

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **SOUTH CAMDEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

LONDON NW1 1RG

LEA area: CAMDEN

Unique reference number: 100051

Headteacher: Mr H Salisbury

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Head  
1604

Dates of inspection: 17–21 September 2001

Inspection number: 187942

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Charrington Street London
Postcode:	NW1 1RG
Telephone number:	020 7387 0126
Fax number:	020 7387 0739
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Alan Chesters
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1604	J Head	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9883	B Silvester	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10759	L Bappa	Team inspector	Religious education Sociology	
7465	R Brent	Team inspector	Resource Base	
19352	K Campbell-Platt	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	
4430	R Eaton	Team inspector	Music	
4647	J Evans	Team inspector	Physical education	
8501	P Hartwright	Team inspector	Design and technology	
31135	R Hobson	Team inspector	English Drama	
3643	D Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	
3674	G Marriott	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1963	S Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	Bengali	
18638	C Shaw	Team inspector	Art Information and communications technology	
31690	B Smith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
27407	B Stoneham	Team inspector	History Vocational education	
8501	A Webb	Team inspector	Science	

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA Ltd

Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

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

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

<b>REPORT CONTENTS</b>	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</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>ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM</b>	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>14</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>62</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

South Camden Community School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18. In September 2001, its Year 7 intake increased from 150 to 180 pupils. With 910 pupils now on roll, it is about the same size as many other comprehensive schools nationally. In all year groups, there are significantly more boys than girls. The school is situated in inner London and is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative, which aims to raise standards in inner city schools. The intake is multicultural; most pupils live within one mile of the school and are of Bangladeshi, black African or white heritage. Currently, there are over 200 refugee pupils in the school, mostly from Somalia, and 14 travellers. Almost 80 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language; around 100 pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. Pupil turnover is high; typically less than 50 per cent of Year 11 pupils have been in the school for five years. Pupils are from mixed socio-economic backgrounds, but many come from homes where there is significant deprivation. About 65 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the average for comprehensive schools nationally. Taken as a whole, pupils' attainment on entry is very low. Although pupils of all levels of prior attainment join the school, the proportion of lower attaining pupils is much greater than that found in most schools nationally. The school has identified 31 per cent of its pupils as having special educational needs, which is above average. Of these, 45 pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is well above average. Needs include specific and moderate learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school also has a resource base for pupils with physical disabilities; seven pupils are studying there at the moment.

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

The school meets the diverse needs of all its pupils very effectively. Although GCSE results are well below average, they are higher than might be expected given pupils' very low attainment on entry. Pupils achieve well. The school has very many more strengths than weaknesses. Teaching is good. The school is led and managed very well; it makes very good use of its financial resources. Thus, although funding is high when compared to that received by most schools nationally, the school gives good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good and often very good. Teachers use their expertise skilfully to manage behaviour and to plan and teach their lessons. As a result, pupils learn well.
- Leadership by the headteacher is excellent. He has established a common determination to raise standards and an ethos of tolerance and respect.
- The school evaluates its performance very thoroughly. It uses assessment information very effectively to ensure that pupils achieve well. Standards have risen rapidly in recent years.
- Pupils receive very good learning opportunities for both their academic and their personal development. Links with the community are excellent.
- Pupils of very different ethnic and social backgrounds work together happily; relationships within the school are very good. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent.

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

- In spite of the schools' efforts, attendance remains below average. This has an adverse effect on standards.
- The sixth form is functioning at a satisfactory level, but it is not flourishing as well as it could.

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

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

Overall, the school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in 1996, following which the school's priority has been to improve provision and standards within the main school. This it has done very successfully. GCSE results have improved significantly, at a faster rate than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades has risen from 11 to around 30

per cent. Teaching has also improved; the proportion of good or better teaching has risen considerably. In addition, the school has addressed almost all of the key issues in the last report successfully. It has improved provision for literacy across the school very successfully. There is now a concerted, whole school approach to developing pupils' literacy skills. Recent improvements have ensured good co-ordination between special educational needs and subject staff. The school has plans in place to ensure that the support provided for pupils with English as an additional language has maximum impact on learning. Pupils are now involved in their learning appropriately, for example, through target setting days; parental involvement in the school's work has improved. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching to share good practice is now a relatively well-established procedure. The school has debated long and hard on the best way to group pupils to optimise their learning. It has sensibly adopted a flexible approach which, for some subjects, includes a 'fast-track' for higher attainers. The school has improved its image within the community. It is now oversubscribed; more families from the local community are choosing the school as their first choice. There are now good curricular and pastoral links with feeder primary schools; Year 7 pupils speak highly of their taster days. The school is no longer required to provide a Christian act of collective worship daily.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	B
A-levels/AS-levels	E*	E*	E	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
Lowest 5%	E*

Similar schools: those schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

National examination results show that pupils achieve well during their time at the school. Although, in 2000, national test results at the end of Year 9 were in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally, they were broadly as expected, given pupils' very low attainment on entry. Results overall matched those of similar schools. Performance was better in English than in mathematics and science. Results have shown an upward trend in recent years. In 2001, provisional results indicate considerable improvement across all three core subjects. By the end of Year 11, the gap between the school's results and those achieved by schools nationally has been reduced. Although GCSE results in 2000 were well below average, they were higher than might be expected. The school's average GCSE points score was above the national average for schools with similar intake. It was well above that for schools whose pupils had achieved similar results in the 1998 national tests at the end of Year 9. Pupils did better in art and design, drama and modern foreign languages than in the other GCSE subjects they took. Performance was relatively weak in English, design and technology, geography and history. Again, GCSE results have improved in recent years; the rate of improvement is faster than that found nationally. In 2001, results improved further still and are the best yet. The school sets, and largely meets, realistic targets for improvement for GCSE results. In 2000, A level results were well below average but, in the main, results were as expected given students' GCSE scores on entry to the course. Results for students taking one-year vocational courses were above those achieved nationally and represented satisfactory achievement. The school does not set overall targets for improvement for post-16 provision.

In general, standards of work seen during the inspection were slightly higher than those described above. For example, overall, standards in Year 11 lessons were below, rather than well below, average. The difference is due, in part, to the fact that pupils' oral work is stronger than their written work; hence performance in written tests is lower than that seen in classrooms. Standards in subjects vary. For example, by Year 11, standards of work are average in Bengali, below average in science and well below



average in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects, including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, given their prior attainment.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is predominantly good in lessons and around the school. Pupils mostly know and follow the school's code of conduct.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships are evident both between pupils and teachers and among the pupils themselves.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, in spite of the school's very good procedures for promoting good attendance.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good.	Good.	Good.

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

Teaching is good overall; often, it is very good. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen in lessons taught by permanent staff. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching across the different year groups. In most lessons, good quality teaching promotes learning of an equally high calibre. Teachers adapt tasks and methods appropriately to meet pupils' differing learning needs. Overall, pupils learn well, building on existing knowledge effectively to acquire new knowledge and skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons very well. They have high expectations and manage pupils skilfully in lessons. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 11. It is also good overall in Bengali, geography, history, music, physical education and vocational education. Teaching is of very good quality in art, drama and religious education. It is satisfactory overall in all other subjects. The school's personal, social and health education programme is taught well. Literacy skills are taught very well through well-established whole school strategies. Numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics; a whole-school approach has yet to be developed.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum meets the interests, aspirations and special needs of its pupils very effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good across the school. Provision helps all pupils, including those in the resource base, to make good progress in learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Most pupils have English as an additional language so the above remarks apply. Provision is enhanced by specialist teachers and home-school link workers and by a focus on language development.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for spiritual development is good; that for moral and cultural development is very good. Pupils are given excellent opportunities for their social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is very effective in the support and guidance given to pupils for both their personal and academic development.

The school has good links with parents. Assessment information is used very well indeed to track pupils' progress and to provide appropriate support for learning.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Senior managers form a strong, cohesive and very effective team. The quality of middle management is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive of the school; they are aware that religious education is not provided post-16 as required by law.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good, with particular strengths in the analysis of test and examination data to inform departmental and whole school planning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes skilful use of funding to extend its work. Teachers' expertise is used to maximum effect.

Overall, there are sufficient staff, good learning resources and adequate accommodation to deliver the school's curriculum. An exception in staffing is in design and technology where, in spite of every effort, the department is short of a specialist teacher. The school considers the benefits of its spending decisions effectively, influenced by the principles of best value. It receives a considerable amount of funding from the Excellence in Cities project. This is targeted very carefully and, undoubtedly, is helping to raise standards.

#### 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 school is well led and managed.</li> <li>The school is approachable.</li> <li>The teaching is good.</li> <li>Their children like school.</li> <li>Their children are expected to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homework is inconsistent.</li> <li>There is a limited range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>Behaviour.</li> <li>The progress made by their children.</li> </ul>

A much smaller percentage of parents than usual returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Their responses, and those of parents who attended the parents' evening, were largely positive. Parents spoke highly of the headteacher; their children like school. They think that their children are taught well and are expected to work hard. They also feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. The inspection team agrees with these positive views. Inspectors found there to be a very good range of extra-curricular activities. They think homework is appropriate and that pupils make good progress. Inspectors agree that there are occasions when behaviour gives cause for some concern. However, behaviour is predominantly good; any lapses are managed well by staff.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form currently has around 140 students on roll; it has grown steadily in size over the past five years. There are significantly more students in Year 12 than in Year 13. As in the main school, males outnumber females in both year groups, roughly in the ratio of three to two. Typically, around 60 per cent of pupils from Year 11 continue into the sixth form; very few join from other schools. The multicultural nature of the main school is thus reflected in its sixth form. GCSE examination results are well below average, so most students embark on a one-year programme leading to GNVQ Intermediate qualifications. At the end of Year 12, around 90 per cent of students move into further education in other institutions. Typically, around 25 students each year have embarked on a two-year programme, leading to AS, A level or AVCE qualifications; this number has increased to around 40 students for 2001 entry. Usually, such students have achieved five or more GCSE's at grade C or above. About 80 per cent go on to higher education at the end of their studies. The school is part of a local consortium. It collaborates with three other schools and a further education college. In this way, it is able to offer around 37 academic subjects at advanced level and an AVCE in science, plus a limited range of Intermediate vocational courses. In addition, all students receive one lesson per week of personal, social and health education; all follow a key skills course.

**HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

At present, the sixth form is operating at a satisfactory level. In many ways, it meets the needs of the school's GCSE pupils well, in that it provides a secure environment for study for all those who wish to continue their education. Ultimately, it allows many students to go on to further and higher education. Cost effectiveness is good; the sixth form does not represent a drain on the financial and other resources of the main school. Standards overall are well below average for A level students and, in general, below average for students taking one-year vocational courses. However, in both instances, students achieve broadly as expected, given their GCSE scores on entry to the course. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The consortium arrangements are managed well. The quality of teaching is good; where pupils have appropriate prerequisite knowledge, it promotes good learning. The main strengths and areas that can be improved are:

**Strengths**

- The sixth form is a safe and harmonious community that offers students good opportunities for personal development.
- Students have better career and educational opportunities as a result of their studies.
- Teaching is good and often very good. Students benefit from a variety of teaching strategies and techniques, which helps their learning.
- Curricular provision is good overall; the consortium arrangements allow students a wide range of learning opportunities.

**What could be improved**

- The sixth form does not evaluate its performance sufficiently well to determine what action should be taken to improve standards.
- Overall, the monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and attendance are unsatisfactory.
- The academic guidance given to some students is unsatisfactory, both before entry and thereafter.
- The school does not provide religious education for post-16 students as required by law.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are well below average as some students start the course from a prior attainment that is too low for successful achievement. Teaching is good. Leadership is good.
Science	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve well in the vocational science courses. Teaching is very good; so too is leadership.
Information and communication technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students achieve at least satisfactory results. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Leadership is good.
Leisure and tourism	<b>Satisfactory.</b> 2001 results were below average owing to staffing issues, which have now been resolved. Teaching is satisfactory. Leadership is good.
Art	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve well, as a result of good teaching. Leadership is very good.
Sociology	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve well; teaching is very good. The subject makes a very strong contribution to students' personal development.
English	<b>Good.</b> Standards are well below average, but represent satisfactory achievement. Teaching is satisfactory. Leadership is good.
Bengali	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is very good; students achieve well. Leadership is good.
French	<b>Good.</b> A and AS level French are new courses. Teaching of two Year 13 students was excellent, resulting in very good achievement.

In other subjects, work was sampled. Teaching was good in both history and media studies. The key skills programme is taught well; excellent teaching was observed in the key skills lesson for information and communications technology.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Unsatisfactory overall. Inadequate use is made of assessment information to evaluate a student's suitability for a particular course or to monitor progress against specific targets thereafter.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Satisfactory. The sixth form has not been a priority for development since the last inspection. Senior managers and governors are aware of its shortcomings and have a clear idea of how it can develop.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students value the school and the courses it provides.</li> <li>Students appreciate the opportunity to pursue their studies, even though their GCSE grades are often somewhat low.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The advice and guidance that students are given during their time in the sixth form.</li> </ul>

Around 20 students responded to the questionnaire; many other formal and informal discussions took place with students during the inspection week. The team shares students' largely positive views and agrees that the advice and guidance given to students needs to be improved.

### **COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

*Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".*

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils achieve well during their time at South Camden Community School. By the end of Year 11, although academic standards are well below average, they are higher than might be expected given pupils' very low attainment on entry. This can be attributed to a variety of factors, but in particular to the good, and often very good, teaching that exists in the school and to very strong leadership, which focuses on raising standards. Since around 80 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, all comments in all sections of this report relate to this group of pupils, as well as to other ethnic groups within the school. Where appropriate, additional comments are made on any specific provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
2. Pupils enter the school with very low overall attainment. In 2000, national test results at the end of Year 9 remained very low in relation to the national average for all schools. However, national comparative information indicates that, overall, pupils achieved at least as well as they should have done. For example, the school's average points score matched that attained nationally by schools with similar intake. Results in English were somewhat better than those in mathematics and science. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The school's average points score has risen steadily from 1997 to 2000. Provisional results for 2001 show further improvement. The percentage of pupils attaining at least the level expected for their age rose in all three subjects, with particularly good improvement in mathematics.
3. GCSE results indicate that the school 'adds considerable value' to pupils' attainments in Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 11, the gap between the school's results and those achieved by schools nationally has been reduced. Results are higher than might be expected. For example, in 2000, the school's average GCSE point score per pupil, and the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades, were both well below the national average for all pupils. However, both were above national averages for schools with similar intake. More importantly, both were well above national averages for schools whose pupils had achieved similar results at the end of Year 9 in 1998. An inspection analysis, comparing 2000 GCSE results for Year 11 pupils with their 1998 Year 9 national test results, indicates that progress was as expected in English and very good indeed in mathematics and science. In 2000, girls attained somewhat better results than boys, but the gap in performance was smaller than that found nationally.
4. From 1996 to 2000, GCSE results improved significantly. The rate of improvement in the school's average GCSE points score was faster than that found nationally. In 2001, provisional data indicates that results continue to improve. Results are the best yet. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades rose from 25 per cent to around 30 per cent; the proportion gaining five or more A\* to G grades rose from 80 per cent to around 87 per cent. In 2000, pupils did better in drama, art and modern languages than in their other GCSE subjects. Performance was relatively weak in English, design and technology, history and geography. National comparative data is not yet available to make similar comparisons for 2001. However, results improved considerably in English, design and technology and history.
5. The school uses results from Year 6 and Year 9 national tests, and results from other standardised tests, to predict likely future performance in Year 9 tests and in GCSE examinations and to set targets. This process is well established in Years 10 and 11 and results in realistic targets for subjects and for individual pupils. The school analyses its results retrospectively; in 2000, most GCSE targets were met, although the percentage of pupils gaining one or more grades A\* to G was short of the 90 per cent target by one per cent. In 2001, all targets were met.
6. Inspection evidence generally substantiates and confirms the picture painted by the school's examination results, although work seen indicates that standards overall are somewhat better than the 2000 national test and examination results suggest. This is due, in part, to the fact that

pupils' oral work is stronger than their written work; hence performance in written tests is lower than that seen in classrooms. In Year 9, standards overall are well below those expected nationally for pupils' age. Standards are above average in Bengali and average in art, physical education and religious education. They are below average in science, information and communications technology (ICT), history, modern foreign languages, and music. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics, design and technology and geography. In Year 11, the overall standard of work seen was rather better, being below, rather than well below, that expected nationally for pupils' age. Standards are average in art, Bengali, drama, music and physical education. They are below average in all other subjects except for English, mathematics, design and technology and vocational education, where standards are well below those expected for 16 year olds. It is too early in the year to judge if the school is on line to meet its 2002 targets for GCSE. However, teachers will need to ensure that the standards of work observed in classrooms are translated into test and examination results.

7. In all subjects, pupils' skills in reading, writing and speaking in formal situations are considerably lower than one would expect to find nationally, and low standards in literacy continue to depress standards overall. Listening is generally quite good, even though some pupils have rather short concentration spans. Pupils' literacy skills are particularly weak on entry to the school. When this is taken into account, it is evident that most pupils make good progress in acquiring literacy and oracy skills.
8. Standards of numeracy are also weak overall. Although most pupils cope reasonably well with the numerical demands of other subjects, again, low level skills limit progress. Standards of written and mental calculation are improving in Years 7 to 9, following the introduction of mental and oral work in mathematics lessons; calculators are used appropriately and accurately.
9. Inspection findings also confirm to a large extent the evidence provided by the school's results and by other assessment information; namely, that pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Overall, high, middle and low attainers achieve well, given their attainment on entry. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make good gains not only in learning, but also in learning how to learn. Many arrive at the school with underdeveloped social skills and a somewhat immature understanding of expected classroom behaviour. The school does a good job in getting them 'on track'. In Years 10 and 11, learning is good. Assessment data is used very well to target pupils who are underachieving and to provide effective support. As a result, achievement is good. Analysis by the school shows that all ethnic groups achieve at least satisfactory results overall. Bangladeshi girls and pupils from Somalia make particularly good progress in Years 10 and 11. By Year 11, achievement is good in all subjects, except ICT and music, where pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This overall good rate of progress is promoted by good teaching and by a focus on raising standards. Pupils are expected to work hard and to meet their targets; most respond positively.
10. The large proportion of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall in language acquisition and in subject learning; they achieve well. However, pupils who are at an early stage of language acquisition, and who arrive at the school after Year 9, make slower progress. Here, many such pupils are unaccompanied refugees; their literacy skills are not sufficiently developed for them to access the subject curriculum effectively. In addition, some pupils who are fluent speakers, but who lack the skills and vocabulary for extended writing, are insufficiently targeted for support. Special educational needs pupils, at all stages of assessment, make good progress and achieve well. This includes those with physical disabilities from the school's resource base. In the main this is for two reasons: they receive good teaching; their learning is supported by the very close liaison between specialist staff and subject departments. Higher attaining pupils also benefit from good teaching; they too make good progress overall and achieve well at the end of both key stages. They respond well to the demands of examination work and to the opportunities provided by the school's gifted and talented programme.
11. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved significantly; the trend of improvement is above the national trend. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades has

risen from 11 per cent to around 30 per cent; the percentage gaining five or more A\* to G grades has risen from 52 per cent to 89 per cent. Pupils with English as an additional language now make at least as good progress as other pupils. Overall, there has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Sixth form**

12. Standards achieved by sixth formers vary considerably according to the course taken and the students who chose to study a subject in any particular year. However, overall, pupils' achievements are broadly satisfactory, given their relatively low standards of entry to different courses.
13. Examination results for those students who sat two or more A levels in 2000 were well below average. Students gained an average points score of 9.8, compared to a national average score of 18.2 points. Results were very low for the previous two years; provisional results for 2001 show little improvement. In all instances, the number of candidates for examinations was comparatively small; most subjects typically enter fewer than five students. With such small numbers, national subject comparisons are not valid. A very small number of candidates were entered in 2000 for less than two A levels or AS equivalents; results for these students were well above the national average.
14. An inspection value-added analysis of A level results for both 2000 and 2001 suggests that these results represent satisfactory achievement given students' GCSE scores on entry. The majority of students commence A level courses having achieved only modest GCSE results. Nevertheless, some of these students make good, or even very good, progress and achieve better results than expected. For the small number of candidates who have good GCSE results, value-added outcomes are disappointing. These students tend not to achieve as well as they should. The school does not set overall targets for its post-16 results, based on predictions resulting from students' GCSE results. It is thus not as aware as it should be as to how well students are achieving on different courses.
15. Results in GNVQ Intermediate courses present a very mixed picture. Overall, in 2000, students taking a one-year course attained above average results. Their average total points score was 8.9, compared with a score of 6.5 nationally. In 2001, results for leisure and tourism suffered because of a lack of continuity in teaching. Staffing was not settled and mainly supply teachers were employed. The course completion rate was well below average, as was the pass rate. No students gained better than a pass grade. Results in vocational science were above average, as was the course completion rate.
16. The standard of work seen during the inspection in Year 12 classes cannot be gauged, as courses have only just started and it is too early to make any firm judgements about standards in subjects. This is true also for standards in the key skills of communication, application of number and information technology. The exception is Bengali, where students take A level after one year. Here, standards seen during the inspection were above average, with pupils achieving very well. Standards of work seen in Year 13 were below average overall but, again, small numbers in many subjects make comparisons with national expectations difficult. However, standards were judged to be above those expected at this stage of the course in art. They were broadly as expected in vocational science and ICT. Standards were below those expected in leisure and tourism and sociology and well below expectations in English and mathematics. In French, standards were very high, partly because the two students involved have lived in communities where French is the first language. Achievement was at least satisfactory in all subjects. Although many students improve their acquisition of English during the sixth form, standards of written and spoken English are comparatively low and this hinders achievement. The school has taken action to address this issue; all Year 12 students now follow a key skills course. Standards have not improved significantly since the last inspection.

