

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOPSHALT SCHOOL

Hillingdon

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102440

Headteacher: Mr JF Hodkinson

Reporting inspector: Michael Gibson

Inspector's number: 1205

Dates of inspection: 17-20 January 2000

Inspection number: 187950

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I. Carter
Date of previous inspection:	22-26 April 1996

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Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Gibson, Registered Inspector		What sort of school it is The school's results & achievements How well the pupils are taught How well the school is led & managed What the school should do to improve further
Anne Ferguson, Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents Opportunities for personal, social & health education
June Alexis	English, media studies, drama, performing arts	The work related curriculum
Terry Bailess		Special educational needs; English as an additional language
James Bowden	Physical education, sports studies	Links with the community & other institutions Equality of opportunity
Kiran Campbell-Platt	Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
Howard Chester	Mathematics	Assessment
Joan Child	Music	Staffing
Alison Edwards	Modern foreign languages	Extra-curricular provision
Peter Harle	Art Sociology	How good the curricular provision is
Jenny Smith	Geography History Business studies Economics	Accommodation

Frances Thornton	Science	Effectiveness of financial management
Carol Worthington	Design & technology Information and communications technology	Resourcing

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bishopshalt School is a Foundation school in the Borough of Hillingdon. It was given Arts College status, specialising in performing arts, in 1998. The immediate vicinity of the school has a semi-rural feel to it, yet the school is only a short walk from a busy main road. The local area is a mix of housing, light industry and a few shops. The school dates back to the turn of the 20th century and is housed in buildings based on an old mansion with mid-century additions and some very new facilities. The school is over-subscribed. It has 1161 pupils on roll and is slightly bigger than many secondary schools. The pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. Over nine percent are known to be eligible for free school meals which is just below the national average. Almost eight per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register which is below average. However, 38 have statutory statements of special educational need which is above average. 110 pupils come from homes where English is an additional language but only one is at an early stage of learning the language. Although many pupils live reasonably close to the school, significant numbers travel considerable distances to attend, including some from other boroughs. Not many pupils move in or out of the school during the course of their education except in the sixth form where a significant proportion join from other schools. The school operates an entry requirement for A level courses of five or more A*-C grades at GCSE. Results of Key Stage 2 tests on entry indicate that the range of attainment is wide and very slightly above average, although the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs has been rising in recent years. The school aims to promote academic and social excellence, to develop each pupil's mental, creative and technological capabilities and to educate them for work and leisure. The school has a development plan for the academic year 1999-2000 but with broad targets up to 2002. The main priority areas include: improving the curriculum to meet the new requirements, improving teaching, pupil attainment and learning skills, improving the use of information technology, further developing staff, improving the fabric of the building and implementing the arts college plan. Targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 have been set for 2000 and 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall this is a good school with many strong features. The standards reached in Key Stages 3 and 4 are above national averages and are improving steadily. Standards in the sixth form are broadly in line with those nationally but have remained steady rather than improving as national ones have. Teaching is good and pupils' attitudes to work are very positive. The school is well led and managed overall. The strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. Bearing in mind the attainment on entry, the high standards reached in examination results, the quality of the teaching and the curriculum and the cost effectiveness of the sixth form, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' results at Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations are above average, are well above those in similar schools and are continuing to improve.
- The teaching and curriculum provided are good overall and these help the pupils to learn.
- The attitude of pupils and students towards their work helps them to achieve well.
- The headteacher gives clear leadership.
- The governors provide good strategic leadership.
- The staff of the school care for their pupils well and support their overall development.

- The staff of the school make effective use of the community and industrial contacts to widen the opportunities in the school.
- The curriculum in the sixth form is wide and provides a good range of opportunities for pupils of differing capabilities and interests including those new to the school.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular provision and opportunities are good.

What could be improved

- More consistent and thorough monitoring of teaching and the quality of pupils' work by directors of study and heads of subjects could help to ensure that teaching and learning improve further.
- More consistent day to day assessment and marking could help more pupils know how to improve their work further.
- Individual pupils are not yet involved enough in agreeing their own academic targets and finding ways of achieving them.
- Information technology is not used sufficiently across the full range of subjects.
- Attainment in the sixth form could be improved to match continuing upward trends nationally and elsewhere in the school.
- The governors do not ensure that statutory requirements are met in the following ways: by providing a daily act of collective worship, by teaching "control and monitoring" in ICT in Key Stage 3 and by reporting to each parent on their children's progress in this subject .

