nearly always very good. Use of the target language for class instructions and explanations by teachers is more consistent than in the last inspection, although some teachers use it more extensively and effectively than others. Where it is used effectively, pupils have greater opportunities to hear French, German or Spanish spoken and their pronunciation is good or very good as a result. However, not enough emphasis is placed on pupils' use of the target language for routine class communication. Lessons are planned carefully and lesson objectives are clear.

159. There is far greater consistency across the department in planning a range of appropriate activities than in the last inspection: nearly all lessons includes a variety of activities which deliver the lesson objectives, and include speaking, listening, reading and writing. The pace of most lessons is brisk and teachers make effective use of the time available, with frequent changes of activity and smooth and logical transitions between tasks. In most classes pupils are interested in what they are doing, concentrate well, work hard and are actively involved in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils: this is demonstrated, for example, in the discussions with pupils about what they need to do to attain higher levels or grades. There is now greater differentiation in than in the last inspection. Teachers are good at supporting lower attaining pupils and challenging higher attainers in whole-class question and answer work. However, there is still not a wide enough range of strategies and resources to support lower attaining pupils, and challenge the higher attainers, in activities where pupils are working on their own; for example in listening or writing tasks. Nevertheless, there is greater consistency in the quality of learning than in the last inspection as a result of the increased variety of tasks and activities. In nearly all lessons pupils behave and concentrate well, work hard and make at least satisfactory progress.

160. The department has experienced considerable problems with staffing and staff absence during the last two years. There has been no head of department since summer 1999, but teachers have worked together effectively since then as a team to develop the work of the department, in particular focusing on the issues of pupil attainment and motivation. This arrangement has resulted in progress since the last inspection on schemes of work, strategies to enhance the image of the subject in school, and greater consistency in teaching strategies across the department.

## **MUSIC**

161. At Southgate School learning music is fun. Teachers convey their own sense of enthusiasm for the subject very effectively and teach the pupils very well.

162. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have fluctuated over the last five years. In 1999 pupils achieved 57.1 per cent A - C grades against the national average of 70.1 per cent. Inspection evidence shows that standards are broadly in line with the national expectation for pupils in the current GCSE groups in Years 10 and 11. Attainment in the music element of the A level performing arts course is above average.

163. Standards at the end of Year 9 are at least in line with, and often above, national expectations. Pupils are developing their knowledge, understanding and skills in performing and composing progressively. Their practical work is effectively informed by their theoretical understanding, for example Year 8 pupils developed a note-row and used it as a basis for composing soundtrack music for a film clip. They were able to explain tonality and could place the composer Schoenberg correctly in the modern period on the classroom timeline. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the use of correct terminology and, as a result, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of subject vocabulary. Year 7 pupils can use and explain terms such as 'triad' and 'pentatonic scale'. This contributes effectively to the development of their literacy skills. Pupils' aural acuity is well developed across the key stages. Singing is very well taught. Teachers actively encourage the use of the voice and pupils perform well as singers, across a wide repertoire. Pupils use information technology regularly in both key stages, mainly to record and retrieve their work using electronic keyboards. Opportunities for them to use other applications are limited.

164. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is consistently good with very good features in all years. The teaching very effectively supports pupils' learning. Strengths in teaching include the teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and their musical expertise. Explanations and instructions to pupils are clear, for example, the explanation of added note chords in a Year 10 GCSE lesson enabled the pupils to tackle the task successfully. There is a high level of challenge in the teaching and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Lessons are well planned and organised and teachers have very good classroom and pupil management strategies, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have a good sense of how to keep the pace of lessons moving: no time is wasted and there is a very purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms. Relationships are very good. Pupils apply creative effort in their work, and acquire and consolidate new knowledge and skills. They show very good levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work in music and generally work well in groups, sustaining interest and concentration well. They provide good mutual support when working in groups on composing and performing activities. The sixth form pupils in the performing arts group are extremely enthusiastic and committed and there is very positive interaction between pupils and with the teacher. Relationships in this group are very mature; pupils listen to each other's views and are able to take a critical, evaluative stance.

165. Teachers monitor progress during lessons very effectively, assessing and recording progress and giving feedback to pupils. Although most pupils understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve, more time could usefully be given in Key Stage 3 lessons for pupils to evaluate their work and suggest improvements themselves. Occasionally, the overall sound level impairs pupils' ability to hear what their work sounds like. The department is exploring strategies to overcome this.

166. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are introduced to a very wide range of music from different periods and cultures. This element is strongly built into the curriculum at Key Stage 3 which includes Reggae, Gershwin, Klezmer and music by Purcell and Britten. The GCSE course includes Twentieth Century European Music, World Music and an analysis of the songs of Sting. The performing arts A level course allows pupils to explore questions of meaning and purpose in depth through the media of music and drama. This was demonstrated through a moving performance about the

breaking down of the Berlin Wall and a presentation about Pope Joan which explored questions of gender and identity.

167. The department is well led and managed. Staff work effectively as a team, each bringing skills and expertise which are complementary. There is good quality extra-curricular provision for music. For example, a choir, jazz ensemble and a wind band all achieve good standards but do not attract the large numbers of pupils that such good provision warrants. Similarly, a team of peripatetic teachers provides good quality tuition in a range of instruments but, currently, the take-up is below 10 per cent of pupils in the school. The department puts on regular formal and informal concerts and contributes to major school productions, the most recent being 'The Threepenny Opera.' Accommodation is good and is used very effectively to support pupils' learning. Resources are adequate in most respects. There are sufficient, good quality electronic keyboards and tuned percussion which are used regularly in all years. However, the department should extend the range of classroom instruments and provide better access to a wider range of information technology applications, particularly for pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

168. In the most recent GCSE physical education examination, 50 per cent of pupils gained A\* - C grades, and 96 per cent gained A\* - G grade passes. This is in line with the national average. In 1997 the school began offering its sixth form pupils the opportunity to sit for an A level in sports studies, and in the most recent examination of the pupils who took the examination 85 per cent gained good pass grades. The number of pupils currently following GCSE and A level courses is impressive.

169. The levels of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 continue to be at least in line with national expectations, with a significant number achieving even higher levels. This is line with teacher assessments. Although most pupils arrive at the school with limited knowledge of physical education skills they quickly respond to the effective teaching so that by the end of the key stage most pupils are performing well in a wide variety of activities. They are confident and versatile in their movements and are generally attentive listeners. In games activities pupils are confident performers and display a range of skills that are generally performed with accuracy and understanding.

170. The overall attainment of Key Stage 4 pupils has improved since the last inspection and also continues to be at least in line with national expectations. Good levels of skills development are clearly evident in a wide variety of activities. Pupils have a good understanding of tactics and strategies and are able to apply the skills that have been practised in the full game situation. In health related education pupils are attaining an understanding of fitness issues and practices and are able to maintain activity levels for appropriate periods of time. Pupils in the examination groups are developing understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Pupils are becoming confident in their use of technical language and most pupils are producing course work folders that are generally well presented and detailed. They have a good understanding of the syllabus requirements and are able to effectively link practical and theoretical concepts.

171. In the sixth form attainment by the students studying the A level course is at least in line with the national average. Most pupils are producing work that is carefully researched and analysed making good cross references to other aspects of the course. They are confident in their use of technical language and enter into lively informed debate in the lessons.

172. Many school teams take part in a large number of inter-school competitions and sporting events, and gain much success. Many pupils have represented Enfield and some have gone on to represent Middlesex. A few pupils have gained national honours.

173. The overall quality of teaching has continued to be at least satisfactory, with most lessons observed being good or very good. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and objectives are clearly stated and understood by the pupils. Lessons are well organised and are conducted at a brisk, demanding pace, achieving an appropriate balance of activities and offering the pupils a range of appropriate challenges. The subject planning is well structured with a choice of tasks that promotes a high level of interest and effort. There is an expectancy that pupils will work hard and behave well and generally these expectations are met. Teachers are encouraging their pupils to be involved with the planning and evaluation of their work, but in order to meet National Curriculum requirements this is an aspect that needs developing. Teachers show care and concern for the pupils whilst encouraging the best in fair play, co-operation and competitive experiences. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on the attainment of the pupils and their enjoyment of the subject.

174. In all aspects of their work most pupils are highly motivated and have a very positive attitude to the subject both in their lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They sustain concentration, co-operate well and demonstrate an ability to challenge themselves. The behaviour is of a good standard. Pupils are very tolerant of each other's strengths and weaknesses. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, are given much support and encouragement by the teaching staff and reach a very satisfactory level of attainment. There is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum offer.

175. The balanced curriculum offer that is meeting the demands of the National Curriculum allows pupils to take part in a wide variety of activities. The more able and interested pupils in Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to take a GCSE in the subject, and pupils in the sixth form can opt to take an A level in sports studies. However there is only a limited opportunity for pupils in the sixth form to take part in timetabled physical education lessons, although some of them are involved with the extra-curricular activities. Many staff give very freely of their time to provide both a wide range of lunchtime and after-school extra-curricular activities, which are very well supported by the pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to go on skiing holidays, water sports activities in Spain and all of Year 7 take part in a residential camp.