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



17. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds say they like their school; most are keen to play a full part in its life. Most pupils have good attitudes to their work. Where attitudes are good, or better, pupils listen carefully and get on well with the task given. They are enthusiastic learners and are keen to participate in lessons by, for example, answering questions. Pupils know what is expected of them and want to succeed. In a minority of cases, attitudes are less positive; pupils do not pay attention, soon get off task, and make little effort with their studies.
18. Behaviour, both in class and around the school, is predominantly good. Problems of behaviour associated with a short attention span and a lack of self-discipline do arise but, normally, teachers are able to handle such incidents very well and minimise any disruption to learning. There are exceptions. For example, at the start of the inspection, some pupils were excitable and noisy, perhaps as a result of tensions within the community following the incidents in New York and Washington in the previous week. At times, some of the behaviour in corridors was noisy, silly and, at times, plain rude. On occasions, such behaviour spilled over into lessons and, in spite of teachers' best endeavours, disrupted learning. Teachers new to the school, and those on supply, often had more difficulty in managing this situation than the more experienced teachers. Pupils themselves helped to draw up a code of conduct, which emphasises respect for others. Pupils report that cases of bullying or oppressive behaviour occur rarely. In the last academic year, there were 82 fixed-term and two permanent exclusions. The number of fixed-term exclusions has declined significantly over the last four years.
19. Relationships, among pupils themselves and between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils work and play together happily and well. They co-operate and are willing to help one another and to share resources. There is a wide range of ethnic groups in the school and the racial and social harmony that is evident is very good. Pupils respect the feelings, views and beliefs of their peers.
20. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds respond well to the opportunities that they are given to take responsibility. Pupils represent the school in musical performances and debates in the local community. Active citizenship is encouraged; elections for the school council are run as a mini general election. Once elected, pupils represent and pursue ideas for improvement from fellow pupils. Significant improvement to the school's toilet facilities resulted from pressure from the school council. Year 11 pupils act as 'Buddies' for younger pupils. Pupils act as library monitors and as guides to visitors to the school. Pupils also show initiative by raising money for charities, like the Bangladesh Flood Relief and Cancer Research.
21. Attendance in 2000 to 2001 was 88.5 per cent, which is well below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Unauthorised absence was around five per cent, which is well above the national average and shows an increase since the last inspection. The main reasons for non-attendance are illness, extended leave during term time, religious celebrations, or pupils kept away to translate for their parents and truancy. Pupils are punctual to lessons, but a small minority, around four per cent, arrives late to school. Unsatisfactory attendance has a negative impact on the progress and achievement of the pupils concerned.
22. In the previous inspection report, behaviour was judged to be good; racial harmony was a very prominent and a positive feature of the school. This is still the case. The level of attendance has improved since the previous inspection but, in spite of the school's efforts, it remains unsatisfactory overall.

### **Sixth form**

23. Sixth form students are positive about the school; their attitudes are good. Sixth form numbers are rising and most students profess to like the school and appreciate the opportunities offered. Many are committed and enthusiastic and are keen to progress further with their education. The school has succeeded in establishing a growing, harmonious and safe environment in which students can work. This provision is appreciated; most students behave well, are respectful and form constructive relationships with one another and with their teachers. Some incidents of immature behaviour were encountered from a small group of female students attending vocational

classes. Such behaviour was the exception. It was confined to a group of students who were largely undecided about staying on at school and was handled well.

24. Students' personal development is good. Students accept responsibility well. For example, they run their own student council and take advantage of opportunities for independent working within the recently improved sixth form study area. The consortium teaching arrangements necessitate that students assume responsibility for their learning by ensuring that they attend the correct venues and on time. In the main they succeed. The prime area for improvement is attendance, which is unsatisfactory. The school estimates that sixth form attendance last year was 89 percent. Given the substantial amount of ground that needs to be covered in all courses in a relatively short period of time, higher attendance rates should be sought as part of the commitment to achieving higher educational standards.

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

25. Teaching is good overall; often, it is very good. Teaching was good or better in almost three-quarters of the lessons observed. Very little unsatisfactory teaching (around one per cent) was observed in lessons taught by permanent staff. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching across the year groups. In most lessons, this good quality teaching promotes learning of an equally high calibre. Overall, pupils learn well, building on existing knowledge effectively to acquire new knowledge and skills. However, in a small minority of lessons, the quality of learning lags behind that of the teaching. This is for a variety of reasons. In science, limited resources mean that practical work is undertaken in groups of four, rather than in pairs. Often, only two of the group are actively involved; learning is relatively slow for the other two. In other instances where factual recall is important, problems associated with short memories limit learning. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, very good teaching promoted only good learning. In other lessons, particularly in some taught by teachers new to the school or by supply teachers, learning is slow due to pupils' short attention span and, on occasions, to their silly behaviour.
26. The good quality teaching is due to a variety of factors. However, four major strengths underpin much of the teaching across all subjects: teachers have good subject knowledge; they plan their lessons very well; they have high expectations; they manage pupils skilfully in lessons. Teaching is very good overall in art, drama and religious education. It is good overall in English, mathematics, science, Bengali, geography, history, music, physical education and vocational education. It is satisfactory overall in all other subjects. The school's personal, social and health education programme is taught well.
27. Teachers are confident and competent in the subjects they teach. They use their knowledge well to engage and hold pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 9 drama lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge was evident in her use and explanation of technical terms. In a Year 8 physical education lesson, the teacher's obvious knowledge and enthusiasm motivated pupils to achieve highly. The start to most lessons is lively and informative; pupils' interest is captured from the start. For example, in a Year 7 geography lesson on grid references, after recapping on the relevant rules, the teacher used pupils very effectively at the board to explain and demonstrate. As a result, pupils gained in confidence; interest was assured. Teachers give clear instructions; hence, pupils understand what they need to do and settle to work quickly and purposefully. Teachers also give clear explanations, they are able to explain new ideas confidently and correctly at a level that is matched well to pupils' previous learning. This helps pupils to build effectively on what they already know and to understand new ideas. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson, the teacher and a learning mentor explained why Muslims need to be clean in order to pray; explanations were at a level which allowed pupils to understand and to learn. Teachers ask perceptive, probing questions, not only to help pupils recall previous learning, as at the start many lessons, but also to enable pupils to think ideas through for themselves. For example, in a Year 8 art lesson, excellent use of questions allowed pupils to articulate what they knew about Gaudi's work and to develop their understanding of pattern further.

28. In many instances, teachers not only have good subject knowledge but also a good grasp of the ways in which pupils learn. They use such expertise well. A strength of the teaching is the careful way in which lessons are planned and prepared, in response to a careful assessment of pupils' needs. Most lessons are structured very well; pupils are given clear time targets and good guidance on the purpose of the lesson. Learning outcomes are communicated clearly to pupils at the start of lessons. Many teachers draw out key learning points effectively at the end of lessons, consolidating and reinforcing the learning that has taken place during the lesson. For example, in a Year 7 personal, social and health education lesson, the teacher made quite clear what pupils were expected to learn as a result of the lesson. At the end, learning was evaluated; most pupils had learned that specific skills are needed for successful group work! In most instances, teachers plan carefully how they can adapt work for pupils of differing attainment, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language, so that all can learn and make progress. For example, in English, tasks and materials are matched carefully to pupils' needs. In art, work is set at different levels, so that all pupils receive appropriate challenge. Teachers have appropriately high expectations for gifted and talented pupils and set work that helps them to attain well. For example, in a Year 11 art lesson, such pupils were pushed hard to develop their drawing and research skills appropriately. When special educational needs staff help to teach a lesson, or when learning assistants are present, teachers plan carefully how to maximise their effect. Homework is planned carefully and is used appropriately in most subjects to reinforce classwork.
29. Most teachers manage pupils very skilfully in lessons. Many of the school's pupils are not easy to manage. Most are good natured, but pupils' natural inclination is to be lively, chatty and somewhat noisy in class. For lower attainers, attention spans are often very short. Younger pupils are not used to sitting still and paying attention. Teachers use a range of strategies, underpinned by the school's code of conduct and behaviour policy, to establish a disciplined and constructive learning environment. Teachers have high expectations for standards of behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them; most respond accordingly. Teachers are firm and fair; pupils can work in a purposeful atmosphere and get help when needed. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident. For example, in English, the teacher quietened and calmed a potentially difficult Year 9 class very effectively. In a Year 11 science class, good class control was observed. Teachers try to encourage independence and self-reliance, but many pupils, especially those in Years 7 to 9, find this difficult. Negative attitudes were seen, for example, in design and technology, and there were instances of poor concentration and of passivity.
30. There are no aspects of teaching which are unsatisfactory overall and no generic weaknesses across all subjects. In many instances, teachers use their day-to-day assessment of pupils' work effectively to help pupils understand what they need to do to make progress. However, practice varies both within and across departments. Most teachers give appropriate praise and constructive criticism during lessons, to motivate pupils and to bolster their self-esteem. Most mark pupils' work regularly but, in some instances, marking does not help pupils to understand the level of their work or what they need to do in order to improve. In general, teachers use resources effectively to promote learning. However, in several subjects, although planning for the use of ICT is appropriate, it is not yet used in lessons to support learning. This is often because teachers at present do not have appropriate access to computers.
31. Overall, literacy skills are taught very well. Since large proportions of pupils have special educational needs, or English as an additional language, many whole-school strategies have been developed to support the teaching of literacy. There is a concerted whole-school approach that is inclusive and well managed. Most subjects make very positive contributions through highlighting key specialist words, stressing accurate spelling, using writing frames and encouraging pupils to read aloud. In religious education, for example, specialist words are regularly emphasised, and skills of note taking and report writing are taught. The geography department tests spelling of geographical terms and pupils write imaginatively as well as factually. In a Spanish lesson seen during the inspection week, the teacher encouraged pupils to use a dictionary, and this was clearly a standard occurrence. Good pair work was seen in a mathematics lesson that helped to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The science

department places strong emphasis on understanding and using technical terms. The English department is starting to use the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy techniques effectively in Year 7, and has a programme to develop these throughout the key stage.

32. These interventions undoubtedly help all pupils to make progress. Partnership teaching between special educational needs and subject teachers is well established and effective, resulting in differentiated tasks and materials. These help pupils, including those from the resource base, to engage with appropriate work across departments. Support assistants provide valuable support for pupils and have a positive impact on learning. The school is aware that partnership teaching between English as an additional language and subject teachers is underdeveloped. Even so, in the majority of lessons, work is appropriately matched to the range of learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Refugee pupils receive good support.
33. The school's strategies for teaching numeracy skills are satisfactory. Pupils use and develop their skills across subjects. For example, basic number and measuring skills are practised in science and in design and technology. Pupils' spatial concepts are improved in art, during work requiring the use of perspective. Pupils have many opportunities to improve their statistical skills. For example, in geography, pupils can interpret the usual range of graphs, charts, map references and line graphs. Six figure map references are used in Year 7 and tally charts are used to create block graphs in Years 8 and 9. Graphical skills are needed in science, in the interpretation of experimental results. In ICT, pupils used data-bases and spreadsheets. However, practice is inconsistent both across and within departments. Opportunities are missed in most subjects to build systematically upon pupils' knowledge and use of number. The school recognises the need for developing a whole-school approach.
34. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last report, when 10 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and just 50 per cent was good or better. The school has supported teachers very successfully in considering how they can best help pupils to learn. Most teachers now match their teaching approaches and their materials to pupils' differing learning needs effectively. Overall, there is appropriate challenge for the higher attainers.

### **Sixth form**

35. Teaching in the sixth form is good and often very good. In general, it promotes good learning. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was observed; around three-quarters of the teaching was good or better. Teaching is very good in science, sociology and Bengali. It is good in mathematics art and English, and satisfactory in ICT and leisure and tourism. It was only possible to see a very small amount of French teaching; this was excellent. Teaching was good in lessons sampled in history and media studies; it was satisfactory in a personal, social and health education lesson. The key skills lessons for communication and application of number were taught well. In the key skills lesson for ICT, teaching was excellent.
36. The same strengths underpin much of the teaching as in the main school. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least good in almost all subjects. For example, in an introductory lesson to the English AS course, the teacher's explanation of tasks and literary analysis were underpinned by good specialist knowledge; pupils were challenged to think hard about literary ideas which promoted good learning. In many subjects, there is very effective questioning, to challenge students and to develop their understanding.
37. Lessons are generally planned very thoroughly; particular attention is paid to meeting the learning needs of students with different prior attainment levels and backgrounds. For example, planning for a Year 13 art lesson, focusing on underwater life, was thoughtful and very detailed. As a result, the purpose of the lesson was very clear; explanations and demonstration were very informative. Different tasks were provided, based on prior knowledge of the students' needs and all were given clear targets. Learning proceeded at a very good rate. Teachers also plan well for students' independent study. Students are given clear instructions and advice what they need to do before subsequent lessons. Teachers' behaviour management skills are less in evidence, but are still strongly evidenced in some instances. For example, in an introductory Year 12

Intermediate GNVQ science lesson, students' behaviour was immature and not as expected of sixth formers. The teacher demonstrated great patience and skill in establishing acceptable behaviour.

38. As in the main school, learning sometimes is not of quite the same quality as teaching. Overall, students' achievements are satisfactory rather than good. A diversity of factors contributes to this situation. Standards of written English are comparatively low; this hinders performance in examinations. Past results indicate that where students have the prerequisite knowledge, teaching allows them to attain high grades. For example, in 2000, the one student who took A level mathematics gained an A grade. However, some students are allowed, for a variety of reasons, to take courses for which they have insufficient prerequisite knowledge. For example, the algebraic skills of some of the students currently studying A level mathematics are very weak indeed. Teachers are thus torn between meeting students' needs and covering the required syllabus. The small size of groups in some subjects limits learning. For example, in English, in spite of skilful questioning, the spark and excitement that is often apparent as students engage in discussion and debate is often lacking.
39. Teachers mark students' work regularly, helping them to know where they have gone wrong and what they can do about it. Most subjects assess students' attainment against course requirements, but this on-going 'informal' assessment, although satisfactory overall, is not underpinned by a rigorous understanding of what students should achieve, given their attainment at the start of the course. Underachievement is not identified sufficiently well for the necessary support to be offered if necessary.

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

40. Provision for Years 7 to 11 has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Overall, the school provides a very good range of educational experiences and learning opportunities, which reflect both national requirements and the specific needs of pupils living in this area. The school is maximising the resources available through Excellence in Cities funding, and other grants, to help to raise standards by focusing on curriculum development and on improving teaching and learning. As part of this, extending and enriching the curriculum further is seen as important.
41. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was described as broad and relevant, but there were a number of criticisms. To a great extent these have been dealt with. Religious education is now being provided for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. The time allocated to subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9 has been improved by the restructuring of the school day; all subjects now have enough time. Additional time has been given to literacy and to ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9.
42. The range of options for Years 10 and 11 has been extended. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, business studies, drama, a humanities course in addition to history and geography and media studies are available. So too is a GNVQ course in ICT. All pupils have a choice from three modern foreign languages, these being Bengali, French and Spanish. Pupils for whom a full GCSE course would not be suitable are able to take a GNVQ foundation level course in Leisure and Tourism and the Youth Award.
43. The basic curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of provision, which includes learning mentors, home school liaison staff and specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. In most instances, this is very well co-ordinated, so that pupils receive the most appropriate support from the right person or group. The provision is monitored carefully, by the pastoral review forum, to avoid duplication of resources.
44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those from the resource base, is good overall. The school has an ethos of social inclusion and special educational needs pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils are withdrawn from modern foreign languages and personal, social and health education lessons for limited periods, for focused support in reading

- and number work, following an annual assessment of need across all year groups. Pupils who have behavioural difficulties receive very good support through mentoring, counselling and, where appropriate, one to one support in the learning support unit. This has a positive impact on homework, attendance, punctuality and class work.
45. The provision for gifted and talented pupils, which is being developed through the Excellence in Cities initiative, is giving these pupils access to a range of extension and enrichment activities, such as master classes in mathematics, which complement the work they are doing in school.
  46. Provision for pupils who are identified as needing extra support by specialist English as an additional language staff is under review. At present, pupils are withdrawn from modern foreign languages for small group support. The school plans to limit this withdrawal, and to provide more in class support. In Key Stage 3, this will be targeted on reading support for specifically targeted pupils. In Key Stage 4, support will be targeted on pupils who are fluent speakers, but who lack the skills and vocabulary for extended writing. Plans are good, but it is not possible to evaluate their impact.
  47. The school's personal, social and health education course is excellent. The programme deals with a wide range of topics, which include relationships, bullying, sex and drugs education, personal safety and financial management. The course also aims to develop a range of skills, for example, those needed to work together as a team, as well as to promote self-confidence. It is taught by tutors. The teaching materials have been substantially reviewed and updated in the past two years to ensure that non-specialists can teach it effectively.
  48. The work experience provision for Year 10 pupils has improved since the last inspection. It is well managed and pupils gain a great deal of valuable experience from their placements. Other aspects of careers work are good; for example, the school runs an Industry Week annually. However, some of the work related to guidance for individual pupils has not been developed to the extent that the school had expected. This is partly due to circumstances beyond the school's control.
  49. Developing links with primary schools was an issue at the last inspection. These now are very good. The extensive liaison enables pupils to make the transition from primary to secondary school successfully. The work is increasingly centred on developing curricular links; for example, the bridge project enables Year 6 pupils to work on a Shakespeare play. The school also runs master classes for primary age children and summer schools. The links with further and higher education are good; co-operation with Kingsway College has improved the provision for vocational education.
  50. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, dance, drama, homework clubs and subject based clubs, all extend pupils' experience and support their academic work. Similarly the school takes every opportunity to exploit the rich resources of London and further afield. Community links make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. The extensive range of visits undertaken to places of interest, including residential visits, and the wide range of visitors invited into the school, enrich the curriculum. The link with the nearby British Library has been used to develop extension activities and to launch a national reading scheme. Other community links include regular contact with groups such as the Somali Parents' Association; the school supports the Somali and Bengali weekend schools. The housing and health authorities and the police all make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
  51. The equality of access and opportunity in the school is very good. All pupils have access to the school's curriculum. In English, great care is taken with the selection of texts. In drama and physical education, all pupils are included in practical work, as far as is practical, including the physically disabled. Improvements in physical education mean that in both curricular and non-curricular work, gender imbalances of the past have been removed. In ICT, there is some lack of opportunity for higher attainers to reach the highest levels by the end of Year 9. In all other subjects, and in the curriculum, outcomes are good. The school seeks to be truly inclusive, by ensuring that equality of access and opportunity underpins all of its work.