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Bishopshalt has steadily raised standards in Key Stages 3 and 4 since the last inspection in 1996. This has been achieved by introducing target setting, using a wider range of teaching styles and improving the teaching time available to religious education and information technology. All other main issues raised have been addressed so that the school is now providing a more suitable range of sixth form courses, is involving middle managers in whole school decision making and has improved the quality of the facilities in the school. Whilst some of the action plans are still being implemented, overall the school has made good progress in responding to the issues raised. The effective organisation, clear leadership from the headteacher, senior management team and governors and the collaborative will to improve mean that the school is in a good position to make further progress.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds based on *average point scores for the whole of the relevant year group* in Key Stage 3 SATs, GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Key Stage 3 Tests	B	C	B	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

GCSE examinations	B	C	B	B
A-levels/AS-levels	C	D	C	

The average level of attainment on entry to the school is similar to that nationally but was slightly above in 1999, particularly in English and science. Results at Key Stages 3 and 4 are above the national average and are broadly in line with attainment nationally in advanced level examinations. In 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching levels 5 and 6 in the National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science and above that in similar schools. There is a rising trend in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in all three subjects similar to that nationally. Standards in most other subjects as measured by teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above national averages. Particularly good work is seen in art. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C and A* to G was well above the national average and that in similar schools. Standards have been steadily rising over the past four years and at a faster rate than that nationally. Attainment of both boys and girls is above the national average. At A level the average points score per subject is slightly above the national average while the average points score per student over the past four years has remained close to but just below the national average. During the same period the national average has risen steadily. Girls achieve more highly than boys in most subjects at this level. The pupils reached the challenging targets set for GCSE results in 1999. In all key stages pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as other pupils.

Standards of literacy, especially those of boys, have risen as a result of efforts made by the school. Although no similar efforts have been made to improve numeracy skills, these are at a satisfactory level overall. Standards in information and communications technology lessons are satisfactory. It is used well in modern languages, music, drama and GNVQ but use in many other subjects is limited.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and to the school in general which helps their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour of the great majority of pupils is very good in lessons and in other activities in the school. Only a very small minority of pupils behave in ways which disturb work. The fixed term exclusion rate was high but is now falling. That for permanent exclusions is very low.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development opportunities are good ranging from jobs with responsibilities to extra-curricular activities including exciting junior and senior productions and a wealth of residential visits. Relationships between pupils and with members of staff are very good and this contributes to the overall positive working atmosphere.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Pupil generally arrive punctually at school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching overall is good. 97 percent of lessons were at least satisfactorily taught. About 65 percent of lessons were good or very good and 25 percent were very good or excellent. Only three percent were unsatisfactory and these were in different subjects. Teaching for pupils over 16 is very good. The quality of teaching in mathematics was consistently good contributing to the high standards reached. Teaching in English was also good whilst that in science was never less than satisfactory. Teachers use key words and encourage reading to develop literacy skills across the curriculum. Numeracy skills are also suitably developed. There were no subjects in which teaching was less than satisfactory, but it was particularly good in mathematics, design technology, art and religious education and good in physical education. Work is generally well planned and in the majority of lessons meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds. Lessons are carried out using a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and at a good pace. Pupils are managed well thus building on their own positive attitudes. Work is suitably assessed through testing though marking is too variable and too often doesn't help pupils know what to do to improve. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is generally good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets requirements except in Key Stage 3 information technology and is broad and balanced. The sixth form offers a wide variety of courses to meet the range of needs. There is a suitable personal, social & health education course, a very good careers programme and a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Links with industry and the community are good and increasing substantially. Links with primary schools have also increased but don't yet concentrate enough on the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make good progress over time in line with their capabilities. The smaller classes, additional classroom support and tasks pitched at the right level help them to improve.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although there are pupils in the school who come from homes where English is a second language, they are fluent in English so no extra provision is made for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual,	Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory except that requirements for collective worship are not met. Pupils are taught well what is right and what is wrong. They are given good

moral, social and cultural development	opportunities for social development in lessons and in other activities. Opportunities for developing an awareness and appreciation of their own culture and that of others are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are good. There are a few health & safety issues but the school has these in hand. Teachers give much time to supporting pupils' development but pupils have too little involvement in agreeing their own academic targets. Form tutors play too limited a role in this process except in Year 11 but do monitor effort grades. Regular formal assessments help pupils to know how they are doing but the school's assessment policy is not fully implemented. Parents receive much information about the school though some of it is too complex. Reports on pupils' progress are good but don't include comments on information technology at Key Stage 3.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school well and the school has made good progress since he joined, though he has less one to one contact with pupils than his predecessor. The school runs smoothly because there are clear policies and procedures and senior staff carry out their responsibilities well. Departments are well organised.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well organised, well informed and help to give the school a sense of direction. They also keep an eye on progress. They have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met though.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The annual reviews help heads of subjects to evaluate how well they are doing. The monitoring of teaching and learning are not regular or consistent enough to help to make further improvements.
The strategic use of resources	There are enough suitably qualified staff and they are well deployed. Accommodation for performing arts and mathematics has improved significantly. Accommodation for other subjects is largely adequate but is in need of renovation especially that for physical education. Learning resources have improved and are used well. The school and governors spend on the school's priorities and ensure that they are getting good value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school and make good progress. • The teaching is good, the school has high expectations of work and behaviour and most pupils have helpful homework. • The school works closely with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents are concerned about bullying in the school. • A few parents think that a minority of teachers do not have good enough control over classes. • Homework is not always set