176. Good leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the subject. Comprehensive records of pupils' attainment are kept, which are used to help plan courses and monitor standards. The staff work well together, support each other, and show a very strong commitment to the pupils. All these factors promote learning well.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

177. There has not been a GCSE group of pupils for three years. This year's Year 11 will be the first to take the exam for some years. Comparative figures with national norms are therefore impossible. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and observations of their learning in their lessons indicate that standards are above those normally found on average in similar schools throughout the country. Pupils' good knowledge and understanding of the concepts of the syllabus is expressed well and effectively in appropriate religious technical vocabulary. For example, Year 11 pupils studying Jewish holy days use the correct Hebrew words to discuss effectively aspects of repentance.

178. Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 9 are above those found on average in similar schools. Pupils not only know the central beliefs and practices of Christianity, and other major world religions, but also understand how these customs and practices are underpinned by faith and belief. For example, Year 9 pupils understand and can discuss the role of miracles as an element of faith for religious people.

179. Pupils who have strong analytical ability consolidate their prior learning with appreciation of concepts such as the application of prayer as an act of devotion. Pupils who are strong in learning facts consolidate their prior knowledge with additional information about artefacts used in religious

ceremonies and customs. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build upon the acquired knowledge and skills at the end of Year 9 and pupils are effectively able to tackle all that is demanded of them in organising their knowledge and completing tasks.

180. Pupils show application to their work. They settle to, and remain, on task, and they show pride in their work, although some pupils' presentation could be improved. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by study and discussion of a range of ideas about their own and other people's values and beliefs, to which they demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance.

181. Teaching is good overall and occasionally very good with no lessons being less than satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and well prepared and lead to pupils learning. In the best lessons, planning is augmented by the use of a range of teaching resources which stimulate the pupils. However, in the few weaker lessons, effectiveness is limited by teachers not varying their teaching methods or classroom organisation sufficiently to motivate and challenge pupils. In these lessons, pupils are often "teacher-led" and not always sufficiently encouraged to become independent learners. Teaching is often best where the teacher has the confidence to be less didactic and more facilitative. Homework is set and marked regularly.

182. For the first three years of school religious education is planned effectively, promotes progression and follows the syllabus which has been agreed by all schools in the borough. This meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. At present, there is not enough time in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form to ensure full and effective coverage of the course: this does not comply with the requirements set down by law. However, all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are to follow a short course beginning in September. There is, however, little planning for an increase in the sixth form provision. This is an issue from the last inspection report which is not yet being addressed.

183. Religious education contributes very effectively to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by effectively providing pupils with knowledge and insight into concepts of right and wrong and asking them to apply those concepts to the range of fundamental issues which confront them in real life, like the bereavement of someone close. For example, Year 9 classes can apply those concepts when discussing the relationships of CS Lewis and Joy Gresham as portrayed in the film "Shadowlands" and they are particularly effective in discussing how religion offers answers or solace to such issues. There is some study of other faiths which teaches pupils to appreciate the diversity of those faiths.

184. The department is managed quietly but efficiently and effectively. There is particularly good support to newly qualified teachers and a clear vision for the development of the subject. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements, particularly in establishing a team of religious education specialists and a suite of rooms dedicated to religious education.

## **BUSINESS STUDIES**

185. This is a good department with many strong features. Standards of attainment at A level, where 86 per cent of students gained A or B grades, are well above average compared with schools throughout the country whilst the standards achieved at GCSE, at 72 per cent A\*-C is above the national average. At GNVQ at the Advanced level, where there were no distinctions in 1999, and at the Intermediate level, standards and completion levels are respectively on a par with those achieved in other schools across the country.

186. At both A level and GCSE pupils have appropriate levels of skills and confidence when discussing concepts involved in their work. For example, Year 12 pupils speak confidently about Inflation and economic policy while Year 10 pupils debate the full socio-economic costs of unemployment effectively. At the advanced level of GNVQ, students have good skills in IT and have a good understanding of their use in business. Pupils cover the key skills adequately. Pupils are now developing the art of writing evaluations, although this continues to be the weakest of their skills. The standard of pupils' portfolios is good. Most are well organised, well structured and well presented.

187. Learning is good. In the GCSE course, and particularly in the Intermediate GNVQ course, the value added to pupils' learning, is good. High standards of work are produced at A level: pupils develop their analytical thinking quite well but do not have quite enough opportunities to explore the more abstract concepts of the subject. At the intermediate level of GNVQ, progress in lessons and through modules and projects is good overall, although some weaker pupils are struggling to maintain these standards. Pupils' progress is especially good where they are actively involved in learning which encourages them to explore themes and make decisions for themselves.