52. The curriculum has developed well since the last inspection. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed its policy for organising teaching groups. Departments have the flexibility to group pupils according to the needs of their particular subjects and pupils. For example, in several subjects, the creation of a fast track set enables allows higher attainers to learn at a fast pace. Developments in the use of ICT across subjects has been somewhat limited. This has been to a large extent because of constraints on access to facilities. However, the opening of the City Learning Centre on the school site will enable departments to implement their plans to develop ICT in more depth.
53. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good. This is a school with a very positive ethos that values reflection, empathy, self-examination and a consideration of the non-material aspects of life. The school has been granted a dispensation and therefore does not have to provide a daily act of collective worship for each pupil. Regular assemblies throughout the week make some contribution to this aspect of pupils' personal development, but little use is made of them to create an aesthetically inspiring occasion through, for example, music or the visual arts. During the week of the inspection, the headteacher's assembly provided pupils with space to reflect quietly on the recent terrorist attacks in America. There is a prayer room for the use of Muslim pupils and staff. Opportunities to develop spiritual awareness within subjects of the curriculum arise spontaneously or as the result of individual initiative; there are some missed opportunities and not every subject shows a high level of awareness of the contribution it can make to this aspect of pupils' development. Religious education makes an excellent contribution, supported by other subjects in the humanities. Pupils are taught to value empathy and self-examination. During the week of the inspection, pupils of all ages showed high levels of maturity in understanding questions of meaning, such as who made God or who could be considered to be a religious martyr.
54. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers and other adults continually reinforce basic moral principles throughout the daily life of the school. Adults provide very good role models for pupils in their daily encounters around the school. They treat pupils with respect and kindness, discuss issues of right and wrong and try to explain why one course of action might be more acceptable than another. In religious education, pupils come to an understanding of moral codes in several world faiths, while in personal and social education, pupils discuss a range of moral and ethical issues. Pupils are encouraged to maintain the rules of fair play when involved in sporting activities. Pupils feel safe in school and believe that teachers know them well. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' moral development. Teachers are not afraid to confront the moral implications of difficult issues, such as the recent terrorist attacks in America. The school's code of conduct, together with its related codes, has been developed after considerable consultation with all parties concerned. In religious education, discussion of this is incorporated into Year 8 lessons on moral codes in Islam. Environmental issues are discussed in several subjects; for example, in humanities, where pupils have recently considered whether Railtrack should demolish Borough Market.
55. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. This is a school that is at ease with itself and with the immediate community. The school has worked extremely hard to achieve this harmony and to help pupils develop their social skills. Many lessons provide opportunities for pupils to work in teams, small groups or with a partner. The school provides an extremely thorough range of opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibilities. The school council, for example, is very active and elections to it are run like national elections, with election addresses and polling booths, borrowed from the local council. The election is run in the presence of the local mayor. The council has a budget that is controlled by pupils. Volunteer playground helpers are interviewed and given job descriptions. There are pupil representatives on the local council's Vulnerable Older People's Working Party. 'Sparkleshark', a lower school gifted and talented drama production, provides a further example. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and day and residential trips, where pupils are encouraged to take an active role as citizens. The mentoring system helps potentially vulnerable pupils to develop their skills in self-confidence and in showing respect to themselves and to their community. Relationships

with the local police are very effective and this enables pupils to see authority in a more positive light than they might otherwise do.

56. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school makes excellent provision for its pupils to live in a multi-cultural and multi-faith Britain. This was very evident, for example, during the week of the inspection where no inter-faith tension was apparent as a result of the recent events in America. These were discussed in several lessons where pupils argued a variety of points of view and showed very impressive levels of tolerance and respect for other people's opinions. The school has worked extremely hard to achieve this level of racial and religious harmony. All pupils in Year 7, for example, have lessons in Bengali and the school has developed excellent links with local communities. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good, through many subjects that teach pupils about a range of cultural traditions. There are some missed opportunities, however, such as in art where most artists studied are 20<sup>th</sup> century Europeans. There are few opportunities for pupils to develop their aesthetic skills through dance.

### **Sixth form**

57. The curriculum offered to sixth form students is good overall. Though the sixth form is smaller than average, the school is able to offer a good range of subjects. This is partly attributable to the school being involved in a consortium arrangement with other schools in Camden. In addition, thought has been given to how the school's own provision can be improved. The breadth of the curriculum has been extended recently by the introduction of AS history and a compulsory key skills course in Year 12. There is a good and established provision for a wide range of A and AS level subjects. In addition, vocational options are available at both Advanced and Intermediate level in science and at Intermediate level in leisure and tourism. There is, however, scope for the curriculum to be developed further, so that it can meet the aspirations and needs of all students more effectively. Vocational options could be extended to include a wider selection of subjects, as well as some courses being offered at Foundation level.
58. The curriculum is socially inclusive and succeeds in offering good opportunities for progression to many students for whom English is an additional language. The provision for careers education and guidance is developing. Though some aspects of the careers guidance programme should be improved, to ensure that students enrol for the most suitable post-16 course available, other aspects of the programme are good. Students have good opportunities for work experience and work shadowing placements. Initiatives such as Excellence in Cities will serve to boost the quality of these experiences. The opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. All students follow a weekly course in personal and social education. Other opportunities are planned, such as involvement in sport but, at the time of the inspection, such courses had not actually started.
59. The overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is very similar to that provided in the rest of the school. Provision for the spiritual development of students is good, even though the school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education for its sixth form students. The school's very positive ethos, that values self-examination, extends into the sixth form. A sixth form student runs an active Muslim society. During the week of the inspection, students took flowers to a nearby American Church, to show sympathy for the victims of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. Some subjects in the curriculum make contributions to this dimension of students' development – for example, the provision in sociology is excellent. Students in Year 13 considered the definition of 'religious' and whether they would categorise themselves as such. They showed a very mature understanding of relevant concepts.
60. The provision for students' moral development is very good. Teachers again reinforce basic moral principles throughout the daily life of the school and treat students with respect. Again, teachers are not afraid to confront the moral implications of difficult issues. This was evident, for example, in class discussions in sociology, where students considered what actions should be taken by the world against terrorism.



61. The school makes very good provision for students' social development. Students are able to go on a variety of residential and other trips; for example, vocational students from Year 12 and bilingual learners visit Wales and Oxford University. Year 12 students work on a mentor programme with Year 8 on sex education and on paired reading with Year 7 pupils. Along with the rest of the school, students in the sixth form are able to participate in the school council and in a range of extra-curricular activities.
62. The provision for cultural development is good. Students are very effectively prepared to live and work in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society and this is evident by their behaviour around the school and in lessons. In a sociology lesson, for example, students from a variety of ethnic and faith backgrounds debated the response of the West to terrorist attacks. They showed high levels of maturity and tolerance for a variety of views and opinions.

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

63. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. Teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them very good support and guidance. This has a positive effect on standards. Health education is given appropriate emphasis within the curriculum. The school nurse and doctor visit regularly and carry out medical checks. There are several qualified first-aiders on the staff and a well equipped medical room. A wide range of specialists visits the school.
64. The school has a satisfactory health and safety policy and annual safety checks are completed by the premises manager. The school has an appropriate child protection policy, which is based upon the local education authority's guidelines. There is a designated teacher who is responsible for the implementation of the policy, which is available to all members of staff via the staff handbook. All teachers have received training and training is planned for the non-teaching staff. Proper records are kept, including an 'at risk register'.
65. The school's procedures for promoting attendance are very good. There is a system of rewards and certificates, on both an individual and a class level, to encourage good attendance and punctuality. The importance of good attendance is emphasised throughout the school. Attendance is monitored by form tutors, by heads of year, by the attendance officer and by an assistant headteacher; there are weekly meetings to review cases of non-attendance. Any concerns are pursued quickly. If the concern persists the educational social worker or one of the home-school link workers will make a home visit. Translators are available for parents who do not have English as a first language. Registers are marked regularly, but greater care is needed to ensure that all pupils are always marked present or absent.
66. The procedures the school has developed to promote discipline and good behaviour are also very good. There is an appropriate behaviour policy, which was compiled after consultation with pupils' parents and staff. Rules and the code of conduct are clear and are displayed in all tutor rooms. The policy contains a suitable range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. A few teachers, especially new and supply teachers, did not apply these consistently during the inspection week. If a pupil's behaviour is causing concern, he or she can be referred to a mentor or a counsellor and be the subject of a pastoral review. The Learning Support Unit can be used for the short-term withdrawal of pupils with behavioural difficulties. Incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour are infrequent but, when they do occur, they are dealt with speedily and properly, in accordance with the anti-bullying and anti-racist policies. There are no perceptible tensions between the various racial groups in the school and one Year 11 pupil referred to her fellow pupils as 'one big family'.
67. The school looks after the pupils in its care very well. Pastoral care is good; form teachers have a caring relationship with their class. Heads of year provide good support. Pupils causing concern for a variety of reasons are referred by the head of year to a pastoral review forum. This comprises representatives from all the different support services within the school. Decisions are taken as to the best means of support; such decisions are communicated to staff and tutors via the weekly staff bulletin. There is a work review day for all pupils with their tutors, which parents

attend, where general targets are agreed. All pupils also have another day in the year, where targets are reviewed. The personal development of pupils is monitored effectively. Each pupil has a personal planner, where merit rewards and targets are recorded. Information on the personal development of pupils is contained in pupils' profiles and in annual reports to parents. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education is delivered on a weekly basis.

68. There are effective systems, both at whole school and departmental level, for assessing and analysing pupils' attainment and progress. Each subject has appropriate procedures in place to assess pupils' performance against National Curriculum, GCSE or other criteria. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are well aware of their likely performance in GCSE examinations. However, the strength of the school's practice is the collection and use of a range of assessment data by senior managers. From the time they enter school, individual pupil profiles are built up, using national test results and results from other standardised tests taken in Year 7. These not only summarise past attainment, but predict likely future performance. Senior managers use such predictions to track pupils' progress across each key stage, to identify underachievers across the ability range and to assess pupils' often complex learning and support needs. They are used effectively to set targets for individuals, for year groups, for departments and for classes. Effective action is taken as a result of these analyses. For example, some underachievers are provided with undergraduate mentors in Year 11. Last year, a group of potentially higher-attaining Year 11 pupils were taken away for a residential working weekend. Further analysis shows that these support strategies work well in ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they should. The information is supplied to all teachers, most of whom make similarly good use of the data to track progress in their subject.
69. There are effective and consistent procedures for placing pupils on the special educational needs register and for providing support. All pupils are carefully screened on entry to school, so that an early identification of needs can be made. In Year 7, pupils who are at National Curriculum level three or below in reading are given extra support. The very good system for information exchange, through the pastoral review forum, ensures that pupils' needs are reviewed and that support is modified in relation to progress. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are under review; the co-ordinator is aware that, often, they need to be more measurable and time limited. All statutory requirements for pupils with statements are met. Pupils' records are updated regularly and the support specified in statements is monitored. Target setting for those pupils with English as an additional language, who receive extra support, is not developed adequately. For example, samples of pupils' work maintained in their profiles are not analysed for specific areas for language development.
70. In the previous inspection report it was stated that good support and guidance were offered within a secure environment; support for pupils' academic and personal development now is very good and is helping to raise standards.

### **Sixth form**

71. The school has established a strong ethos for personal care and sixth form students benefit from this as much as pupils in Years 7 to 11. However, other aspects of the support and guidance given to students are less effective. For example, during the inspection, the school struggled to produce accurate figures for attendance; monitoring procedures for this academic year are unsatisfactory. A drive to improve attendance is hindered by inadequate registration arrangements for A and AS students, who only see their tutors once a week. Though there are registration procedures in lessons, these do not ensure sufficiently high attendance rates.

### **Assessment**

72. The effectiveness of the school's use of assessment data to monitor students' academic performance is unsatisfactory. Many departments employ acceptable and often good assessment techniques, but the rigorous use of data to track progress, and to ensure that standards are sufficiently high, is not embedded across the entire sixth form. This lack of rigour

means that students are insufficiently aware of their progress. Data is not used sufficiently well to set realistic targets for students or to provide targeted support. This is having an adverse impact on standards. The setting of target grades, and the measuring of progress against such targets, is at an embryonic stage

### ***Advice, support and guidance***

73. Students receive good support for their personal needs and development. However, weaknesses in monitoring students' academic progress mean that, overall, the support and guidance offered to sixth form students is unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in the use of assessment data, as described above, limit the objective guidance that the school can give in leading all students towards appropriate study and career opportunities. The quality of advice offered to students about their programmes of study needs improving. This weakness was identified by students themselves. Better advice is needed in Year 11, and when students receive their GCSE results, to ensure that all students opt for courses on which they are likely to succeed. During their time in the sixth, the quality of advice offered to students needs improving to ensure that viable programmes of study are maintained. An analysis of A level results shows that in 2000, for example, many students were entered for only one A level, which was failed. Such an outcome depresses overall standards. The lack of detailed assessment data makes it harder to diagnose individual learning needs accurately. Consequently some students may not be receiving sufficient additional support and standards suffer. The opportunities for support from personal tutors are similarly unsatisfactory. Vocational students register with their form tutor daily, but A and AS level students only formally register with their form tutor on a Monday morning. This lack of contact makes it very difficult for tutors to monitor each student's academic progress proficiently.

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

74. A much smaller percentage of parents than usual returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Their responses, and those of parents who attended the parents' evening, were largely positive. In general, parents are pleased with what the school, and its sixth form, offers. Parents spoke highly of the headteacher and feel that their children like school. They think that their children are taught well and are expected to work hard. They also feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. The inspection team agrees with these positive views. Inspectors found there to be a very good range of extra-curricular activities. They think homework is appropriate and that pupils make good progress. Inspectors agree that there are occasions when behaviour gives cause for some concern. However, behaviour is predominantly good; usually, any lapses are managed well by staff.
75. The school has worked hard and sensitively to establish a good partnership with parents. There is a home link teacher for each year group and home-school link workers, who work with parents from different ethnic communities. Although, in some ways, response is not as good as the school would like, there is now almost full attendance by parents at their child's annual work review day and at parent's evenings. The school also holds curriculum focus meetings, but these are not well attended by parents. However, parental attendance at special events, like concerts and plays, is good. Prospective parents are invited into the school prior to their child's entry. Parents are encouraged to help in the school and a small number take up the opportunity on a regular basis. The School Association has been revived, but is not yet active in fund raising for the school. A Somali Parents' Association has been formed and is a registered charity.
76. The information provided to parents is good. Monthly newsletters are sent out, as well as information letters. Translations are always available if needed. The school has an Internet website. Parents are given information on how they can assist with their child's homework and about the homework clubs provided by the school. Annual reports tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do and sets targets for improvement. Day-to-day communication is facilitated through pupils' diaries.

77. The school's links with its parents are effective and their involvement has a good impact on the work of the school. Parents sign a home school learning contract and make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning

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

78. Overall, leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He has a very clear vision for the school, wherein pupils and their achievements are central. In his determination to raise standards, he demands a lot from staff but gives a great deal in return. His work in building bridges with the local community is far reaching and extremely effective. Both in school and in the community, the headteacher is a very 'visible' person; for example, he frequently tours the neighbourhood to cement relationships with members of the community. He seeks to create a truly inclusive school, where pupils' self-esteem is raised and where all get a 'fair deal'. He is very well respected by pupils, staff and parents alike. His skills are complemented by a cohesive and very effective team of senior managers.
79. Collectively, the senior management team has established a common determination within the school to raise standards; there is a climate of 'wanting to do well'. The school aims to promote academic excellence and an ethos which challenges inequality and which is underpinned by tolerance and respect. These aims are reflected in many aspects of provision; for example, in the focus on raising standards, which permeates all aspects of the school's work, in its very good curricular provision, in the numerous ways in which support for learning is provided, in the very effective use of data to raise achievement and in the racial harmony that exists within the school. These values are also reflected in the contributions of pupils and staff; for example, in mentoring and in the work of the school council.
80. In general, governors are supportive of the school. They are informed of the school's work through regular reports from the headteacher and from the finance manager. They use this information appropriately to monitor the school's results and provision and to help shape its future direction. The small group that met with inspectors during the inspection were very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has regular and effective contact with the chairman, which informs planning. Governors are largely successful in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met: they are aware that the school does not meet requirements for the provision of religious education within the sixth form.
81. The leadership and management skills of middle managers are good or very good in all subjects. The Excellence in Cities initiative is very well led and managed. All heads of department give a firm steer to their department's work; most subject staff work together effectively as a team. This has resulted in improved standards since the last inspection and to the better than expected results achieved by pupils. The relatively newly-appointed special educational needs co-ordinator provides good co-ordination for the department in reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of support and has a clear overview of the improvements required. The English as an additional language department is without a co-ordinator at present. Although some progress has been made in linking specialist teachers with departments, and with special educational needs staff, for curriculum development and partnership teaching, there remains a lack of consistency across the school. The school's newly appointed head of inclusive education is providing very good interim management.