<p>and keeps them well informed. Parents feel able to approach the school with questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well managed and led. • Pupils are helped to become more mature and responsible. This is helped by the school providing a wide range of activities outside lessons. 	<p>consistently.</p>
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The inspectors agreed with the positive views which the great majority of parents had of the school. The school deals promptly and appropriately with the low incidence of bullying. A very small minority of pupils do not behave well in class and in a very few lessons these pupils were not suitably managed. Relevant homework was set but the two week timetable sometimes causes an imbalance in successive weeks.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school achieves results at Key Stages 3 and 4 which are well above the national average. Those in advanced level examinations are broadly in line with attainment nationally.
2. The school has not received full information from primary schools about the pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 in recent years. Almost complete results for pupils entering the school in 1998 and 1999 have been received only this term. Preliminary analysis shows that the average level of attainment in 1998 was similar to that nationally while that in 1999 was slightly above, particularly in English and science.
3. In 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching levels 5 and 6 in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science and above that in similar schools. The average points score achieved in each of these subjects was also above the national figures especially in mathematics. There is a rising trend in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in all three subjects. The average points score in English and mathematics has also been rising over the past couple of years whilst that in science has remained steady. The trend has been similar to that nationally. Attainment of both boys and girls is above the national average and the differences between them are not now significant. Standards in most other subjects as measured by teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above national averages.
4. Work seen in Key Stage 3 shows that pupils can write in a variety of styles for different purposes in English. The work is usually above expectations for their age though they are inclined to make some technical errors. Pupils are articulate and read with understanding in this subject and others. Work of an even higher standard was observed in mathematics where even lower attaining pupils are close to national expectations for their age. In science pupils have a knowledge level which is close to and sometimes above average but their skills in investigations are lower. Above average work was seen in art, design technology, physical education and religious education and pupils of all levels of attainment are making good progress. Pupils reach standards in information technology, history, geography and modern languages which are about at the level expected for their age. Pupils at all levels of prior attainment learn well and make good progress overall. The school does not make formal provision for gifted and talented pupils and relies on teachers to provide work and extra-curricular activities which give them sufficient opportunity to make appropriate progress. The lack of formal identification makes it hard to track their progress but higher attaining pupils produce some work of quality. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading and spelling, many improving their reading age by significant amounts. They are all entered for National Curriculum tests and the majority achieve levels which show they have made satisfactory progress.
5. In 1999 the percentage of Key Stage 4 pupils achieving five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at grades A* to C and A* to G was well above the national average and that in similar schools. The average points

score per pupil has been rising steadily over the past four years and at a faster rate than that nationally. Attainment of both boys and girls is above the national average. In lessons pupils develop their writing skills showing an understanding of the writer's intentions; they read more fluently and with greater understanding and speak with a widening use of appropriate vocabulary. They do not always modify their views enough when presented with different and valid opinions. In mathematics pupils show above average levels of ability and can apply their knowledge to new situations well. Pupils in science show knowledge and understanding which is broadly in line with that expected in topics such as respiration and representing chemical reactions by word equations. As at Key Stage 3 their skills in science investigations are not at the same level. There have been improvements in pupils' achievements in information technology and religious education. Pupils studying religious education, design and technology, art, geography, history and physical education are currently reaching standards above those expected. Attainment in modern foreign languages, information technology and music is broadly in line with expectations. The work of those pupils following the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation courses in business studies and health and social care is at a satisfactory level. Many of these pupils are making good gains in developing skills including those used in information and communications technology. This is partly because they work for part of the time in tandem with students from the sixth form which is having mutual benefit. Pupils of all levels of attainment learn effectively and make good progress overall. This indicates that many pupils are on track to achieve results in line with those achieved by previous cohorts of pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make as much progress as other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make good progress. As a result every pupil secured at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to G in 1999.