188. Pupils' attitudes towards their work are good. They are attentive, respond well to questions, remain on task, maintain concentration and take pride in their finished work. Sometimes students listen passively rather than take an active part in lessons and this restricts progress a little.

189. Teaching is good, being never less than satisfactory: in 60 per cent of lessons teaching is good and sometimes it is very good. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subjects they teach, and they plan their lessons effectively. They use time and other resources effectively and set clear targets. In the best lessons teachers are less didactic, but are sufficiently adept at intervening with additional supportive teaching points whilst allowing and encouraging pupils to learn independently.

190. The department has clear marking and assessment policies which involve formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. Teachers use the assessment of pupils' work well to inform future planning and teaching. The department uses its own internal system to verify its assessments effectively, and the good assessor feedback forms an effective basis for self-assessment and target setting. A particularly effective feature is the use of final quality verification checks with internal feedback.

191. The department is efficiently and effectively managed and this has resulted in a commitment to high achievement. The qualifications and experience of the staff match the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the students, including the skills to act as internal assessors for GNVQ. The department has continued to build on the good features outlined in the last inspection report. However, the computers in the department are very much out of date and this means that pupils and students capabilities in using information technology are sound at best.

## **MEDIA STUDIES**

192. Post-16 curricular provision is enhanced by media studies. Last year, there were 50 candidates for A level, 49 of whom secured A\*-E grades, 34 of them achieving grades A-C. This level of success is normal for the school; in 1998, every candidate passed. Media studies is also offered as a GNVQ subject, at Advanced and Intermediate levels, and students are equally successful on these courses. Teaching is uniformly good.

193. Four different staff teach media studies, in a well-equipped suite of rooms. Some of the hardware is becoming dated, but has been adapted to meet the needs of the courses. Students are able to gain experience on a range of computing and recording equipment.

194. During the inspection, a range of media activities was seen in operation. More traditional teaching is involved in the study of media forms, with good use made of films and clips on video. In the more practical lessons, students are encouraged to work independently in the different media rooms and in the library. They were seen editing video footage, broadcasting on the school radio station, and working on the school website.

195. The students engage whole-heartedly in this subject; they discuss well in lessons, work well collaboratively and independently, and relate to staff in a very adult way.

## **SOCIOLOGY**

196. Pupils attain standards in examinations at age 16 that are above national averages. Achievement in lessons is good. Pupils are beginning to analyse complex ideas and show they understand the different theories used to explain social phenomenon, for example, the lesson where pupils were analysing and comparing sociological theories of social class. By the end of the lesson all pupils, including one pupil who had support for learning, had understood the different positions. Some were able to talk about the different theories with some confidence.

197. Good standards are attained in the A level GCE examination. Achievement in lessons is also of a high standard. Pupils show a good understanding of sociological questions and are able to discuss the contribution of different theorists. The lesson on the family in modern society showed pupils' developing knowledge and understanding of a number of different, sometimes contradictory positions.

198. Teaching is based on very good subject knowledge and is good or very good. Lessons are well structured and the balance of debate, focused, skilful questioning and direct teaching provides a good mix of challenge and support for pupils' learning and ensures that all pupils make progress. There are high expectations for pupils' attainment. This results in pupils being offered demanding work which is generally well matched to pupils' needs, although the most able pupils would sometimes benefit from missing out introductory work and moving directly to the more demanding activities.

199. The quality of pupils' course work for GCSE and A level examinations is very good. A wide range of topics is selected by pupils, which reflects their own personal interests. Many of these topics are challenging and all examples seen show evidence of very good independent research completed with considerable application and care. The best examples show very good levels of analysis and much of the A level course work demonstrates pupils' ability to synthesise and use other research to support their findings. Sociology was not reported on in the last inspection.

## **PSYCHOLOGY**

200. Standards in the sixth form, in psychology, are in line with expectations. Students have a sound understanding of the different psychological theories and are able to distinguish between them. Good teaching successfully moves students' learning forward by setting clear objectives and expectations, and responding well to students' questions. Subject knowledge is very secure and this also helps pupils to make progress with their learning because complex theories are explained clearly and put into a practical context: for example, students regularly begin lessons with a relaxation session which puts into practice the theoretical ideas of the course.

201. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the very good relationships with students: praise is used very effectively to encourage students and to get the best from them. This has a number of constructive results. Students have extremely positive attitudes about psychology: they behave very well, concentrate very hard and have a strong desire to do well. As a result of these positive attitudes, students make good progress with their learning, broadening and deepening their understanding and knowledge.