82. Overall, the school's strategies for monitoring and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses are very good. The headteacher and other senior managers have a very good understanding indeed of the quality of the school's results, of its teaching and of other aspects of school provision. At departmental level, such understanding is slightly less secure. Although good overall, practice varies from satisfactory to very good. Practice is inconsistent across departments.
83. In general, the school monitors and evaluates its academic standards very well indeed at both whole school and departmental level. Very good use is made of national and standardised test information to predict likely performance in the Year 9 national tests and in GCSE examinations and to set challenging targets for pupils and for departments. Heads of department, in discussion with senior managers, compare predicted outcomes with those actually achieved, analyse the reasons for any differences, and identify departmental actions to be taken to raise standards. Excellent use is made of the information by senior managers and by the Excellence in Cities co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the performance of individual pupils and to provide support for potential underachievers. The school also uses its data well to monitor the performance and achievements of different groups of pupils at GCSE; for example, by gender and ethnicity. A minor point for development is to produce a clearer analysis of expectations and outcomes for whole year groups.
84. The school monitors the quality of its teaching effectively. Senior managers, together with support from the local education authority, have undertaken a programme of classroom observation in recent years. As a result, the headteacher has a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school. He has taken very effective action to support individuals and departments and to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning within the school. He is perceived to have made sometimes difficult decisions fairly. The school is aware that, although most heads of department monitor the quality of teaching within their departments effectively and share the good practice that exists, monitoring is not of a consistently high standard across all departments. The proposed programme of observation for performance management is aimed to provide greater consistency in practice. Many other school procedures are monitored carefully. For example, attendance levels are monitored rigorously and action is taken to reduce the amount of absence. There is thorough monitoring of the school's budget. The last audit report in 1999 identified no major areas for improvement. The finance manager regularly provides appropriately detailed reports for the headteacher, for governors and for relevant teaching staff. The governors' finance committee meets regularly to oversee financial matters and to monitor spending.
85. Since his appointment 12 years ago, the headteacher has instigated many changes. Actions were based initially on a well-informed analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since the last inspection, the school has increasingly used monitoring and evaluation information to identify priorities for development and actions to be taken in order to raise standards. It is well down the road in terms of self-evaluation. The 2000 to 2003 school improvement plan is focused on raising standards further through self evaluation. Priorities are entirely appropriate. Action plans for different initiatives, including departmental plans, are detailed clearly to guide development. There are clear criteria against which success can be evaluated and good lines of communication and support, so that senior managers are informed of developments fully.
86. The headteacher and other senior managers manage change very effectively, making very effective use of the school's overall resources. The headteacher delegates effectively and makes skilful use of people, using their strengths to maximum effect. Teachers are deployed effectively; good use is made of their subject expertise, so that much of the teaching is good or very good. Educational support staff, who provide support for pupils with special educational needs, are valued highly; their contribution in lessons is significant in the gains in learning that pupils make. The school functions smoothly due to an efficient administrative team and a helpful premises manager. The school has plans to review staffing levels, and roles and responsibilities, to improve administration and premises management further. The school's use of information technology to aid its administration is adequate; plans are in hand to extend its use, particularly to support the processing of assessment information.

87. The school also makes effective and imaginative use of funding to consolidate and develop the school's work. Most action plans are costed and provide a good framework for ensuring that spending decisions are governed, as far as possible, by the school's educational priorities. The good quality learning seen in classrooms indicates that pupils are benefiting from well-targeted spending. Prudent spending in the past has allowed the school to accumulate sufficient money to carry out its building plans in the current financial year. In recent years, the school has benefited from a considerable amount of extra funding, received as a result of recent government policies and grants. All such monies have been used imaginatively, for the purposes intended. For example, the school receives a considerable amount of money from the Excellence in Cities Project. This has been used very effectively to develop provision for gifted and talented pupils and to consolidate and extend support for learning through mentoring, counselling and through the creation of a learning development team. These developments have without doubt helped to raise standards.
88. The school evaluates the impact of its spending decisions sensibly, influenced by the principles of best value. The school regularly compares its results with those of similar schools, both locally and nationally, although it does not yet compare its spending patterns with those nationally. It challenges itself consistently to ensure that provision best meets pupils' needs and uses many intervention strategies to support pupils' learning. Teachers are involved in consultation; so too are parents, for example, through the work of the home-school link workers. Pupils have their say through the school's council. The expected procedures are in place to ensure that improvements to buildings and services are undertaken at the optimum financial rate. The school genuinely seeks to analyse what actions make a difference to standards; it enables pupils to achieve well by age 16. Thus, even though spending per pupil is high, the school provides good value for money.
89. Overall, the school has a satisfactory match of teaching and non-teaching staff for the needs of its curriculum. Teachers are appropriately qualified, or experienced, in the subjects they teach. In design and technology, successive changes of teachers and the difficulty of appointing appropriately qualified staff have affected standards adversely. The mathematics department is fully staffed but, again, the continuity of pupils' learning has been affected in recent times by rapid changes of teachers. In a small minority of subjects, such as Bengali and physical education, there are teachers who do not have qualified teacher status, but who are qualified in the subjects they teach. In general, such teachers have good skills and knowledge in the subject and support pupils' learning effectively. Support staff match needs well. School designed and printed support materials are of excellent quality. Administrative, clerical and premises staff are adequate in number. To accommodate the needs of the new City Learning Centre, the school has plans well advanced for restructuring both administrative and premises staffing. Very good management systems for teaching and non-teaching staff are in place, headed by a deputy head teacher and the finance manager.
90. Staff development is very well organised and the school holds the Investors in People award. The school started this year with 18 new members of staff. It supports teachers very well. It uses fully the local education authority's provision for inducting newly qualified teachers, as well as its own very good induction and mentoring systems. The staff handbook is detailed and helpful. There are very well-organised arrangements for inservice training that balance teacher, department and school needs and link them to the school development plan. The school has a good structure in place for managing performance, ensuring quality time for meetings. This too is linked well to the development plan. All staff who applied passed through the threshold assessment successfully.
91. The school is a provider of initial teaching training. This too is very well organised by an assistant head teacher. The rationale is very good and the roles of all the staff involved are clear and focused. The budget and its allocation are precise and thoughtfully allocated to give maximum benefit to the school.
92. Overall, resources for learning are good. The library is a particular strength of the school. It has a sufficiently wide range of books, matched to curricular requirements, and up-to-date magazines

and newspapers. Art and design, geography and history and teenage fiction are provided for particularly well. There is a specific Shakespeare section. The library particularly reflects the needs of a multicultural society, with its provision of books in many different languages. The various sections are marked clearly, and include books selected for their special interest. The library is very well managed and uses an automated borrowing system, which pupils help to run. It is adequately funded and well used at all times. There are five computers, all having Internet access, and a suite of computers in the connected ICT area. Teachers are making increasing use of the facilities. A well-organised central reprographics area is available for staff use. An expert design and video editing service is provided by the reprographics manager, who also maintains a school web site. The facility is self-funding through its use by various departments.

93. Departmental resources are generally satisfactory with the exception of science and technology, where shortage of equipment reduces the range of possible teaching strategies and affects learning. English, Bengali and physical education are provided for well. At present, ICT has satisfactory provision, including two network rooms for whole class teaching of the subject. Mathematics, science and technology have a significant number of additional computers. The overall provision will be considerably improved when the current City Learning Centre building programme is completed.
94. Overall the provision of accommodation is satisfactory. The school is located on a single site and housed in a mixture of old and new buildings; it provides a secure and pleasant environment. The premises are managed and organised well; a committed team supports the premises manager. The maintenance, repairs, refurbishment and decoration of the school are all part of a well-planned rolling programme. The school is clean and tidy; the grounds are well maintained and kept litter free.
95. Accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum, except for design and technology teachers, who await the near completion of a new specialist block. All subjects have their own suite of rooms with adequate storage, except modern foreign languages, which is not fully suited. The specialist provision for drama is good and all teaching rooms are now fully used. The décor in the physical education department is poor and leaking roofs continue to give problems. The girls' changing rooms are spacious, but do not provide adequate shower facilities. Wide corridors and lifts provide wheelchair access to all areas except some art rooms.
96. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection to update specialist accommodation and facilities and the school is currently undergoing an extensive building programme as part of the long term vision to improve the school. A new dining hall is fully operational, along with one new and one refurbished science laboratory, refurbished music rooms, redecorated art rooms with improved lighting, electrics and new sinks, new toilets for the pupils and an updated staff room. The new dual use sports hall, completed in 1996, is an excellent resource; however, during the inspection week, the space was not used efficiently. The security of the building has been upgraded and it is now well monitored.
97. Overall, the school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in 1996. It has addressed almost all of the key issues in the last report successfully. It has improved provision for literacy across the school very successfully. There is now a concerted, whole school approach to developing pupils' literacy skills. Partnership teaching and planning between special educational needs and subject staff is now good. The school has plans in place to ensure that the support provided for pupils with English as an additional language has maximum impact on learning. Pupils are now involved in their learning appropriately, for example, through target setting days; parental involvement in the school's work has improved. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching to share good practice is now a relatively well-established procedure. The school has debated long and hard on the best way to group pupils to optimise their learning. It has sensibly adopted a flexible approach which, for some subjects, includes a 'fast-track' for higher attainers. The school has improved its image within the community. It is now oversubscribed; more families from the local community are choosing the school as their first choice. There are now good curricular and pastoral links with feeder primary schools; Year 7

pupils speak highly of their taster days. The school is no longer required to provide a Christian act of collective worship daily.

### **Sixth form**

98. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The school's priority for the past five years has been to develop its main school provision and to raise standards. This it has done successfully. The school is aware that, as a consequence, its sixth form is 'functioning but not flourishing'. Senior staff and the governing body have a clear idea about how the sixth form should develop. They acknowledge that to a large extent the sixth form has not received the same attention as the rest of the school and they are aware of the key weaknesses that exist. Rigorous and effective procedures, such as the use of assessment data to monitor and support students' progress, which are embedded practices in the main school, have yet to be applied to the sixth form. Weaknesses in monitoring provision, academic results and attendance mean that standards have not risen significantly over the past few years. Planning for development has not been underpinned by a rigorous evaluation of priorities for improvement.
99. At present, the sixth form is operating at a satisfactory level. It is cost effective and does not represent a drain on the financial and other resources of the main school. There is considerable potential for improvement. For example, the sixth form is growing and the quality of teaching for post-16 students is good. Curricular provision is good overall; the consortium arrangements allow students access to a wide choice of learning opportunities. However, at present, insufficient attention is given to improving standards of academic performance and attendance. Any improvement in standards is occurring at only a slow pace. For the effectiveness of the sixth form to improve further, quality assurance procedures need to be improved significantly.
100. The sixth form has sufficient appropriately qualified teachers. The recent appointment of experienced teachers has strengthened the teaching of key skills and vocational courses. The consortium arrangements that the school operates benefit teacher provision.
101. Resources for learning for sixth form students are also good. Teachers and students have access to the same facilities as those described above. The library is particularly well used by sixth form students for research and private study. It provides resources aimed specifically at post-16 students. For example, there is an induction service for new students. Advice can be given on careers and university information, writing correct bibliographies and how to obtain books from other libraries. Books are provided to lead students into recent prize winning novels and more challenging literature. A-level and GNVQ revision books can be borrowed. There are no specific shortages of resources at departmental level.
102. The sixth form uses the same specialist rooms and facilities on the main site. The sixth form centre has been refurbished since the last inspection; however, this space is inadequate for the number of students using it. There are insufficient study areas for students to work independently and to carry out research. There is also no dedicated area for vocational science students.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

103. In the context of a school that allows its Year 11 to 16 pupils to achieve well, there are no major areas for improvement for the main school, other than for the school to sustain its efforts to improve attendance (paragraph 21). However, the following minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan.

In order to maintain improvements to standards, the school should:

- maintain its rigorous approach to behaviour management, focusing particularly on the development of self-discipline among pupils; (paragraph 18)
- ensure that the planned programme of classroom observation of teaching is carried out consistently well, to share good practice further; (paragraph 84);
- develop a whole-school approach to the teaching of numeracy; (paragraph 33)
- strengthen co-ordination between English as an additional language specialist staff and other departments; (paragraph 46, 81, 97)
- ensure that marking of pupils' work is of a consistently high standard both across and within departments; (paragraphs 30, 117, 158, 163, 182, 201)
- ensure that departmental plans to use ICT to support teaching are implemented effectively. (paragraphs 30, 52, 114, 129, 160, 163, 175, 182, 189, 193)

Almost all of these points are identified in the current school development plan.

### Sixth form

To raise standards and the quality of provision in the sixth form, governors, senior and middle managers and other staff should;

- (1) improve the monitoring and evaluation of academic performance in the sixth form, so that development planning is underpinned by a rigorous analysis of what needs to be improved; (paragraphs 98)
- (2) improve the use of assessment data, firstly to give appropriate guidance to students before entry to the sixth form and, secondly, to monitor and support each student's progress thereafter; (paragraphs 72, 73, 99)
- (3) improve both attendance levels and the procedures for monitoring attendance; (paragraphs 24, 71)
- (4) ensure that statutory requirements are met for the provision of religious education. (paragraph 59)

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### South Camden Resource Base

104. There are six full-time pupils with physical disabilities and one who attends on a part-time basis. Some pupils have additional needs such as English as an additional language. All are attached to the resource base, which is an integral part of the department for inclusive education.
105. Standards at the end of each key stage cannot be judged because each group is too small for valid comparisons to be made. However, school and local authority data indicate that although attainment varies between individuals according to the extent of their individual needs, overall, it is below average. Achievement is good because these pupils often start from a very low base. Work is well presented and pupils are making good progress in relation to their special educational needs or stage of language acquisition. Pupils learn well. Their relationships with each other and the teachers and support staff are good.
106. Teaching by resource base staff, including support staff, is good. They understand thoroughly pupils' needs and make good provision for the teaching of basic skills, especially literacy and numeracy. Planning is good, down to the level of individual need. However, in mainstream classes where pupils are supported by teaching assistants, there is no designated time to allow planning with teachers. As a result, teaching is not always fully effective. Imaginative teaching resources are made and used: for example, the provision of a laptop helped a Year 9 pupil to enhance his understanding of the agricultural revolution. Generally, however, there is a need for more ICT provision. Behaviour management is very good for the minority of pupils who have particular frustrations or emotional needs. As a result, learning is good, particularly in those groups supported by the team. Teachers make good attempts to develop the spirituality and social and cultural awareness of pupils. This was evident in an impressive whole-school assembly, where all physically impaired pupils played a full part. The school also works hard to use its parental and strong community links to raise achievement.
107. Pupils in the resource base have a good curriculum. There is a very good balance between extraction and in-class support: for example, Year 10 and 11 pupils are withdrawn from selected classes to reinforce work on their core subjects. Individual education plans are drawn up carefully and support staff do their best to adapt teaching in mainstream classes to their pupils' needs. However, as at the last inspection, current arrangements mean that mainstream teachers do not always incorporate pupils' individual education plans into their lesson planning and this hinders the quality of learning for some pupils. The school is aware of this and has, as a priority, the continuing professional development of mainstream staff in such matters.
108. Pupils receive good quality support. Adults know the pupils well and are aware of their individual needs. For example, an effective multi-disciplinary approach through the pastoral review forum contributes significantly to pupils' achievements, by ensuring that their needs are both identified and addressed. Therapists contribute to progress; however, there is insufficient speech and language and occupational therapist time. Additional staffing is used well: in particular, there are excellent arrangements to encourage independence training in pupils. The base has satisfactory procedures for monitoring academic and personal development. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are identified through subject screening arrangements; levels of attainment are recorded in all subjects.
109. The last inspection report recommended that the organisation of special educational needs should be reviewed. As a result, governors and the headteacher re-structured the staffing arrangements and created a department for inclusive education. Both its newly appointed head and the special educational needs co-ordinator have made an excellent start; the quality of overall leadership and management is very good. They have a secure strategic grasp of the developments necessary for further improvement. Whilst some responsibilities and accountabilities have yet to be clarified, including some relating to the resource base, there is good capacity within the present systems for continuing improvement.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	134
	Sixth form	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		91

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
--	-----------	-----------	------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------

#### Years 7 - 11

Number	8	25	65	27	8	1	0
Percentage	6.0	18.7	48.5	20.1	6.0	0.7	0

#### Sixth form

Number	3	9	16	7	1	0	0
Percentage	8.3	25.0	44.4	19.4	2.8	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

**Information about the school's pupils. The following applies to the academic year 2000 to 2001. In September 2001, the number on roll in Y7 – 11 increased by one form of entry ; sixth form numbers have increased to around 140.**

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 - 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	732	105
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	541	

Special educational needs	Y7 - 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	39	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	262	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	653

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	71
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	64

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	7.7

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	103	48	151

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	35	37
	Girls	27	14	13
	Total	57	49	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	38 (38)	33 (32)	34 (29)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	6 (9)	13 (12)	10 (9)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	31	46
	Girls	24	19	19
	Total	54	50	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	37 (35)	34 (43)	44 (30)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	13 (16)	6 (12)	18 (13)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	99	52	151

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	22	78	87
	Girls	15	34	49
	Total	37	121	136
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	25 (19)	80 (82)	90 (89)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (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	29 ( )
	National	38.4 ( )

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	30	47
	National	N/a	N/a

**Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)**

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
	2000	14	10	24

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	11.4	7.9	9.8	4.5	9.0	6.0
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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	45	76
	National		73.2

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	154
Black – other	22
Indian	6
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	450
Chinese	6
White	165
Any other minority ethnic group	57

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	16	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	30	1
Chinese	0	0
White	10	1
Other minority ethnic groups	20	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 - 13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	58.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8:1

**Education support staff: Y7 - 13**

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	684.5

**Deployment of teachers: Y7 - 13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.7
---	------

**Average teaching group size: Y7 - 11**

Key Stage 3	22.9
Key Stage 4	18.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	4,091,611
Total expenditure	3,999,262
Expenditure per pupil	4,602
Balance brought forward from previous year	274,193
Balance carried forward to next year	366,542

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	30
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	30

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	866
Number of questionnaires returned	51

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	32	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	47	35	14	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	33	8	8	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	35	14	4	4
The teaching is good.	55	37	2	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	34	10	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	29	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	29	4	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	54	34	10	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	32	6	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	33	10	6	8



**PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

**ENGLISH**

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **very good**.

**Strengths**

- Teaching is good, with teachers having very good subject knowledge and strategies for managing behaviour. As a result, pupils achieve well and this is having an effect on raising standards.
- The National Literacy Strategy is being used effectively and this is leading to an improvement in the accuracy of pupils' writing.

**Areas for improvement**

- National Curriculum levels should be used more regularly to assess how well pupils are doing, and to identify areas for improvement, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
- Strategies to help pupils to speak more confidently in formal situations need developing.
- Private reading for enjoyment needs to become a priority.

110. Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average, although when compared with results from similar schools, standards were close to the average. Results were better than in mathematics and science, when compared with all schools nationally. In 2001, results were higher. There has been a rising trend in attainment over the last three years. When pupils come into the school their literacy levels are very low when compared to the national average, so this means that they achieve well during their first three years. The attainment gap between boys and girls was similar to the national picture, with girls outperforming boys.
111. In the English GCSE results in 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving an A\*-C grade was well below the average, as was the percentage of pupils attaining a grade G or higher. There has been a steady rise in the number of pupils gaining a C grade or higher over the last three years. More girls achieve a grade C or better than do boys, although the gap is a little narrower than that found nationally. The 2001 English GCSE results saw a rise in nearly 10 per cent of pupils gaining a C grade or better. In the English literature GCSE examination in 2000, the proportion of pupils who achieved an A\* to C grade was well below the national average. Standards in English literature, too, have been rising over the last three years, and in 2001 the percentage of pupils attaining a C grade or higher rose by three per cent. When compared with pupils' prior attainment, these results in both English and literature represent good achievement.
112. Standards of work seen during the inspection for Year 9 pupils confirm the 2000 national test results; standards are well below those expected nationally for pupils' age. A few higher attaining pupils perform above national expectations, and their writing is accurate, imaginative and, usually, detailed. The majority of pupils write short, under-developed pieces, drawing on a fairly limited vocabulary, although technical accuracy is often good. All pupils are introduced to the skills of literary analysis and are able to make straightforward judgements about writers' intentions. The majority of pupils, with the exception of those in the early stage of learning English, express their ideas orally quite confidently in informal situations, although their language is often fairly restricted. Many do not demonstrate the same level of confidence in more formal situations. Most pupils listen well both to their teachers and to other pupils and the majority achieve well during their first three years in the school. This is borne out by examining pupils' work, showing how far pupils improve over time.