6. A significant proportion of post 16 students enter the school at the beginning of the sixth form. The vast majority of students following advanced level courses are entered for three subjects and in 1999 the average points score per subject was slightly above the national average. However, the average points score per student was close to but just below the national average. The reason for this discrepancy is not clear but may be because students do not take more than three A or AS subjects. The average points score per student has remained fairly constant over the past four years though the national average has risen steadily. Particularly good results have been obtained in psychology, art and history. Girls achieve more highly than boys at this level. In English current post 16 students generally have a good grasp of complex texts and write essays in which they provide appropriate evidence to support their points of view. Mathematics students display a good ability to handle more difficult mathematical concepts and can solve problems effectively. Sixth form science students generally show practical techniques at a level appropriate to the stage of the course and have an understanding of topics such as halogens and plant tissues at the level expected. The range of attainment in science is very wide, however. Standards in art continue to be above those found typically in A level courses. Students in modern foreign languages make considerable progress from Key Stage 4 and achieve above average standards in their work. Students following the GNVQ health and social care and business studies courses have grown in confidence and their work shows an increasing maturity in organisation and content. Similar progress can be seen in the work of students following psychology, sociology, philosophy and performing arts A level courses. Attainment in sports studies at this level is about in line with expectations. Overall work of those currently in the sixth form is of a higher standard than that indicated by the examination results of previous cohorts. Sixth form students are receiving good support in individual subjects which

is aiding their learning. This is not yet systematic, however, and the school is currently considering what strategies it can employ to raise attainment for present post 16 students.

7. The school has made significant efforts to ensure that literacy standards are maintained or improved, especially those of boys. They have, for example, appointed a literacy co-ordinator, introduced a literacy policy, extended the opportunities to read in context, increased the use of the library with a section mainly based on boys' interests, given a higher focus to spelling and introduced key words in each subject. This has led to a improved level of general literacy. Pupils are able to use technical terms in subject contexts with confidence and suitable accuracy.
8. No similar whole school efforts have been made to improve numeracy skills. Despite this pupils showed appropriate measuring skills in design and technology, sound graphical skills in science and appropriate numeracy skills in physical education. There was more limited evidence of such development within the work sampled and lessons observed in geography.
9. Information and communications technology is taught as a discrete subject in Key Stages 3 and 4 but is rarely used in many other subjects and consequently has little impact on learning in those subjects. Nevertheless, the technology is used effectively to enhance learning in modern foreign languages, through use of databases, the internet and word processing for example, in music when pupils record, edit and sequence compositions, and in religious education, drama and GNVQ courses.
10. The governors set targets for 1999 which were appropriately challenging and were achieved. Targets have also been set for the years 2000 and 2001. Those for 2000 had to be set before the 1999 results were known and now appear to be less challenging. The school is confident that these will be exceeded.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

11. Pupils like coming to school. There is a satisfactory level of attendance and very little unauthorised absence. Many pupils take a keen and active part in a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities.
12. Behaviour at school is mainly good. There were only isolated instances of bad behaviour which disrupted classes and some jostling in corridors at lesson change over. Behaviour was good or better in the great majority of lessons and very good in some. This was particularly true for sixth form lessons, such as a Year 12 business studies lesson where students switched straight into their lesson, listened carefully to the teacher, got on quietly with exercises and supported others when they needed help. Pupils generally have a positive attitude towards work and this helps them to learn more effectively and achieve more highly. There was a significant number of short term exclusions partly due to a rigid interpretation of rules but the number is now reducing. There have been very few permanent exclusions.
13. The general absence of graffiti and litter was considered by pupils to be normal. They confirmed that bullying was generally not an issue. They know what is right and what is wrong.
14. Supportive and constructive relationships are well established throughout the school community, including pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those with special

educational needs. For example, a pupil on crutches was given priority in corridors and many offers of assistance were made to 'lost' inspectors. Pupils have a good awareness of how their behaviour can affect others, as seen in a Year 9 personal, social and health education lesson on 'conflict in the home' and the way difficult issues such as bereavement were tackled in a Year 8 drama lesson.