113. The standard of work of current Year 11 pupils is well below the national average, but this nevertheless represents good achievement, when their attainment at the start of Year 10 is taken into account. Highest attaining pupils become quite skilled in literary analysis, and they write extended pieces accurately, in a lively and imaginative way. Middle and lower attaining pupils can also analyse texts, although in less depth, and their writing is less developed. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with others, from entering the school until they are 16.
114. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good. During the inspection, four out of every five lessons seen were good or better, with nearly one in three lessons being very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers have a secure command of their subject, and they use their knowledge to challenge pupils to think deeply and to make connections between the use of language and writers' intentions. For example, in a Year 7 lesson seen, the teacher used her knowledge of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' to lead the pupils to a good level of understanding of meaning and character. Pupils were beginning to be introduced to the skills of literary analysis. The teacher's provision of writing frames enabled pupils who are at an early stage of learning English to cope effectively with Shakespeare's language and to make good progress, in line with others' in the lesson. Teachers prepare and plan lessons well, usually incorporating a period of paired or group work and an opportunity for pupils to write independently. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils worked well in groups, researching background material for a presentation on 'Lord of the Flies'. The teacher clearly explained her expectations of what pupils were to do and how they were to behave, and they responded well and made good progress in the lesson. The management of pupils' behaviour is a strength of the department. In a Year 9 lesson, in which pupils examined the language of persuasion, the teacher's expert strategies at managing behaviour enabled her to turn around a potentially difficult, disruptive class, thereby establishing a very good climate for learning. Teaching in all year groups is good, although a little better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. The reason for this is partly teachers' effective use of the National Literacy Strategy in the earlier years. All schemes of work include assignments in which pupils use computers, either for research purposes or to draft and present work. This is a developing area for the department.
115. In all subjects, pupils' skills in reading, writing and speaking in formal situations are considerably lower than one would expect to find nationally, and low standards in literacy depress standards overall, although there is a rising trend over time. Listening is generally quite good, even though some pupils have rather short concentration spans. When, however, their attainment levels are taken into account on their entry to the school, it can be seen that the majority of pupils make good progress in acquiring literacy and oracy skills. There is a concerted whole-school policy for raising literacy standards that is organised and managed well. Whilst teachers of English have been instrumental in raising literacy standards, almost all subjects have incorporated techniques designed to focus on key words, spelling and sentence structure into their teaching. The humanities faculty in particular uses literacy strategy techniques effectively.
116. Pupils like English, on the whole. They show positive attitudes to the subject, which are seen in their volunteering answers to questions and enthusiastic participation in group and whole-class work. In a Year 8 lesson, the teacher was leading pupils to examine the technicalities of analysing a poem. The pupils were lively and engaged in what they were doing; they were interested in the work and their positive approach helped to ensure that they made good progress in the lesson.
117. The department uses performance data very well to assess how both individuals and groups of pupils achieve. They use the information that they have effectively to monitor trends and to agree development priorities. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, giving helpful development points and recognising good work. Year 10 and 11 pupils usually know which GCSE grades they are aiming for, their current performance level, and targets for improvement. Pupils in Years 7 and 8, however, do not have a clear idea at which National Curriculum level they are working and teachers do not regularly mark work using levels.

118. The department is very well led and managed. The head of the department has been in post since Easter, and she has a reflective, analytical approach to considering how well pupils are doing and in identifying areas for improvement. She uses test and examination data effectively to pinpoint underachievement and then addresses problems that she has identified systematically. There is a programme in place for monitoring teaching, and the head of department gives appropriate feedback and is involved in setting teachers' targets. This process is having a positive effect on learning and achievement.
119. The department has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen at the end of both Years 9 and 11, in part due to the development and implementation of strategies to teach literacy. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 has been rewritten, to include an emphasis on writing accurately and in using computers. Pupils who are particularly gifted and talented in the subject are identified and are targeted for additional, more stretching work. The quality of teaching has improved, with teachers successfully matching work set in lessons much more effectively to pupils' levels and needs. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, as well as how they will behave. The department has prioritised improving boys' achievement, and as a result has seen significant progress. All staff work well together as a team. They support one another and are open to ideas and challenges and, as a result of their positive approach, the department is well placed to develop even further.

### Drama

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **good**.

#### Strengths .

- Teaching is very good, with teachers having high expectations of what pupils can do and how they will behave.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are high in comparison with other subjects.

#### Areas for improvement

- The negative attitudes of some groups of younger boys restricts their learning.

120. The GCSE results in drama in 2000 were in line with national standards. This represents very good achievement when the fact that pupils come to the school with very limited experiences of drama is taken into account. In 2001, the numbers of pupils attaining a grade C or higher rose. Results over the last three years have been consistently high when compared with other subjects in the school.
121. Standards of work in Year 9 were a little below average. Pupils achieve well in their first three years in the school, and acquire an understanding of drama terms and techniques. By the time that pupils take their GCSE examination in Year 11, standards are in line with the national average, which represents good achievement through the course. Pupils can employ a variety of dramatic and theatrical techniques to portray character, to show emotion and to tell a story. They understand and use technical terms such as 'naturalism', 'realism' and 'role' and they improvise in groups effectively. Higher attaining pupils use drama methods in quite sophisticated ways. Lower attaining pupils, particularly boys, still have difficulty in always taking improvised work seriously and they blur the boundary between drama and 'play'. On the whole, however, pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They enjoy it and are keen to learn.
122. Teaching overall is very good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and they insist on high standards, including behaviour and listening. They have very good specialist subject knowledge, and the pace of lessons is brisk, which maximises time available in lessons.

Teachers follow whole-school strategies for teaching literacy, and computers and video equipment are used where appropriate. The department has good assessment procedures in place, using levels that they have designed. Teachers give very helpful, constructive feedback to pupils after practical work during lessons. Also, they encourage self-evaluation.

123. The head of department provides very good leadership and management of the subject. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour from pupils; this is a direct reflection of the department head's high standards and expectations. She also provides very good support to the newly qualified teacher in the department. The subject has a high profile among the pupils and it plays a full role in the arts faculty.

## MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Strengths

- Monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance and taking appropriate action has improved standards.
- Good assessment procedures help pupils' learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Sometimes, a limited range of teaching methods, and the ineffective use of time, restricts learning.

124. Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 9 were very low when compared to the national average for all schools. However, results were as might be expected, showing satisfactory achievement, given pupils' very low attainment on entry to the school. The proportion of pupils reaching at least the level expected for their age was in line with that for similar schools nationally. Since 1997, results have improved steadily. That trend continued in 2001, when results in mathematics improved significantly. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls or of different ethnic groups.
125. GCSE results in 2000 were well below the national average for the number of pupils at grades A\* to C, but close to the national average for the number of pupils at grades A\* to G. Such results represent good achievement, given pupils' results at the end of Year 9 in 1998. Again, results have shown steady improvement since 1997. There has been no consistent difference in the performance of boys and girls, or in the different ethnic groups of pupils in the school. Provisional results show that this trend of improvement continued in 2001.
126. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 9 were well below those expected for pupils' age, reflecting last year's national test results. Overall, achievement through Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. There is some underachievement in Year 7, where the curriculum is being developed in line with recent changes nationally, particularly for the higher attainers. In Year 8, pupils follow individual learning programmes. Not all pupils can start on a new topic by themselves, and have to wait for teacher support. Some of the work seen involved learning through understanding, as in the case of a pupil with Venn diagrams. Again, there is some underachievement, as work is not always targeted on pupils' needs and the rate of learning is sometimes slow. Recent innovations in the teaching of number are helpful to pupils' learning, but need to focus on new learning for all pupils if standards are to rise. Teaching is targeted more efficiently on pupils' needs in Year 9, due to recent changes in the curriculum. The rate of learning is increased as a result and achievement in lessons for this year group is good. High attainers benefit from extended discussions. For example, in a lesson on straight-line graphs, pupils could explain why lines with negative gradients were a reflection in the y-axis of corresponding lines with positive gradients. Average attainers can plot points on a graph accurately. Their learning is enhanced by good concentration skills and challenging teaching. Low attainers pursue individual learning programmes. They use their initiative well and receive good individual support.

127. The standard of work of current Year 11 pupils is well below average overall. However, pupils achieve well given their prior attainment in Year 9. The teaching arrangements focus appropriately on the needs of all pupils. High attainers on the higher level GCSE course know the formulae for the area and circumference of a circle and can apply them to the solution of problems involving segments of circles. Average attainers on the intermediate course can simplify algebraic expressions involving indexes. Low attainers on the foundation course have yet to fully understand the concept of place value and its application to the change from one unit to another; millimetres to metres for example. Some Year 10 pupils on the higher level course are preparing for an early entry to GCSE in 2002. Pupils with special needs achieve as well as other pupils in both key stages. Provision for them is good.
128. Standards of numeracy are also weak overall. Although most pupils cope reasonably well with the numerical demands of other subjects, again, low level skills limit progress. Standards of written and mental calculation are improving at Key Stage 3, following the introduction of mental and oral work in mathematics lessons; calculators are used appropriately and accurately. Pupils have opportunities to practise and develop their skills in a range of subjects but, as yet, there is no whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy.
129. Overall, teaching is good. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The main strength is teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding. Teachers focus clearly on the scheme of work. They give clear explanations and make good use of questions and answers to promote good overall learning. Impact on learning is greatest when open-ended questions form the basis for whole class discussions. The use of overhead projectors in some lessons adds to the good quality of teachers' presentations. The teaching of basic skills is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, the teaching of simple algebra moved with good pace and patience, allowing pupils to ask questions, thereby maximising their understanding and skill. Assessment of pupils' work is good. In a Year 11 lesson on algebra, which clearly focused on the boundary of learning, good assessment led to constant verbal repetition by way of emphasis, so necessary for those pupils whose memories are short. In the small number of lessons that were unsatisfactory, and in others that were satisfactory overall, areas for improvement are the management of pupils, teaching methods and the use of time. Management of pupils is good overall and very good in some lessons but, when it is unsatisfactory, learning is reduced significantly. Teaching methods sometimes lack open-ended questions that promote interest, discussion and learning. Mental work, both oral and written, is not evident in all teaching. Computers are not used enough in the teaching of mathematics to support and extend learning.
130. Leadership and management are good. Priorities for improvement are appropriate and are set out in a good development plan, which focuses on the curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. The arrangements for teaching in Years 7 and 8 are under review. Planning for this involves whole departmental meetings on a regular basis, which is good practice. The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the department's performance is very good. For example, the overview of pupils' standards and progress through the school by teaching group, by gender, by ethnic origin is very thorough. The information so gained is used very well to raise standards. Since the last inspection the attainment gap between boys and girls has been eliminated and standards have risen. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There is a commitment by the department for improvement in standards, which is clear despite recent changes in teaching staff. The department has the capacity to improve standards further.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good; teachers' skills and enthusiasm promote good learning.
- Assessment procedures, and the use made of resulting data, help pupils to achieve well.
- Good use is made of technical support staff in lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- Increased levels of resources are needed to permit paired working and more efficient learning.
- More materials are needed to meet both higher and lower attaining pupils' needs.
- More helpful comments in marking are required, to show pupils how to improve their work.

131. Results in the 2000 national tests for 14 year-olds were well below the national average for all schools, but matched those for schools with a similar intake. This represents good achievement, given pupils' very low attainment on entry to the school. Results for 2001 are better than those for 2000, continuing the improving trend of recent years. In the 2000 tests, boys outperformed girls, but this was reversed in 2001, for the first time. As the result of successful targeting of Year 9 pupils, the number of pupils scoring level 3 or below fell; the performance of white boys improved and that of black African boys increased considerably.
132. GCSE results for 2000 were in line with the national average for grades A\* to G, but were well below the national average for grades A\* to C. In 2001, results improved on the previous year, but A\* to C grades remained well below national figures. Boys performed better than girls in both grade ranges. Considering the number of pupils entered for whom English is not their first language, the 98 per cent success rate in grades A\* to G is represents good achievement.
133. Achievement in lessons in the first three years is generally good. Although, in Year 9, the general standard of work is below that expected nationally, it represents a marked improvement on pupils' very low overall attainment on entry to the school. In Year 9, in the 'fast track' group, work is at or above the national expectation. The standard of work in lessons often rises when a particular topic seizes pupils' interest – for instance, examination of plant cells under the microscope. Pupils in Year 7 are gradually becoming accustomed to using specialised apparatus and to working in a laboratory. They are also becoming more confident in experimental work. Their written work is usually done neatly and is well organised, as they begin to understand the requirements of an accurate scientific report and the pattern of writing that is required.
134. The standard of work of pupils who have just entered Year 11 remains below average overall, but shows improvement from Year 9. In addition to the GCSE examinations, low-attaining pupils have the opportunity to qualify for a Certificate of Achievement award and this course runs at the same time as their GCSE work. Overall, pupils achieve well. There is little difference in the classroom between the work produced by boys and girls. Pupils with special needs cannot be distinguished by their spoken or practical work, and when they are supported, their written work too, often matches that of their classmates. In general, they achieve well, but when additional support is not available, their written record reflects their literacy difficulties and is sometimes incomplete. There was no obvious difference in the achievement of pupils of any particular ethnic background.
135. The standard of teaching is generally good. Of the lessons seen, half were good and one third were very good or excellent. Two lessons were unsatisfactory, due to poor pupil behaviour. Teachers' command of the subject is good, and their enthusiasm and commitment communicate themselves to pupils. Lessons are planned well and contain plenty of challenges. Practical work forms a high proportion of lesson time and is eagerly anticipated by pupils. The firm emphasis on the required standards of written work in Year 7 means that notebooks are neatly written and laid out conventionally. Teachers take great pains with the understanding and use of unfamiliar

words, especially scientific terms and this support enables all pupils to understand new terminology. Staff mostly know their pupils from earlier years, and are aware of individual difficulties and of short-attention spans. By employing a variety of activities, and varying the pace of the lesson, teachers keep pupils interested in their tasks. However, the provision of materials, which meet the needs of higher and lower attainers, requires further development. Most pupils respond to their teachers' expectations of them; they have every encouragement to learn well in a supportive and caring atmosphere. However, more helpful comments in marking are required to show pupils how to improve their work. A unique feature of lessons is the way in which the particular skills and talents of the technical support staff are used to support teaching. Good examples were seen in demonstrating slide-preparation in microscope work, or when ICT techniques are used to supplement pupils' experimentation, or to provide an additional resource. ICT forms an increasingly important part of science teaching and pupils experience various aspects of the technology in all years.

136. Most pupils are polite and well-mannered to staff and to visitors and behave well in lessons. However, a small minority of boys is prepared to take advantage of the teacher's involvement supporting other pupils. The resulting pause to return them to normal behaviour disturbs the concentration of the rest of the class and causes a check in progress. Unusually, this happened despite the pace of the lesson being good and there being plenty of practical activity to occupy pupils. Laboratory discipline is otherwise good and pupils conform to the safety requirements of the work. Pupils help each other over minor difficulties and physically impaired pupils are particularly well supported by their classmates.
137. Leadership is very good and the department is well managed. There is a strong team spirit and many responsibilities are delegated. Assessment, record-keeping and the use that is made of assessment results to monitor pupils' progress and to raise standards are strengths of the department. The level of resources is unsatisfactory. In several lessons, pupils were forced to work in groups of four or five, instead of the normal two or three, because of the lack of serviceable apparatus. This leads to some pupils not being fully involved and to a lowering of standards. It also increases opportunities for inappropriate behaviour. Science teachers contribute to after-school clubs for homework and for improving coursework and a technician runs a small animal club for interested Year 7 and 8 pupils.
138. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Standards have risen. Almost all of the ten items cited for improvement have been addressed.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Planning of the curriculum and of individual lessons is often excellent. Consequently, teaching, particularly of basic skills, is very good.
- The day-to-day management of pupils and their learning promotes high standards.

### Areas for improvement

- Pupils need to be taught how to be more individual in their work.
- The breadth of media and techniques for older pupils is too narrow.

139. Results in the 2000 GCSE examination were in line with the national average for A\* to C grades. Boys were more successful than girls, which is the reverse of the national trend. However, a higher than average proportion of pupils gained the highest grade. Pupils did much better in art and design GCSE than in the other subjects they took. In the 2001 GCSE, the average grade was lower, although all pupils passed the examination.

140. Judging by the work of last year's Year 10 pupils, and the work they have done so far this term, the standards attained by the current Year 11 pupils are also average. Pupils respond well to the study of the work of other artists, for instance Georgia O'Keefe. During the inspection, the best pupils explored the context of her paintings through drawing, experiment with methods and expressing personal responses. The majority of pupils are able to draw well and develop new painting styles to explore their subject. Pupils in Year 9 also achieve standards which are average when compared with schools nationally. All pupils develop skills in using a range of techniques such as drawing, painting and printing as well as exploring three-dimensional shapes in laminated paper, plaster and clay. The inspection did not find any significant differences in attainment between boys and girls, nor between the different ethnic groups and backgrounds. Overall, achievement is good.
141. Teaching is very good and enables pupils to learn well. The most significant achievement takes place in the first three years. The curriculum and the individual lessons are meticulously planned and executed so that the pupils know exactly what is expected of them. The lesson objectives include behaviour, attitudes and skills in writing, speaking and listening, in addition to those for art and design. Pupils arrive at the school with well below average skills, knowledge and understanding in art. They can often be very self-centred and lacking in concentration, as well as having undeveloped social and language skills. It is a tribute to the high expectations and management skills of the teachers that pupils quickly learn to relax, work hard and above all, enjoy the processes of creativity. Teachers provide work and support for pupils at all levels, including pupils who show special aptitudes. Lower attaining pupils, and those identified as having special educational needs, make the same progress as the bulk of the pupils because of this. In an excellent lesson with Year 8, the teacher gained the attention and involvement of pupils with probing questions and imaginative and stimulating resources. The area of study was the work of Gaudi and the response to the homework and class tasks meant that pupils made very good progress, filling their sketchbook pages with colourful and expressive images. Even in this lesson, the teacher had to use very good management skills to deal with a few less committed pupils.
142. A broad spectrum of pupils takes the GCSE course. As with the younger pupils, it is due to teachers' commitment and discipline that pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Here, teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding of the curriculum enable lessons to be stimulating as well as challenging. Pupils enjoy art and are often amazed by the teachers' own drawings as well as by the work of more famous artists. Luxurious still life, access to computers and reproductions of the work of other artists add significantly to the lessons. Teachers are able to take pupils on visits to galleries and museums showing exhibitions relevant to the topic they are working on. Computer image processing has begun to make an impact on learning. Teachers provide very good information to pupils on how well they are doing and set individual targets for improvement. Having achieved this success, further progress could be made in teaching pupils to develop their own interests and areas for study. At present, there is less emphasis on the art and design from the parts of the world where many of these pupils have their backgrounds; for instance Africa and Asia.
143. The department is very well led by the head of visual and performing arts. She has significantly raised the status of art in the school, analysing what was needed to raise attainment and working tirelessly to achieve it. This has been done despite great difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers. The development of teaching has been vital and she has achieved this effectively through careful monitoring and the sharing of good practice. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and this enables the department to judge how well pupils are doing in relation to previous achievements. The aims of the department reflect exactly the aims of the school, providing all pupils equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Analysis presently being undertaken will show if any particular group of pupils achieves better results than any other. The plans for the near future will improve accommodation and resources, enabling the range of options to be widened.
144. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection and is well-set to improve even further. Improvements since the last inspection include: the use of sketchbooks, pupils' understanding of art; and planning and assessment, including pupils' self-assessment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**



Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The effective use of ICT and the good use of assessment data promote pupils' learning.
- GCSE results have improved recently.

Areas for improvement

- The current accommodation restricts learning; resources, although at present barely satisfactory, are used insufficiently well.
- The attitudes and behaviour of some pupils limit their learning.

145. Since 1998, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have been consistently well below the national average. GCSE results for food technology and resistant materials have also been well below average, but have improved on the 'design and realisation' results reported at the time of the last inspection. Girls have generally done better than boys. In 2000, pupils' results in technology were lower than in the other GCSE subjects they took. However, although tests and examination results have been well below average, achievement is satisfactory by Year 9, and good by Year 11 given pupils' very low attainment on entry. Early indications are that 2001 results have improved. This is in spite of staffing, resources and accommodation difficulties.
146. In the lessons observed in Years 9 and 11, standards were also well below average. In Year 11, standards were well below average in both resistant materials and food technology. However some pupils are likely to gain 'A' grades, demonstrating considerable achievement. Overall, achievement is satisfactory; however, pupils in classes taught by established teachers achieve well. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress and have some extra classroom assistance other than that given by the teacher. Gifted or talented pupils are identified early on and given extra encouragement. ICT skills develop rapidly and are used well in technology. However, numeracy skills are generally weak and need greater support. During the inspection week, pupils were able to develop some ideas about the technology design process. Many used computers to design pages for their coursework. In food technology, pupils learned how to perform a taste test and record the results. Little practical work was seen at this stage in the module, but some imaginative clocks have been made previously by Year 11 pupils. These show that pupils can be creative and integrate their own cultural background into the designs very effectively.
147. This department is short of a full-time teacher due to recruitment difficulties. In addition, another permanent teacher was unavoidably absent during the inspection week. Thus, much of the teaching during the inspection was undertaken by temporary and supply teachers. Scrutiny of pupils' work, highlighting the progress they have made over time, indicates that teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. However, during the inspection, there was a significant difference in lessons taught by permanent teachers and those taught by other staff. Whilst two-thirds of the observed teaching was sound or better, with some being very good, one third was unsatisfactory. The established teachers have good knowledge in their subject areas. For example, teachers' knowledge and understanding produced good work in the new Year 10 and 11 GCSE textiles course. Temporary and supply teachers are often not qualified in the subject areas that they are required to teach; a lack of understanding and experience often results in a slow pace of learning. The experienced teachers make appropriate lesson plans, use suitable teaching methods and manage pupils well. Their expectations and homework demands are good. There have been similar difficulties in appointing satisfactory support staff. Thus, even the resources that are available are not used sufficiently well; an over emphasis on written work limits learning. Little practical work was undertaken during the inspection week, although some Year 7 pupils enjoyed using sewing machines in textiles.
148. Teachers provide grades for attainment and progress at the end of each work module, but make few assessments at more frequent intervals. Quick day-to-day tests could provide a greater focus and increase motivation. Assessment grades are collected centrally and analysed to show

progress for each student. This provides valuable information for parents, teachers and pupils. School examinations in technology are now included. They provide valuable comparative information. Most lessons are suitable for lower attaining pupils because they are able to get help from their peers. Higher attainers are identified quickly and are given the additional encouragement and extra work.

149. In nearly half of the lessons observed a number of pupils showed a poor attitude to work and failed to co-operate with teacher. Although most pupils are willing to work, a substantial minority in Years 10 and 11 was noisy and wasted time. This was particularly the case when their usual teacher was absent and at the beginning of the week. However relationships with each other and with the teacher were otherwise satisfactory. The great majority of pupils show respect for other people. Many Year 11 pupils, and particularly girls, are very willing to take responsibility for their own work.
150. The curriculum provides a broad range of opportunities for the development of skills in Years 7 to 9 by the teaching of food technology, resistant materials, graphics, textiles and the associated ICT module. These options continue to be available during Years 10 and 11. Computers are well used to improve presentation and to search for information. Spelling tests are given regularly and keywords are emphasised. Measurement and scale-drawing need greater emphasis, as does the teaching of electronics. Spreadsheets could be used to produce cutting lists and to cost food items. All pupils have equality of access and can attend an additional technology club each week after school. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to outside firms and museums.
151. The department is led and managed very well. The head of department is very active in encouraging all pupils to gain the best possible examination results and is active in the future development of the department. Good records are kept, so that disruption due to staffing difficulties is minimised. The department has identified appropriate targets to teach the content of the technology national curriculum. However these targets are sometimes difficult to achieve where staff are unfamiliar with a particular aspect of the curriculum. Financial management is sound but capitation is not sufficient to allow for immediate replacement of damaged items. ICT is used well in technology and is taught as part of the technology curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
152. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, in spite of poor accommodation and on-going difficulties with recruiting teachers. As noted at the time of the last inspection, resources are barely satisfactory; items such as cookers need repairing and tools need replacement. These factors have restricted pupils' learning. However, new accommodation and appropriate resources are expected to be ready by the beginning of 2002.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good; assessment tasks are used well to support learning.
- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching from Year 9.
- There is good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills.

### Areas for improvement

- Day-to-day marking of pupils' work does not always give enough guidance on how to improve.
- Standards of presentation of work vary too much; expectations are not clear.

153. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are very low. In 2000, the teacher assessment of standards at the end of Year 9 shows that over a third of pupils are reaching the expected level for their age; half the girls and almost a third of the boys achieved as expected. The results show that standards are rising rapidly. Twice as many pupils are reaching the standard expected for their age as did in 1998. Overall, pupils are achieving well relative to their starting point, even though the standard overall is still well below average.
154. GCSE results have improved significantly since the last inspection. In 2000, they were broadly average when compared with the national results. The pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment, though not quite as well in geography as in some other subjects. The results in 2001 are not as good, but they are still much higher than the target set by the department on the basis of the pupils' previous work. This represents good achievement for these pupils. There are no national statistics yet to compare them with. In both years, girls did much better than boys.
155. The work seen during the inspection reflects the teacher assessment and the examination results and most pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry. The work in books in Years 7 and 8 shows that pupils steadily acquire geographical knowledge and understanding of different regions, though their practical skills, for example in map work, do not develop as quickly. The rate of progress speeds up in Year 9 when pupils have more specialist teaching.
156. In Years 10 and 11, pupils who have chosen to study geography or the combined humanities course, which includes elements of geography, continue to achieve well and the overall standard of work is below, rather than well below, average. The best course work on the Amazon Rainforest was detailed, well-researched and considered all the issues. Most pupils had taken a sensible range of factors into account before reaching their conclusions, though a few had done little more than download information from a CD Rom.
157. Teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a good understanding of the National Curriculum and GCSE requirements, even though in Years 7 and 8 they are not all subject specialists. Teachers generally have high expectations for work and behaviour and make these very clear. They take a common approach to planning and teaching, they explain the aims of lessons carefully and usually write these up and refer to them during, and at the end of, the lesson to make sure that pupils have really understood the work. Most lessons have a good mix of oral, written and practical work. There is a consistent emphasis on developing literacy skills, for example through the use of key words. This is helping to raise standards. Pupils are expected to complete a considerable amount of work during lessons. The vast majority of pupils respond well in lessons and, with encouragement, are co-operative and learn well.
158. The only relative weaknesses in teaching relates to the marking and presentation of pupils' work. The day-to-day marking of books, though regular, does not often give pupils much guidance on how to improve their work. In contrast, the assessment tasks at the end of each section of work are marked very carefully and graded according to National Curriculum levels. Teachers are not consistent across the department in expecting high standards of presentation from their pupils.
159. Pupils of different attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, are supported well, though in the planning more use could be made of different levels of worksheet. Where additional support is provided in class, this is very well managed with subject and support teacher working in a real partnership to identify and meet the specific needs of individuals and the more general needs of the whole class. This was very evident in a Year 7 lesson on four and six figure grid references, where the work of both teachers enabled virtually everyone in the class to understand the principles and apply their knowledge to a practical situation.

160. Geography is well managed and the effective teaching and learning stems from the good teamwork within the department. The head of department and colleagues monitor and evaluate work carefully through observation of lessons, looking at pupils' books and a detailed analysis of assessment and examination results. The curriculum is modified in the light of the evaluation. For example, the introduction of fast track groups in Years 9 and 10 is designed to challenge higher attainers and to allow teachers to give better support to other pupils in the mixed ability groups. The targets set are realistic and based on good knowledge of the pupils' capabilities. The departmental action plan, based on this monitoring and evaluation, clearly identifies key priorities such as the need to raise the attainment of boys, the further development of fieldwork and the use of ICT. The funding allocated to the department is well managed and the department has a good range of books, however access to ICT is limited.

## HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

### Strengths

- In the majority of lessons, good planning enhances learning.
- Pupils are well managed, ensuring that a stable environment for learning is established.
- In all years, learning is fostered by the emphasis that is placed on developing literacy skills.

### Areas for improvement

- Though pupils' work is marked regularly, more attention needs to be given to the quality of marking, so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- More emphasis should be placed on the use of ICT as a teaching strategy.

161. Standards at the end of Year 9, based on teacher assessments, are below average. This applies to both boys and girls, who achieve remarkably similar results. A little under a half of pupils reach the level expected for their age. GCSE results for both 1999 and 2000 were well below average when compared to all schools nationally. Pupils attained less well in history than in many of their other GCSE subjects. Results in 2001 showed a significant improvement, with 40 per cent of pupils gaining grades A\* to C. Such results were significantly better for boys than for girls. However, all the girls entered attained a grade.
162. For present pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, standards overall are below average but, in each year, there is a significant minority of pupils who are producing work that is either in line with national expectations, or that exceeds this level. The department's literacy strategy is ensuring that some pupils are making rapid progress, as they become more confident in their oral and writing skills. The fast track arrangements are also contributing to rising standards, especially in Year 9. Standards for GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11 remain below average, though there is a significant minority of pupils who are working at well above this level. Many pupils in all years from 7 to 11 display good, or even very good, oral skills. The main obstacle to further improvements in standards is that the writing skills of many pupils are pedestrian. Many find it difficult to write clear and detailed historical accounts, though this situation is improving. Nevertheless, achievement overall is good throughout the school, given pupils' very low attainment on entry.
163. The standard of teaching is good overall and has improved since that last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Various strengths of teaching are identifiable. The management of pupils is particularly good and this ensures that lessons are conducted in a civilised manner and that pupils are able to learn and express their opinions and ideas without facing critical comments from their peers. Learning is further facilitated by good planning and by staff using a variety of teaching strategies, designed to provide variety as a means of maintaining pupils' attention. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, a contemporary map of nineteenth century London was used to encourage pupils to identify the areas where cholera was most prevalent. The pupils then had to use their prior knowledge to explain why cholera was located in some areas and not others. The lesson proceeded to look at the pioneering work of Dr. Snow. This

carefully planned lesson stimulated interest and enthusiasm and learning was good. In two Year 9 lessons, teachers used source materials, especially cartoons, to illustrate various features of the enclosure movement and the factory system. In both cases, this approach gained pupils' attention and succeeded in developing pupils' knowledge of events, as well as developing their powers of deduction and analysis. In all lessons, including in the sixth form, the strong emphasis teachers placed on the development of literacy skills helped learning. Some aspects of teaching require refinement. Though pupils' work is generally marked regularly, the quality of marking, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9, is variable. For standards to improve further, teachers will need to add comments indicating how improvements could be achieved. Pupils' learning is also limited by restricted opportunities to use ICT in lessons. This particularly restricts the development of research and numeracy skills.

164. History forms part of the humanities department; leadership and management of this area of the curriculum are good. Very good use is made of assessment data in Years 7 to 11 to track pupils' progress and to raise standards. Another good aspect of management is in Years 7 and 8, where history is taught as part of an integrated programme along with geography and religious studies. Common tasks are well planned and specialist subject teachers are used appropriately, thus ensuring that the progress of pupils is enhanced. The department is fully committed to improving the pupils' literacy skills and the establishment of a fast track group, especially in Year 9, is making a good contribution to learning. The quality of management has ensured that good progress has been made since the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- All pupils learn a variety of applications in a range of National Curriculum subjects.
- The school has very good plans for developing ICT across the curriculum and for measuring pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has the potential to raise standards further.

### Areas for improvement

- To ensure that all National Curriculum subject plans, for the use of ICT in their teaching and learning, are implemented effectively.

165. Results in the GNVQ examination at age 16 have varied over the last 3 years and have been generally below average. In 2000, 30 pupils were entered and 14 gained a pass. This is below the national average. In 2001, 19 pupils were entered and 9 achieved a merit of distinction at Intermediate level. The school's assessment of attainment in Year 9 last year showed that about a quarter of pupils reached the expected level or higher in ICT. There are no national statistics for comparison as yet for 2001.
166. The inspection confirms that standards of work are below average at the ends of Year 9 and 11. By the time they reach the end of Year 9, pupils can access the computer effectively to design a poster, write a poem, research a topic in history or measure changes of temperature in science. All pupils learn how to explore the Internet although none has yet used e-mail. The higher attaining pupils can combine information from various sources and know how to derive and interpret a graph from information they have assembled in a simple database. Less well developed is pupils' facility in evaluating their work and making improvements. Search skills, using CD-ROMS or the Internet, are fairly superficial, although pupils know how to 'download' text and pictures, cutting and pasting for use in their homework.
167. Standards for GNVQ pupils are below average. They develop the skills needed to provide the solutions to simple real world problems involving the use of databases, spreadsheets and desktop publishing. The higher attaining pupils provide a clear rationale for their work and use the system of review and evaluation well in order to improve it. Indications of the pupils' initiative

and thoroughness in planning and organising their work are less evident. Since pupils enter the school with greatly varying and generally very low average skills and understanding in ICT, this level of attainment represents satisfactory achievement in both Key Stages.

168. Specialist teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good, particularly at Key Stage 4. In the best lesson, a Year 10 GCSE class, the teacher had planned a very comprehensive and challenging set of learning objectives which she shared with the pupils. By skilful questioning, she was able to discover what pupils had learned and set tasks accordingly. Because of this all, pupils responded well and made good progress. She also dealt very well with some inattentive and chatty pupils, so that the lesson kept up a good pace. In the unsuccessful lesson, an inexperienced teacher allowed disruptive behaviour to prevent much new learning taking place. Generally, however, teachers employ good strategies to promote learning and good behaviour. Pupils are interested in ICT and the way that it affects their everyday lives. They enjoy the practical work and are keen to show their achievements. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special needs, make equally sound progress. Some software specifically designed for these pupils is used well, for instance in mathematics. The school has assessed the performance of pupils in the GNVQ and other areas of the curriculum and decided to offer GCSE ICT instead. This is an equally practical subject and suits the needs of a broader range of pupils. In this class, and in the final year of the GNVQ in Year 11, teaching is generally satisfactory, enabling the pupils to make satisfactory progress. In the lessons where ICT is used in other subjects, pupils enhance their learning through planned tasks, for instance comparing data-logging using electronic means with data-logging 'by hand' in a science lesson. Many pupils at all levels use computers on their own initiative in school or at home to do their homework or to research topics at lunchtime and after school.
169. The school delivers the National Curriculum in ICT through a mixture of specialist teaching (partly overseen by the design and technology department), through work in other curriculum subjects and through the examination classes in Years 10 and 11. This system has been under continual review and is still evolving to take account of the new national and local initiatives. The school's participation in Excellence in Cities is enabling the construction, staffing and resourcing of a new technology/learning centre block for school and community use. In the interim period, space for teaching ICT is tight and this is affecting the control and management of pupils. On the other hand, the school's computer network provides flexible access to a wide range of curriculum resources. By opening the computer network to pupils before, during and after school there is rarely a time when all computers are not being used for learning. Dropping into these sessions provided a good insight into the impact and importance of ICT in the school.
170. The good leadership and management of ICT is provided temporarily by the new learning centre manager and by a deputy head. Both recognise the need to improve the involvement of all subjects in the provision of ICT. They will introduce measures to combat the patchy coverage in Years 10 and 11 and make sure that pupils' attainment and progress are tracked properly. The school is trying hard to find a new ICT co-ordinator. A good start has been made in measuring pupils' attainment at Key Stage 3 and these results have provided some of the impetus for the very good planning and curriculum development. Given all these good indicators, it is clear that the school has a very good chance of making a 'quantum leap' in the provision of ICT in the near future.
171. In spite of the hiatus due to building works, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection. These include raising attainment, coverage of the National Curriculum and access to computers and other equipment.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

### Bengali

Overall, the quality of provision in Bengali is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and their use of Bengali in lessons helps pupils' to achieve well.
- Good curricular opportunities, and well-prepared, culturally relevant resources, support learning for pupils of all ages and abilities.

#### Areas for improvement

- Pupils need further opportunities to use ICT and to develop their independent learning skills.

172. The GCSE results in 2000 were above the national average for all schools. No comparative analysis can be made between the school's results and those for similar schools, due to the lack of information in this areas. GCSE results have risen over the last five years with 100% passes; 2001 results have fallen slightly below the results of 2000.
173. The standards of work of the current Year 9 pupils are above average, which reflects the school's examination results. Most pupils are achieving well in relation to their competence in the language on entry. Although pupils come from homes where Sylheti, a dialect of Bengali or Bengali is spoken, they enter the school with limited skills in Standard Bengali. The pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 achieve well through work matched to their abilities and the effective support provided by teaching assistants. Pupils can use short phrases and appropriate words to answer questions. More able pupils ask questions to gain more information as seen in a Year 8 lesson. The pupils asked questions to improve their vocabulary of different gender.
174. The standards of work for current Year 11 pupils are average in reading and writing in relation to the number of pupils working towards higher levels. About two-thirds of the year group achieve higher levels in speaking and listening but a number of them are currently working at average levels in reading and writing. The pupils listen to unfamiliar materials with good understanding. For example, the pupils in Year 11 listened to the biography of Helen Keller and answered questions and later some of them read the text to the class. Pupils are achieving well in Years 10 and 11 in all four language skills, but their progress is faster in speaking and listening than in reading and writing as they have more opportunities for listening to the language at home and in the community.
175. The quality of teaching overall is good. It is carefully planned with varied opportunities to acquire and practise language skills well. At its best, activities are engaging and matched to pupils needs, expectations are high and culturally relevant materials are particularly motivating. Teachers know their pupils well and share with them what they have achieved. They use their linguistic competence effectively to ensure good continuity and consolidation of learning through consistent use of the spoken language. Pupils are learning to work independently using dictionaries and glossaries and they are using the language spontaneously through paired work. However, there was insufficient evidence of the use of ICT across the department and the range of opportunities for developing independent learning skills and application of the language were limited.
176. Pupils generally show good attitudes to learning the language and work with sustained concentration and good behaviour. Sometimes, a small minority of pupils easily lose concentration and work less productively.
177. The leadership and management of the department are good with a constant drive to improve the provision and standards in the subject. Examination results are analysed and issues are identified and addressed appropriately. In addition, stable and experienced staff, well thought-out

schemes of work and good teacher-made resources have made an impact on pupils' learning and achievement in the last three years.

178. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teachers now plan to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and there is support given to pupils with special educational needs. Some aspects of independent learning skills have improved through ensuring that students use dictionaries and glossaries for learning and checking work.

## French and Spanish

Overall the quality of provision in French and Spanish is **good**.

### Strengths:

- Pupils achieve well in French and Spanish and have a positive attitude to language learning.
- Grammatical progression is built into the schemes of work for French and Spanish and pupils' show good understanding of basic grammatical concepts.
- Curriculum provision is good, offering three languages equally; an after-school community languages club provides opportunities for pupils with English as an additional language to gain accreditation in their first language.