15. Pupils show initiative and are keen to take on positions of responsibility, such as sixth form prefects and library assistants from across the school. Year 8 pupils demonstrated how well they carry out such responsibilities by their care of hamsters in the 'Animal House' club. In general, pupils are able to organise their work effectively and work independently. Students were seen successfully undertaking a time management exercise as part of the sixth form industry conference.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching in the school is of good quality overall. Internal examinations prevented inspectors from observing lessons in Years 11 and 13 and the industry conference restricted observations in Year 12 to three days. Nevertheless, well over 170 lessons were seen throughout the rest of the school. Teaching in about 97 per cent of lessons was at least satisfactory. 25 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent and 65 per cent were good or better. Good teaching was seen in all subject areas and all years. A slightly higher proportion of good and very good lessons was observed in Year 12. Particularly good teaching was observed in art, design and technology, economics, mathematics and religious studies.
17. Teaching in the school has many good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and of the requirements of the courses including those, such as sociology and psychology, which are only taught in Years 12 and 13. The effective use of teacher knowledge was well illustrated in a very good Year 12 lesson on sociological triangulation where students were enabled to learn some of the technical language quickly and well. Teachers have adapted well to the very different approach to acquisition of knowledge and skills required in vocationally oriented courses offered in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
18. Lessons are usually planned clearly and matched to the needs of the pupils. The links with previous learning are clear. Work follows on well to ensure that skills and knowledge are built up securely. However, there was little obvious indication in the teachers' lesson planning seen to show how the requirements of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) or those of gifted pupils were to be met. However, even though there was no written reference to IEPs, the work met the pupils' needs and the level of challenge was about right in the majority of lessons. In a Year 7 design and technology lesson on making a desk tidy the teacher's knowledge of the pupils meant that work was pitched at just the right level enabling the pupils to make good progress in their design drawings.
19. Most teachers give a clear indication at the beginning of the lesson of what the pupils should learn. Lower attaining pupils in a Year 9 mathematics lesson made good progress in learning about the angles in a triangle partly because the teacher had checked that they were very clear what they should be learning. The clarity with which lesson aims are presented stimulates pupils' interest and in the main they stay focused on the task in hand. The methods teachers use are usually appropriate to the subject matter. There is clear evidence that the school has worked at developing the range of teaching styles since the last inspection. Teachers use a range of

approaches including question and answer, class teaching, group work, case studies, demonstrations, pupil research and pupil presentations. Effective use is often made of questioning and this has a positive impact on learning. In Year 9 lesson good teacher use of questions enabled low attaining pupils to make good progress in understanding how light travels and is reflected from a mirror surface. Teachers encourage the development of basic language skills and the use of appropriate technical language. Many teachers encourage reading within the subject and display key words in their rooms to help pupils retain the language. The overall impact is that basic skills in language and numeracy are successfully developed.

20. Teachers have suitably high expectations of behaviour and the quality and pace of work. This helps to re-inforce the pupils' own positive attitudes to work. Pupils generally respond well to the teachers' expectations and work at a good pace, responding to the challenges set. Pupils are usually well managed so that lessons are taught effectively. Overall teachers manage time well and in a majority of lessons they include a review of what should have been learned. In a number of the lessons which were otherwise satisfactory this aspect of the lesson was too rushed and the pupils were insufficiently involved in confirming what they have learned. In addition this reduces the information available to help teachers assess pupils' progress and to guide future planning.
21. Teachers make effective use of textual and physical resources in most lessons. However, with the exception of modern foreign languages, music, GNVQ and sometimes religious education and drama, too little use is made of information and communications technology to support learning.
22. In the very small proportion of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory work was too often not matched to the needs of the pupils, especially those with lower attainment. In these lessons expectations were not high enough, management of those pupils less willing to learn was poor and the pace was too slow.
23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall but better in Key Stage 3 in many of lessons in English, mathematics and to some extent science. In some subjects, such as art and music, the practice of setting by achievement in other subjects does not aid the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Most teachers have an awareness of individual pupils' work needs and adapt suitably. Basic skills teaching by the staff of the special needs faculty is good. Support teachers make a useful contribution to pupils' learning within lessons. However, they are sometimes insufficiently involved in planning the lesson and contributing to ways in which the work can be made accessible enough to pupils with special educational and other learning needs. Occasionally expectations of writing are too low.
24. Some parents were concerned about consistency in setting homework. Homework set during the inspection week was generally appropriate to the topic being studied, at about the right level and re-inforced the work done in class. However, the structure of the timetable means that there is sometimes an imbalance between homework set in each of the two weeks.
25. Teachers know their pupils well. They use formal assessment tasks effectively to assess track pupils' overall progress. They make informal judgements about pupils' learning and, in most lessons, respond to individual pupils' needs. Marking of work is, in general, not consistent enough between teachers in the same department or

between subjects. A very small minority of teachers did not mark frequently enough. Marking of students' work in Years 12 and 13 is generally more informative in indicating how they can improve. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 show a good general knowledge of how well they are doing from grades and test results but have a less clear idea of what they can do to improve. Older students are much clearer.