### Areas for improvement:

- There is insufficient use of ICT in French and Spanish to support pupils' learning.
- Targets for pupils in Years 7 to 9, that stem from the monitoring of their performance, are not clearly linked to National Curriculum level descriptors.
- Marking across the department is not always consistent.
- In both French and Spanish, pupils have insufficient opportunities for independent learning and extended reading.

179. Teachers' assessments in 2000 in both French and Spanish show standards for all students to be well below national expectations. There is however a trend of improving standards, with 2001 results showing a significant improvement, with far fewer pupils failing to reach the level expected for their age. GCSE results in 2000 at A\* to C were also well below the national average for all schools in French and below the average for Spanish. Again however, there is a trend of improving results and in both languages, results at A\* to G are in line with the national average.

180. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 9 in both French and Spanish are also below average. However, most pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry and have positive attitudes to language learning. In speaking, pupils respond readily with good pronunciation and intonation and can express simple opinions, although their responses are limited to single phrases or sentences with little evidence of being able to produce more extended speech. In both French and Spanish, with support, pupils can pick out details and main points from quite extended listening passages, (in Spanish, this included a song). When instructions are given in the foreign language, pupils understand and respond quickly. Reading comprehension in both languages is limited to reading single phrases or short passages. When writing French and Spanish, most pupils require support to produce more than single sentences, but their work is careful and accurate. In Spanish pupils are beginning to use the past tense at the beginning of Year 9. In French, work seen in last year's end of Year 9 assessment, shows that higher attaining pupils can write at length and accurately, using tenses other than the present. Most pupils have a good understanding of some basic grammatical concepts and can apply them in their own work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in a mixed ability setting in Years 7 to 9 and in the broad foundation tier sets in Years 10 and 11.

181. In Year 11 lessons, where pupils studying French and Spanish follow a modular GCSE examination, standards are again below average. However, some pupils have already achieved results in the first two modules, covering reading, listening and speaking, which indicate that they are achieving well. There is evidence that pupils can produce more extended speaking and can respond to different kinds of listening and reading texts. In lessons, higher attaining pupils in



both French and Spanish are able to use the past tense accurately, in the context of describing past holidays, but both in speaking and writing, pupils' own language consists largely of single sentence responses.

182. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory in French and Spanish, with some examples of good and very good teaching. The department suffered staffing difficulties last year and although new staff have been recruited, the department is relatively inexperienced. All French and Spanish teachers have good subject knowledge, with native speaker competence in their first language and good knowledge of their second language, providing good models of pronunciation, intonation and range of language for pupils. Lessons are well planned, usually providing pupils with the opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing and with built in grammatical progression. In most lessons, there is good class management, enabling pupils to work collaboratively, to contribute orally and to listen carefully and even less experienced teachers are able to deal with occasional challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils. In a few lessons, for some of the time, pupils were unable to contribute effectively, were off task and opportunities for learning were limited. There was over-emphasis on copy writing and few opportunities for speaking or listening. In some lessons observed, French or Spanish was the main language of communication, with pupils responding readily in the language themselves, but in others there was too much use of English, resulting in little response from pupils in French or Spanish. In some classes in Years 7 to 9, there are very good examples of clear marking, indicating areas for improvement, but this is not consistent across teachers in the department. In years 10 and 11, in both languages, the modular GCSE is motivating teachers to prepare pupils well for the demands of the examination; pupils are clear what they need to do to improve. There is very little opportunity for pupils to use ICT in their language learning. In both key stages in French and Spanish, ICT is not yet incorporated into language teaching and learning and there are few opportunities for pupils to learn and use language more independently.
183. The department is very well led and managed. It works as a team with a clear commitment to improve standards and to share good practice and resources. Department documentation is clear, with appropriate policies covering a range of issues, such as rewards and sanctions, teaching and learning, gifted and talented pupils and assessment. The department development plan, clearly linked to the school development plan, identifies appropriate areas for development such as training opportunities and ICT. Communication in the department is very good. The curriculum provision is good with three languages offered in both key stages. The carousel in term one of Year 7 provides a firm basis for an informed choice of language for continued study. This change in curricular provision, so that pupils study one language only for most Key Stage 3, has resulted in improved standards. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are assessed regularly in all four skills, however, the targets for pupils are not clearly linked to National Curriculum level descriptors. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have clear target grades and advice on how to improve, including the provision of revision guides and after school revision opportunities.
184. Since the last inspection the department has made good improvement. Assessment in the department has improved overall, although there are still areas for development. Pupils' writing skills have improved and there is a clear emphasis on accuracy. There are opportunities for more extended listening, but there still remain fewer opportunities for extended reading and speaking. Standards overall have improved since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

### Strengths

- Standards are improving, due to good teaching in Years 7 to 9 and very good teaching Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are very good, helping pupils to learn.
- The school's generous provision for instrumental lessons supports learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Higher attaining pupils are not always suitably challenged in lessons.
- Provision for ICT to support learning needs to be improved.

185. GCSE results in 2000 were above the national average. In 2001, a very small number of candidates attained less well and in some other recent years, results have been below the national average. Against similar schools results are above average. GCSE numbers have risen over the past five years and the current Year 10, a "twilight" group, is the largest the school has had in recent times. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show a similar fluctuation. Pupils achieve well at GCSE given their attainment at the end of Year 9. Boys and girls achieve equally well, although some boys in particular could achieve better results through better concentration in lessons.
186. The standards of work of current Year 9 pupils are below average. However most pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry. The improving attitude and consistent good teaching mean that standards rise through the key stage. Many pupils through the key stage have a poor sense of rhythm and, in Year 7, do not sing well. Many sing on the "speaking" voice and have little sense of pitch. Very few, other than those receiving instrumental lessons, read music and the work sample shows little substantial invention of music. Not all pupils in a Year 8 lesson could confidently say whether notes in a tune had risen or fallen, whether it had an accompaniment or not or whether it moved in steps or in leaps. Year 9 pupils showed a better grasp of rhythm, most of them being secure with a straightforward short three part percussion idea. This was easy for the age group however and therefore represents below average attainment even though some pupils were quick and fluent.
187. Standards of work in Year 11 are average. Year 11 pupils tackled the extemporisation test (the "Terminal Task" for GCSE) with some success, especially for a first attempt. Some seized quickly on the potential of the given ideas whilst others could do little beyond repeating it with the obvious variation of pitch or dynamic. Several clearly could absorb much from the instrumental teachers' extremely capable and inspiring demonstrations; others derived less benefit. Similarly, in the listening test, several could answer the questions quite fully whilst other struggled to identify basic musical points. Year 10 pupils, receiving their lessons after school, have covered too little work in the first two weeks of term for a judgement to be made. Files of work for the present Year 11 group show a steadily rising standard through last year. They have positive attitudes to their work and concentrate well. This was especially noticeable in the double lesson seen.
188. A major reason for the improving attainment as pupils go through the school is the good and, in Years 10 and 11, the very good teaching. The teacher prepares thoroughly and well, is thoroughly conversant with the scheme of work and the needs of all pupils in relation to the National Curriculum. Tasks offer opportunity for pupils, including those with special educational needs, to work at their own level. In some lessons, higher attainers could tackle more difficult work, the Year 9 rhythm work being a good example. However, many gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities and achieve well through the instrumental teaching scheme. As at the time of the previous inspection, discipline is very good. At this early stage in the school year, for example, the teacher worked hard to establish the "rules" of the department with the new Year 7 pupils. This means that lessons are well ordered and pupils can settle to work and to learn.

Lessons are well paced and the teacher takes care to recap to make sure that pupils understand. In both Year 11 lessons, additional help came from the peripatetic instrumental teaching team, but there is no class assistant in Key Stage 3 lessons.

189. Music is very well led and managed. The department handbook is excellent, being full and detailed. The department monitors its work carefully and this helps to raise standards. Systems for assessment are very good and the department has detailed records on every pupil. This helps the department to match activities to pupils' attainments. The scheme of work, presently being revised, is very sound; it uses a good balance of traditional and popular music to teach the elements of music. There is insufficient use of ICT but the department's development plan shows that this is to be remedied. There is one music teacher on whom most extra-curricular duties and all teaching and organisation fall. However, the school supports generously a system of peripatetic instrumental teachers. These teachers are well used in some lessons and one of the school bands. The department is committed to equal opportunities and all activities are open to all pupils.
190. The department has made good progress since the time of the previous inspection. In some aspects of its work, such as the raised profile of music in the school and the amount of music actually happening, it has made very good progress.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

### Strengths

- A well qualified, knowledgeable team of specialists manage pupils well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils for behaviour, participation and standards of dress; pupils learn well.
- There is a clear vision for implementing change, especially in regard to raising girls' attitudes and achievement.

### Areas for improvement:

- The time allocation to each area of activity in the curriculum for Years 7 to 9, and opportunities for pupils to participate in dance, need developing..
- ICT is used insufficiently well to enhance teaching and learning.
- Participation in extra curricular activities is not monitored.

191. Standards in lessons observed in games by the end of Year 9 are average and match teacher assessments. At the end of Year 11 standards in the core curriculum are also average. GCSE examination results are below the national average for all schools, but are in line with those for similar schools. Pupils do not achieve as well in the written part of the exam as they do in the practical assessment. GCSE has been reintroduced since the last inspection with numbers increasing.
192. In Years 7 to 11, pupils reflect the whole attainment range. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry and make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included into the physical education programme and also make good progress. In Years 7 to 9, lessons were observed in football, hockey, basketball and gymnastics. By the end of Year 9 in games, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the rules and positional play. They perform a range of sending and receiving skills with increasing confidence and control and apply them into the major competitive games. Boys and girls talk knowledgeably about the game of football, a strength in the curriculum. In Year 9 basketball, higher attaining pupils perform ball-handling skills with increasing accuracy and speed, anticipating moves in order to outwit their opponents. In Year 7 gymnastics, pupils are able to plan and link movements together; however, their gymnastic sequences lack fluency, body tension and variation, typical of Year 7 at the beginners stage. In Years 10 and 11, lessons were observed in football, volleyball, table tennis and weight training. By the end of Year 11 pupils increase their knowledge, understanding and performance skills in a range of activities.

- They demonstrate a sound understanding of games play and perform sending and receiving skills with accuracy and consistency.
193. Teaching and learning are good. All teachers are knowledgeable specialists, confident in teaching a range of activities. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Management and organisation of pupils are very good. Teachers make good use of questioning and quality demonstrations to improve pupils observation and performance skills. Praise and encouragement increases confidence and evaluative feedback improves their learning. ICT is used insufficiently to support learning.
194. All pupils respond well to the high expectations demanded of them. Behaviour is very good and participation and the wearing of appropriate clothing in lessons is excellent. Pupils enjoy their lessons, are highly motivated and are willing to be physically active due to the enthusiasm and positive role models of the teachers. Relationships are good, developing pupils confidence and self esteem. In Years 7 to 11, pupils develop good social and co-operative skills with a partner, in group work and in teams. In competitive team play, pupils demonstrate fair play and good sporting behaviour and show respect for the referee's decisions. In all years, pupils use the specialist equipment and facilities safely.
195. Physical education provides a wide range of activities in the curriculum and extra curricular activities. The curriculum in Year 7 to 9 is broad but not balanced with an emphasis on games reducing the amount of time spent on other areas. There are few opportunities for pupils to participate in dance. In Year 10 and 11 there are no opportunities to study accredited vocational qualifications. The provision for extra curricular recreational and sporting opportunities is good and complements and extends the curriculum. However numbers attending are currently not monitored. Pupils have extensive opportunities to represent the school in competitive sports and achieve regular success.
196. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department keeps abreast of current issues and trends and is committed to managing change. Teachers work well together as a team and give generously of their time in and out of school. Physical education is a member of the visual and performing arts faculty, although currently it is unclear how they fit into this structure. Day to day procedures are efficient and very effective, supported by a well developed handbook. Schemes and units of work support the good teaching and reflect the well planned ongoing professional development. The facilities are currently in poor décor, the sports hall is inefficiently used and the girls' showers are not sensitive to the needs of growing adolescents. Displays however are good and celebrate pupils' achievements, provide information and illustrations of contemporary issues in sport.
197. The department has made significant improvements since the last inspection. GCSE has been reintroduced with increasing numbers taking the course. Girls are now keeping pace with boys in Years 7 to 9 as a result of being taught in single sex groupings in Year 7 and 8 and having access to the same curriculum. The department is now consistent in its procedures with high standards in clothing, behaviour and participation. Teaching and learning are good, with improved behaviour leading to improved achievement. Extra curricular provision has increased, with activities taking place every break, lunchtime and after school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good; lessons are structured well, with a very good range of activities, which help pupils to build up their knowledge and understanding.
- The subject's contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very positive.

### Areas for improvement

- Although assessment procedures are good and have improved considerably since the last inspection, there is scope to develop day-to-day marking of work, so that pupils are given more specific guidance on what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve.
- The department needs to maintain its focus on improving pupils' writing skills and examination techniques.

198. Results in the 2000 GCSE short course examination were below average. Results in 2001 were similar. The percentage of pupils achieving A\* to G grades has improved considerably over the last two years, at 96 per cent in 2001, with almost the full year group sitting the examination. This represents a considerable improvement and good achievement.
199. Inspection evidence suggests that standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with the expectations of the Camden Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils have a sound basic knowledge of world religions and they recognise and use religious language in a meaningful way. They are beginning to understand some of the similarities and differences that might exist between religions and are aware of the relevance of what they are studying for their own lives and experiences. Pupils express themselves well orally but their writing skills are much weaker. This begins to have a negative impact on their work by the time they are in Years 10 and 11 and need to work within the constraints of the formal written language required by the examination syllabus. Almost all pupils are showing an understanding of religious perspectives on a range of ethical issues. This was evident, for example, in a Year 8 lesson where pupils considered the concept of religious martyrdom. They try very hard to offer reasoned views on such issues. They show good understanding of how religious belief might affect the lives of believers; for example, in a Year 8 lesson, when pupils questioned a learning mentor on how and why he became a Muslim. Pupils make good progress in learning from Year 7, when their attainment is below average overall, to the end of Year 9; achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make similar rates of progress as those of their peers. Higher attaining pupils are able to reach their potential.
200. The standards seen in lessons in Years 10 and 11 are close to the national average; pupils of all attainment levels continue to achieve well. For example, pupils in the higher band, who will sit the full course examination, made good progress in a Year 11 lesson, where they considered links between the three monotheistic religions. There is evidence that the department is working hard to improve pupils' skills in writing and in examination techniques. For example, pupils are given sheets of relevant scriptural quotations to support their answers with evidence. Most pupils are more fluent orally than in writing. This is having an impact, for example, on pupils who potentially are capable of a C grade but only manage a D grade in the actual examination. Such pupils need to be a focus for the department. Pupils are able to identify questions of meaning, such as the nature of God, and are able to suggest answers to such questions with reference to specific religious teaching. They understand that religious education has a practical application to everyday life and are enabled to consider their own values and beliefs about a wide range of moral and ethical issues.
201. The quality of teaching is very good throughout. Occasionally, it is excellent. Teachers are appropriately knowledgeable in all aspects of the subject. This means that teachers' introductions and explanations are clear, with very good quality questioning which builds

effectively on pupils' responses, taking their learning forward at a very good pace. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Pupils are being taught to think for themselves and to consider a whole range of moral and ethical issues. Teachers provide good role models for the subject and are clearly committed to raising standards. Pupils appreciate the enthusiasm with which their lessons are taught. Classroom relationships are very positive and pupils feel sufficiently confident to discuss their personal viewpoints in a secure and purposeful atmosphere. Subject-specific vocabulary is introduced systematically, although it needs to be supported more consistently by classroom displays of key words, exemplars of pupils' work etc. Classroom management is very good: all teachers have very clear behavioural and work-related expectations, which pupils try hard to live up to. Assessment procedures are good and have improved since the last inspection, although there is scope to review the quality of diagnostic comments which are written on pupils' exercise books.

202. Pupils in religious education are enthusiastic, eager to learn and tolerant of each other's views and beliefs. They are keen to use their own religious backgrounds or their own experiences to clarify what they have just learnt. Classroom relationships are very positive with pupils from all ethnic backgrounds getting on well with each other.
203. This is a well-managed subject, within a humanities faculty, with a clear vision for the future. Statutory requirements to provide religious education for all pupils are met fully from Years 7 to 11, although not, as yet, in the sixth form. Religious education makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The department functions well as a cohesive team. It has made good progress since the last inspection.

**PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM**

In the inspection, 9 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2000.

***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English literature	1	100	76	0	12	1.00	1.82

***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	6	100	89	67	45	7.67	5.99
Biology	4	75	88	25	34	4.50	5.28
Chemistry	7	100	89	14	42	5.14	5.87
Physics	3	100	88	33	41	6.00	5.72
Design and technology	1	100	92	0	29	2.00	5.37
Business studies	3	100	91	33	30	6.00	5.34
Economics	1	100	88	100	36	8.00	5.41
Computer studies	5	80	85	0	23	4.50	4.57
Art	6	100	96	67	45	8.33	6.42
Drama	1	100	99	0	36	6.00	6.49
Sociology	2	100	88	0	37	3.00	5.46
Other social studies	2	50	88	0	35	2.00	5.34
English literature	7	86	96	0	36	2.57	5.90
Communication studies	5	100	93	0	30	2.40	5.42
Other languages	4	75	94	25	59	4.00	7.07

### Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Science	20	80	29.5	40	20.8	10	4.7
Leisure and tourism	26	65	53.8	12	24.1	0	5.1

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

#### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on provision for A and AS level mathematics and provision for vocational science. A key skills lesson for the application of number was sampled. Here, teaching and learning were good. A level chemistry was also sampled. Teaching in the lessons seen was good; students are achieving well.

#### Mathematics

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

#### Strengths

- Teaching is good; clear explanations benefit pupils' learning.

#### Areas for improvement

- Advice to students prior to the start of the course needs developing.
- Standards overall need to improve.
- More teaching time is needed in Year 12.

204. Standards in the A level examination have varied considerably over the past four years but, because of the small numbers entered in each case, a national comparison is not valid. In 2001, five students were entered. Although results overall are likely to be well below average, achievement is satisfactory in relation to students' GCSE results at the start of the course.

205. Students in Year 12 are just starting the AS course. It is too early to make judgements on standards of work seen. However, their GCSE results vary considerably; some are beginning their studies with very weak algebraic skills and limited knowledge. For example, the work on vectors is new to some, whereas it is revision for others. Two students in the group are beginning the course again. All are aware of the private study requirements of the course; all showed interest in the lesson seen. Standards of work in Year 13 vary. Standards seen in A level lessons were well above average. For example, rapid progress was made in the sketching of graphs that included the modulus of  $x$ ; achievement is good. Standards attained by AS students vary, but are well below average overall. In their Year 12 examinations, five did not gain a pass grade; one student gained a grade A. GCSE results at the start of the course were low; even so, students' commitment to work has been short of that necessary for success and, for these students, achievement overall is unsatisfactory.

206. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good; there are clear explanations which students understand and profit from. Basic skills in algebra are taught well. However, learning is not of quite the same standard, being satisfactory overall. This is due to a variety of factors. The memories of some AS students are short. Although algebraic skills are practised, they are not recalled well or quickly enough to facilitate the solution of more complex problems. The condition for a quadratic to have real roots, or the factors of simple quadratic expressions, are problems in themselves for these students, rather than intermediary steps in the solution of more complex problems. At A level, new ideas are grasped quickly and



routines are practised until work is secure. However, learning is limited to some extent as small numbers of students limit the interaction that is possible with others studying at the same level.

207. Leadership and management are good. There is a need for more teaching time now that the number of students in Year 12 has reached 17, and action will be required early when assessment indicates that students are unlikely to reach their target grades.

## Science

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good, with staff teaching their specialisms.
- Courses are well led and well planned; they are popular with students..
- The Intermediate course provides an excellent second chance for students whose literacy skills have matured late.
- The AVCE course provides an alternative route to higher education – the ambition of most.

### Areas for improvement

- The level of resources for reference is insufficient to support students' learning.
- There is no adequate working area, where science resources are available and where work can be left between lessons.

208. In 2001, the Intermediate GNVQ group gained seven pass, five merit and one distinction certificates. A further three students have incomplete passes due to unfinished units of work. Two of the 18 students withdrew at an early stage. National figures for comparison are not yet available. These examination results continue the pattern of results of the last few years, with the majority of students gaining pass or merit certificates with a smaller number of distinctions as well. In 2000, results were above those attained nationally; students achieved well given their GCSE results at the start of the course. There has been no fixed pattern of boy/girl predominance, the results varying from year to year. The AVCE course is now in its second year, no student yet having completed the course.

209. It is too early to make judgements about the standard of work seen in Year 12. However, overall, standards of work of the present Intermediate course students reflect the low GCSE grades that were accepted on entry in order to meet their aspirations. At this early stage (in the second week of their course), students have yet to settle into the routine of independent sixth form working and the accompanying expectations but, there are indications that, as in previous years, students will quickly mature and standards will improve. Most have made a satisfactory start on plant production and on widening their knowledge of atomic structure and how this affects the properties of materials.

210. Students in Year 13 taking the AVCE course are achieving well; standards of work are at least as expected. Students responded well to the programme of events and deadlines set on their Intermediate course last year and found the structure helpful and supportive. In addition, current AVCE students began their sixth form studies with a higher standard of GCSE results; this has provided a much firmer foundation on which their course can build. In lessons, they work well independently, support each other and tackle individual assignments and research tasks with growing confidence. It is a characteristic of the high motivation, ambition and determination of the AVCE students that it is impossible to distinguish Year 12 from Year 13 students by their application and standard of work. They appreciate the benefits of both years being taught together and have already formed themselves into a cohesive, well-integrated student body. Students are appreciative of the key skills courses which have strengthened initial individual weaknesses and have allowed them to tackle the course with greater confidence.

211. Teaching is very good overall, and staff can give full rein to their enthusiasms in teaching their own specialisms. This, together with their commitment and ambition for their students, leads to

increased interest and motivation. Good planning, a brisk pace to lessons, plenty of challenge and variety all contribute to interesting and absorbing lessons in an encouraging and positive environment, in which students learn well. Students have responded well to this, and have grown in maturity and confidence. Excellent staff-student relationships result in an informal, relaxed atmosphere and in the AVCE course there is little need for anything but very 'light touch' discipline. Intermediate course students are still growing into this, and although as yet they are still learning much as they did in GCSE classes, they are beginning to appreciate different approaches and the extra depth of subject material. Advanced course students thrive on the independent learning opportunities and the standard of verbal answers and argument is good. Time is used well and students are aware of the need to meet set deadlines. The library, although often crowded for study periods, is a well-used and well thought of resource and ICT facilities are well used. Private study time is adequate for both courses and students have sufficient time to research and write up their portfolios. There is however, a clear need for a working base for both courses, which contains appropriate reference materials and in which work can be left unattended.

212. Good leadership and good management are reflected by the results achieved so far and the popularity of the courses. Both courses are planned well and normal school resources support practical activities reasonably well. The level of reference material however is low, and not as good as staff would wish; this limits independent study. The overlapping of Years 12 and 13 on the AVCE course, and the combined teaching of both years, works well and is an effective and efficient use of staff and resources. The teachers co-ordinating the courses, and the subject teachers, are well known to students; equally, staff have a detailed knowledge of their students which enables unobtrusive and effective support to be given. From the evidence of past portfolios of work, assessment and monitoring of students' progress is good and students are kept aware of any shortcomings before these become pressing problems. Verification arrangements are clearly understood and students regard them as being fair and effective.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on provision for A and AS level courses in ICT. A key skills lesson for information technology was also sampled. Here, teaching was excellent, allowing students to achieve very well. Standards were very high. The course is very popular with students.

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

- Strengths
- Teachers' good knowledge of the subject, good teaching of basic skills, and good and improving access to resources, support pupils' learning.
- Students are given clear targets, which helps them to plan their learning and to achieve well.
  
- Areas for improvement
- The level of challenge and expectations of students are not always high enough.

213. Standards in A level examinations over the past four years have been very variable, but generally well below average. However, the number of students entered each year has been very small so that national comparisons are not valid.
214. Standards overall in the current sixth form are average. In the A level group, which began its second year this term, standards are above average. Students achieved reasonably well in the AS modules taken in the last academic year. They have evaluated their performance and know what they need to do to improve. Students have a good grasp of the range of applications which they have to use. They choose and employ them well in solving the realistic problems provided by the course. They have a good understanding of the way that ICT is applied in the 'real world'. The Year 12 group is much larger and more varied and here, standards overall are average; achievement is satisfactory.
215. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and structure lessons effectively. Basic skills are taught well.

Students are given good indications of their attainment and progress and are set clear, individual targets. This enables them to plan their learning and to make good progress. The teaching is less successful when the teacher fails to check the students' understanding, so that the pace is slow and laboured. In general, the teaching lacks visual stimulation and information and models for the students to work to. The level of challenge and expectations of students are not always high enough.

216. The school has piloted a range of different A level examinations recently and now has a viable course: A level ICT. This is more suited to demand and is complemented by vocational courses in Business and Leisure and Tourism, both of which have an important ICT component. When talking to students, it is clear how much they value the school and the courses they are taking. The majority aim to go on to places in higher education on a range of courses from software engineering to medicine. They claim that they have not received a great deal of careers advice.
217. ICT in the sixth form is well led and managed by the same team as in the main school. Assessment and planning are good because they are focused particularly on the needs of the examination students. Staff, accommodation and resources are shared. The sixth form computer suite is tiny but students generally have access to other terminals available in the main school. They will benefit from the improved resources when the new City Learning Centre facility becomes available shortly.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on provision for GNVQ in leisure and tourism at Intermediate level.

### Leisure and Tourism

Overall, the quality of provision in leisure and tourism is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- There is a clear vision of how provision for vocational education can be improved.
- Students are managed well in lessons and this aids learning.

#### Areas for improvement

- More use should be made of ICT, to enable students to undertake more research work for themselves.
- Teaching accommodation should be reviewed to ensure that all students have adequate access to ICT to support their learning in lessons.

218. Examination results in 2001 are likely to be below average, as was the course completion rate. Only 50 per cent of candidates completed the course. All gained pass grades; no merit or distinction grades were awarded. Though this outcome is disappointing, it should be placed in context. The school appointed a new manager for vocational educational with effect from September 2001. Prior to this, the department had suffered considerably from staffing difficulties and students had endured a number of staff changes. This uncertainty undoubtedly adversely affected standards. No judgement about standards or achievement for present Year 12 students can be made. The course has only just commenced and some students are still undecided about whether to follow this option.

219. Teaching overall is satisfactory. In two lessons, teaching was good but, in one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory. Various strengths are associated with the good teaching. These include the knowledge of the vocational context shown by staff, their planning and the way in which they manage the behaviour of students, some of whom are restless, slow to settle to their work and who have short concentration spans. In a lesson where students had to identify various sectors of the leisure and tourism industry, students were given well-prepared prompt sheets, which they had to develop. This encouraged research through the use of textbooks and specialist directories and encouraged students to reflect on their own experiences of the industry. Such an approach offered challenge and successfully fostered learning and interest. Where teaching was less good, the lesson lacked pace, it was too teacher centred and there was insufficient challenge. In some lessons, the degree of learning was restricted by either the inappropriate use of ICT, or by students not having access to ICT equipment. In one lesson students were required to use the Internet to identify how tourist firms segment their market. Though the students were given a range of potential areas to investigate, their searches were 'blind' as no specific sites had been identified in the lesson planning. This resulted in wasted time and effort and some female students, in particular, became rather restless. In another lesson on a similar theme, planning was far better, but there were no computers in the classroom, thus denying the students an opportunity to develop their research skills by using computers.
220. Though the head of department is newly appointed, there are already clear indications to show that the management of the department is good with the potential for further improvement. Schemes of work have been revised, there is a clear vision on how vocational provision should be developed to ensure that the courses offered more accurately reflect students' needs. Strong co-operation is being established with other curriculum areas. The provision for the teaching of key skills has been revised and significantly improved and very good planning is being undertaken to ensure that vocational students can benefit from good quality work experience and work shadowing placements in the local economy.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on provision for art at A and AS level but a media studies lesson was also sampled. Here, teaching was good and enabled students to make good progress in their learning.

### ART & DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Teaching is good; modules of work are planned very well.
- Each individual student is challenged appropriately.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students need to be taught to explore a wider range of personal influences.
- Opportunities for lower attaining students to pursue their study of art successfully are limited.

221. Standards in the A level examination have varied considerably over the last four years but, because of the small numbers entered in each case, a national comparison is not valid. In 2001, five students were entered: four gained a grade A and the other a grade C.
222. Standards at the beginning of students' second year in the sixth form are above average. In the AS examinations, which they took last year, results ranged grades D to A. The students' painting and drawing skills are particularly well developed and they analyse the work of other artists very well. Classroom and corridor displays of their paintings and sculpture showed dramatically the influence of Francis Bacon and Edward Hopper amongst others. Overall, achievement is good.

223. The teaching is good. Good knowledge and understanding of the subject and the curriculum helps teachers to plan the modules of work very well. They take particular trouble to provide appropriate challenges for each student. Very good quality subjects for still life, books and reproductions and computer access are supplemented by regular visits to some of the best galleries and museums in the world. However, students need to be taught to explore a wider range of personal influences. The students' work is valued and appreciated by all in the school and this helps raise the expectations of both teachers and students. All students talked to value the school and the courses it provides. Most of the A level art students plan some sort of future career or course in the arts.
224. As in the main school, leadership and management are very good. All the strengths in this area, including the development of teaching and the improving of resources, apply equally well here. Having only a small number of students in the sixth form has its strengths and weaknesses. The department might consider raising the 'critical mass' of the art department, by offering more to attract a wider range of students. At present, opportunities for lower attaining students to pursue their study if art are limited. Provision could include a vocational aspect as well as broadening the programmes of study to take account of the wide range of social and cultural influences (different arts and crafts and so on) that the students bring to the school. The art department has clear aims to extend the scope of its work in the sixth form. Because of the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers, it is well placed to achieve them.

## HUMANITIES

The focus was on provision for sociology at A level but one AS level history lesson was sampled. This lesson featured good teaching. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and teaching helped students to develop their understanding of the structure of government in the USA. Very good emphasis was placed on extending the students' vocabulary.

Overall the quality of provision in sociology is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good; lessons are structured clearly and build on current events to illustrate and develop students' understanding of sociological concepts.
- Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive; teaching is enthusiastic.
- The subject's contribution towards students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

### Areas for development

- The department needs to maintain its focus on developing students' writing skills and examination skills to improve standards.

225. It is not possible to compare examination results in 2000 with schools nationally, because only two students were entered for the subject at A level. Neither of these received an A or B grade. In 2001, 13 students took sociology at A level and 4 of these received the highest grades; just over three-quarters passed. Although the numbers are still too small to make meaningful statistical comparisons, the evidence suggests that both the popularity of the subject and the standards achieved in public examinations are rising.
226. It is not possible to judge standards achieved in the current Year 12 because, at this stage in the term, students have only had one or two lessons in sociology and none has studied it at GCSE level. Standards seen in Year 13 are below average overall, although students' verbal abilities suggest that in class discussions they are able to reach national standards. This was evident, for example, in a lesson where students considered the role played by religion in society. During discussions, students raised the issue of the recent terrorist attacks in America and how these can be judged in religious terms. They showed considerable levels of maturity and understanding. Students of all abilities make good levels of progress in both years of the sixth form and achieve well. They show good levels of concentration and perseverance when faced with difficult tasks. This was evident, for example, in a Year 12 lesson when students studied three quite difficult anthropological texts in order to build up their understanding of sociological

concepts. Similarly, in Year 13, students examined the definition of 'religious' in order to classify themselves as religious or non-religious. Their understanding of the concepts involved showed considerable progress by the time the lesson ended.

227. The quality of teaching is very good throughout. Specialist teaching means that lessons are effectively introduced, so that students are very clear about what they are going to learn and why. Expectations of students are high and students respond positively. Sociological concepts are effectively illustrated by topical events and by encouraging students to consider a very wide range of evidence, from academic texts to television soap operas. Teachers are not afraid to confront difficult issues and students are, in turn, demonstrating high levels of maturity and tolerance in their discussions. Subject-specific terminology is introduced systematically, although there is scope for this to be more consistently supported by, for example, classroom displays or student glossaries. Teaching is enthusiastic and challenging, taking students' learning forward at a fast pace.
228. Students in sociology are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. They show high levels of maturity and are developing as independent learners. They are courteous and polite to each other, to their teacher and to visitors.
229. This is a well-managed subject with an effective vision for the future. There is recognition of the need to develop students' writing and examination skills to improve standards. Sociology makes an excellent contribution towards students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

230. The focus was on provision for English, Bengali and French at A and AS levels. A key skills lesson in communication was sampled. Here, teaching was good. Most students had English as an additional language; they were at very different stages of language acquisition. All gained in knowledge and confidence. GNVQ Spanish was also sampled; one lesson was observed which was the first lesson of the course. The teaching was good, with the lesson largely conducted in Spanish; students went away motivated and with increased confidence.

### English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Teaching is good, with teachers' specialist subject knowledge used to good effect to extend students' learning.
- Students have positive attitudes to the subject.

#### Areas for improvement

- Small group sizes tend to result in discussion that is rather ponderous and lacking in zest.
- The department is not yet analysing how much 'extra value' they are giving students throughout the course.

231. The A level examination results in 2000 were well below the national average. Only six students entered, and five passed, achieving C to E grades. In 2001, three students took the examination, and each passed. It is not possible to comment on trends over time, as too few students have consistently been entered for the examination to make comparisons valid.
232. A limited sample of A level work from Year 13 students seen during the inspection confirmed that standards are well below the national average. Students can analyse straightforward texts successfully, and are able to compare and contrast treatments and themes. However, middle and lower attaining students sometimes use rather clumsy expressions in their writing and they lack the ability to discern or express an understanding of the subtleties in what they read.

Students in Year 12 are only two weeks into their course, but at this stage they would appear to reflect national average standards in terms of understanding techniques of literary analysis. In one lesson seen, students were deconstructing text using analytical techniques to make judgements about theme, genre and style of writing. They made intelligent, perceptive judgements about what they read, commenting on imagery and metaphor accurately. Students achieve to a satisfactory degree during the two years of the A level course.

233. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have wide subject knowledge that enables them to ask probing questions of the students, as well as to explain the finer points of literary analysis. In a Year 12 AS lesson, the teacher carefully led students to explore some textual extracts, challenging them to think deeply about the writers' intentions and the techniques used to create character and plot. Students responded well to the teacher and made good gains in acquiring the skills of literary analysis. They generally have positive attitudes to the subject, which they take seriously; students want to do well. Procedures for marking and assessing work are satisfactory. A level work is marked helpfully using examination criteria, which are shared with students. Little analysis of achievement is carried out and, as a result, different groups of students are not targeted systematically for improvement, although this is less necessary whilst group sizes remain small and teachers know individual strengths and weaknesses well. The department is trying to encourage students who would succeed on the course to join, through measures such as arranging a pre-course 'taster' day, with a view to increasing group sizes and making discussions more lively.
234. The leadership and management of sixth form matters are good. The department has responded to the demands of the new AS and A level courses well, and is teaching communication skills as part of the key skills course effectively. The whole areas of teaching and learning styles and assessment and target setting in the sixth form have still to be developed, but the department has come some way to responding to students' needs. For example, they have changed examining boards in both English and media studies, in order to make the courses more relevant to the students. The head of department intends to review the consortium arrangements to try to ensure that students' needs are best catered for.

## Bengali

Overall, provision in the subject is **good**.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching, including the skills and competence of the teacher, is very good, helping students to achieve well.
- Well-prepared and authentic resources are used well to support learning.

### Areas for improvement

- ICT is used insufficiently well to aid learning.

235. Over the last three years, low numbers of students have studied the subject and all have been entered for A level Bengali after one year's study. Because of these small numbers, it is not possible to make any comparisons nationally. In 2000, three out of five students achieved B or C grades.
236. The evidence from work seen in Year 12 lessons and in students' files during the inspection shows that overall standards are average, but that most able students are achieving well. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are good. They speak standard Bengali confidently and express their views clearly. Their pronunciation and intonation are good. Pupils prepare stories and dialogues using examples of phrases and glossaries and present them to the class. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing are average as seen in their translation work from Bengali to English. The pupils were observed in the second lesson of the year and they have yet to develop a secure knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

237. The quality of teaching in Year 12 is very good and students achieve very well. High expectations of the spoken and written language and organisation of varied group tasks generate enthusiasm among students. The teacher uses authentic resources very effectively, so that students understand how to use the language appropriately. Consistent emphasis on the use of standard Bengali in speaking helps students to consolidate their skills in the spoken language and to make at least good progress. Although the teacher uses good resources to motivate and enthuse students, there is insufficient evidence of the use of ICT to raise standards in reading and writing further.
238. Students are mature and motivated to learn and show interest in the subject. They are keen to participate in discussions, giving their views willingly. They have good research skills and use dictionaries, glossaries and reference books well.
239. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Experienced and qualified teaching staff and appropriate resources, such as books and journals, contribute to students' enthusiasm for learning.

## French

Overall the quality of provision in French is **good**.

### Strengths:

- Teaching is excellent, with very good knowledge of examination requirements; a range of activities and authentic resources are used well.
- Students show oral fluency and the ability to express complex ideas; they are positive about the course and work well together in small groups.
- Consortium arrangements work well.

### Areas for improvement:

- To increase the uptake in Year 12.

240. A level and AS French are new courses in the school and it is too early in the year, and there are too few students, to make a firm judgement about standards. However the two students in Year 13 are making excellent progress in their speaking and listening skills. They are already able to make judgements, give reasons and justifications and discuss complex issues. Although both students have French-speaking backgrounds, their achievement is very good. Evidence of their progress is in the range of structure and vocabulary, as well as the concepts and outside knowledge they are able to use, in order to deal with more difficult topics such as global issues.
241. Although only two lessons were seen, the teaching observed was excellent. The planning is meticulous, allowing for a build up of skills and range of activities. After the teaching and eliciting of key vocabulary, the teacher enabled students to understand and respond to an authentic French news recording from that morning and to read and respond in speaking to articles about the recent events in America in the French press. The teaching ensures not only that students are thoroughly prepared for their written examinations, but also that skills are developed for the reading and listening examination requirements. Clear preparation for the requirements of the oral component was seen in homework, which required students to report in French from an English source.
242. As a result of the consortium arrangements it is not possible to make a judgement on how well the subject is led and managed. However, the consortium arrangements work well for both students and teachers and students react positively to the benefits of attending another institution. Overall, students are very positive about the course.