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

26. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3, satisfying statutory requirements in most, though not all, all respects. There is now a 25 hour teaching week providing enough time to teach the statutory curriculum. There is access to the broad curriculum for all pupils with only a few caveats mentioned below. The small teaching groups encompassing pupils with special educational needs are effective in meeting their needs. However, setting based on attainment in other subjects is not always appropriate to the teaching of arts subjects or for pupils with special educational needs. There are increasing links with primary schools but these have too little impact on the curriculum provision especially in Year 7. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection and is generally satisfactory. However, it does not fully satisfy legal requirements at Key Stage 3 because teaching about "control and monitoring" is not fully covered. Although information and communications technology is used well in modern languages, music, drama, design technology and GNVQ other subjects do not make enough use of it. The curriculum provision for religious education, which did not meet requirements at the last inspection, is now satisfactory at all key stages. More able linguists, both boys and girls, take a second modern foreign language in Years 8 and 9. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is now enhanced by inclusion of drama and dance.
27. Arts College status has had a very positive impact on specific arts subjects and on resourcing to support the curriculum. In particular, the inclusion of dance at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE, drama as a core subject at Key Stage 3, extra music and art for some pupils in Years 8 and 9 and the A level performing arts course have enhanced the curriculum provision. The impact across the whole curriculum is at an earlier stage of development, but there has been an effect on information and communication technology and history, for example. There is good provision for the development of literacy skills, but numeracy skills across the curriculum are not yet planned coherently.
28. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is also broad and balanced though with weaknesses in ensuring access to information technology through other subjects. There is appropriate curricular provision for those with special needs and the Code of Practice is fully implemented. As well as a good level of GCSE provision, the school has appropriately introduced more work-related learning for pupils who are less motivated by traditional academic subjects and some of those who have special educational needs. This includes day release to attend college courses in motor vehicle maintenance and information technology. An ASDAN course is being tried with some Year 10 pupils and appropriate Certificate of Achievement courses are offered in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. In addition GNVQ courses in health and social care and business studies have been introduced. Overall this represents good improvement since the last inspection. The take up of arts subjects in Key Stage 4 is lower than in comparable schools – less than 20 per cent of pupils at Key Stage 4 take a performing arts subject and the option system does not positively encourage pupil participation at this level. However, numbers

opting for the visual arts have been improving over recent years. The school is actively investigating ways to increase involvement in the arts at Key Stage 4.

29. There is a good range of post 16 courses at A level with more than twenty subjects offered. Some A/S level and intermediate GNVQ courses are also provided. There is also a small though shrinking number of GCSE courses which are being replaced by more appropriate alternatives. Numbers in A level groups are generally suitably high, giving positive opportunities for student mutual support and development. The school is well prepared for the changes required in post 16 provision from September 2000.
30. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education opportunities offered to pupils are satisfactory overall and have been sustained since the last inspection. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory whilst the provision for moral and social development is good. In art, music, literature, drama and religious education particularly, pupils develop their own ideas through expressive projects and activities, and also have opportunities to develop their spiritual and self awareness. Opportunities for collective worship are satisfactory in principle – all pupils have three assemblies a week, and the ‘thought for the day’ is expected by the school to be applied in any tutorial time not covered by assemblies. Practice in this matter, where sometimes the ‘thought’ is simply mentioned in passing as part of the notices, means that the school does not fully satisfy statutory requirements nor is spiritual development promoted through this mechanism. Pupils are taught through their lessons and informally to distinguish right from wrong and the codes of expectation are clear. The majority of pupils follow these well and the provision for moral development is good and effective. There are already many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and others, such as the institution of a school council, are being actively developed. Residential trips and club activities provide additional ways for pupils to develop socially. Activities including the musical and dramatic productions provide good opportunities for pupils at all levels to develop an awareness of their own culture. Courses such as dance, performing arts and music provide good opportunities for including awareness of the range of cultures represented in the school. However, the development of pupils’ appreciation of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures are not evenly promoted across all curriculum areas.
31. The school makes good arrangements to help pupils take advantage of opportunities to learn by organising the wide range of extra-curricular activities across the key stages referred to above. These include study support sessions for examination classes, and open access to the computer rooms before school and during break and lunchtimes. This is put to effective use by many pupils. Parents are generally pleased with the provision and there is evidence of particular strengths in some departments. The physical education department offers a very good range of sporting activities, both competitive and recreational. The programme of artistic and musical activities is a strength, and the long tradition of major school productions involving junior and senior pupils is a valuable feature of the school, as are the residential trips both overseas and in this country. Lunchtime and after school clubs are successfully run by several departments such as languages, dance and ceramics, and Year 12 students have a chance to participate in the two day industry conference. Extra-curricular provision makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school and is having a good effect on pupil attainment and attitudes as well as to their social development.

32. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), is currently satisfactory with appropriate inclusion of sex education and drugs awareness. It is taught principally through timetabled PSHE lessons and religious education, with input from visiting agencies, such as the Metropolitan Police. Lack of suitable accommodation reduces the potential impact of PSHE. There is also a lack of a team of specialist staff. Teachers are currently drawn from other subject areas under an acting head of department. However, there is an exciting aim to develop the relevance and challenge of the personal, social and health education programme by incorporating the views of pupils from the planned School Council.
33. In addition to the work-related subjects at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form mentioned above, there is a careers element in personal, social and health education in Years 7 to 9 and this forms part of the preparation for Key Stage 4 option choice. A specialist teacher teaches all the careers modules at Key Stage 4 and organises effectively the work experience/ business placement system in Year 10 for all pupils. Students in Years 12 and 13 have individual interviews where careers guidance is linked to support for university entrance applications. Overall careers guidance is good, and the school has received recognition for the quality of its work through receipt of the West London Quality Award.
34. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to maintain and develop community links. The governors are keen to review the impact of the present community links on the curriculum. At present there are very positive industry links which enrich the curriculum, particularly in the sixth form. The well-established industry conference illustrated this effectively. Students were clearly benefitting from the challenge provided by the activities planned. Other community links which are built in to the main curriculum, work experience, the work related curriculum and to extra-curricular activities also continue to enrich the curriculum across many year groups. The school's status as an Arts College has enabled it to develop wider community links with an arts focus, and develop the use of the campus by these groups. The impact of this development on pupils' learning across the whole curriculum is still developing. The school welcomes approaches to become involved from all sections of the community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school takes good care of pupils' welfare and provides good support for all, including those with special educational needs. This accords with parents' views. The Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs is fully implemented.
36. Effective child protection procedures are in place and are fully understood by staff. There are appropriate health and safety measures in place, such as fire evacuation practice and recording of accidents. There is a separate medical room, although the location upstairs is not ideal. There are a number of health and safety issues related to accommodation. However, these are already known to the school which has remedial action in hand.
37. Pupils receive good pastoral support from senior staff, heads of year and form tutors who are matched to groups in Year 7 and, where possible, remain with the same pupils throughout the main school. There is thorough induction for Year 7 pupils and good guidance on key decisions such as which GCSE subjects to study and potential careers to aim for.

38. There are effective procedures in place to promote good behaviour and attendance with appropriate steps taken to manage the little bullying which occurs. The cut-off time at which lateness is recorded as an absence is one hour from the start of the school day. This is unusually long. However, numbers of pupils arriving even a little late are currently low.
39. The school uses the Key Stage 2 teacher assessments and other data to place pupils in tutor groups. Pupils with special educational needs are also identified at this early stage and suitable arrangements for their support are organised accordingly. The special needs register is well maintained and there is good support from external agencies. The school uses data satisfactorily and increasingly well. For example, it uses NFER cognitive ability tests in Year 7 to identify potential attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Lack of complete information about Key Stage 2 performance has meant that the school has not been able to make full use of this data in the past. Similar NFER tests are repeated in Year 9. These contribute, together with National Curriculum tests and teacher assessment, to the evaluation of potential GCSE results. From this data the school agrees targets for GCSE performance in each subject and determines the overall targets for the school.
40. Since the last inspection the school has revised and improved its internal assessment policy. This now sets out comprehensive guidance to departments on how regular assessment should be built into teaching programmes; how pupils should be made aware of their progress and attainment; and how assessment should be used to set targets for pupils. The procedures outlined are good. However, at present implementation of some aspects of the policy is inconsistent within and between departments. Formal assessments are made in all subjects at the end of each year and at the end of topics in many subjects. These are used effectively to track pupil progress, to give general guidance to pupils about their progress, to set pupils and to pitch work at about the right level. Self assessment is used well to help pupils know how they are doing in art, music, modern foreign languages and religious education. There are strengths in some features of assessment in science, design technology and information technology which are helping pupils to improve. However, the use of marking to help pupils know what they need to do to improve is inconsistent within and between departments. In particular in English, history, geography and religious education there is inconsistency of marking, with too little constructive comment on work. In mathematics marking of books is uneven. In history and geography teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 are not sufficiently accurate and do not give a true picture of pupils' attainment. The special educational needs register is in place and good use is made of the range of information recorded about progress of pupils on the register. The Code of Practice is fully implemented, procedures for producing statements and for annual reviews are thorough and are meticulously carried out, but those for reviewing learning targets in pupils' individual education plans are less effective.
41. Pupils' effort in all subjects is reported to parents, twice yearly in Key Stage 3 and termly in Key Stage 4. Comprehensive reports, which comment helpfully on pupils' work and give grades for attainment relative to the set or group, are sent home annually. Levels of attainment using National Curriculum grades are reported according to the statutory requirement at the end of Key Stage 3. Effort and attainment grades are used suitably by heads of year to monitor pupils' progress and form tutors discuss effort with their pupils. However, there is no system for form tutors to be regularly involved in academic target setting with pupils except in Year 11. Individual target setting takes place in modern foreign languages and in

technology, but in most subjects targets for end of key stage and GCSE performance are not shared systematically enough with individual pupils to help them to improve further.

42. The school does not include in its reports to parents a comment on attainment and progress in information and communications technology, and is therefore in breach of this statutory requirement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents have a good opinion of the school. They are largely satisfied with the wide range of information provided but would welcome more about what their children are studying. The school is already planning to provide more detailed information about the curriculum through regular newsletters and is considering ways of making existing information, such as that in the prospectus, more accessible.
44. Parents make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. The school association is valued by the school. It provides significant financial support through fund raising. This has benefited pupils' learning through the provision of resources such as the minibus. The school association is also used by school management as a sounding board for future initiatives. Parents are supportive of homework, regularly sign homework books and almost all have recognised home-school agreements. They do not have significant involvement in day-to-day school activities. Parents make a strong contribution to governing body activities. Parents are fully involved with the statementing and review processes for pupils with statements of special educational need but less effectively with the formulation and review of individual education plans.
45. The school has recognised the need to develop parental links further with several initiatives in mind or underway. These include a parents' computer literacy course, set up with the goal of increasing their confidence in providing better support for children at home, and a recently-compiled skills register. This will allow parents' experiences to be used in careers education or their skills to be employed in improving school accommodation, for example.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The school has clear and appropriate aims and values which are suitably focused on standards. These are understood by pupils, staff, parents and governors and the work of the school is very obviously directed towards fulfilling them. It is very apparent that relationships between these groups help the school to be successful in achieving the aims.
47. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and this has a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils. During his three years in office he and the senior management team have brought about a number of very important and necessary changes, many of which are still being implemented. The demands created by making these changes have led to a reduction in the level of individual contact between the headteacher and pupils, particularly in contrast to previous approaches to the role. The developments are mainly identified in an appropriate strategic action plan produced in response to the findings of the last inspection. This is being implemented through a more detailed annual school development plan. The current plan has the right priorities, is clear about what actions are needed and who has responsibility for them. The actions are suitably costed but criteria against which

progress can be judged are sometimes not sufficiently focused on the outcome planned.

48. The headteacher has led the initiative to raise funding to develop the site very effectively. One significant aspect within this development has been the successful bid to achieve the status of Arts College. Another of the major changes being made is a complete revision of the school's management structure. The major management functions of the senior management team are carried out efficiently and effectively. One of the recent changes is the creation of the roles of director of studies. This has the potential to provide an effective system to support the further development of teaching and learning when fully in place. At present there is not enough consistency in the way in which the directors of studies operate and their monitoring of teaching and learning is too limited. The school is aware of this and is currently planning further developments. There are comprehensive organisational and administrative systems which enable the school to operate smoothly and which support the work of the senior team, the heads of year, faculties and subjects.
49. The school has increased the whole school involvement of middle managers, especially heads of departments, through a range of strategies designed partly to improve their impact on standards. This group is now able to contribute to the development of policies which affect the whole school, for example, through attendance at meetings of the academic board. They now manage training budgets and take part in structured annual reviews of progress with the headteacher. The reviews require an increasing amount of self-evaluation which departments are beginning to develop. Departments are all capably managed. Heads of department ensure that curriculum requirements are met, that pupils are regularly tested, that resources are organised and used effectively and that their colleagues are suitably led. However, there is insufficient monitoring by heads of departments to ensure that teaching, assessment and learning are consistently of high enough quality. The art department is particularly well managed and includes many of these features. The provision for special education needs was seen as a strength in the last inspection report. In some ways this continues to be the case, for example, in relation to the manner in which individual needs are actually met and the good levels of support. However, the number of pupils with statements of need has risen considerably, creating additional pressures on the special needs management. More effective procedures for production of individual education plans, greater delegation and coordination of special educational needs across the curriculum would improve the effectiveness and impact of the work further.
50. The governing body has a good understanding of its role in providing longer term strategies for development and having an oversight of progress made. It is well organised and operates effectively through its committee structure. The governors are well informed and work in a very open way through encouraging staff participation for example. The school's academic progress and finance are suitably monitored and the governors meet their obligations to set targets. A few statutory requirements are not met, however. These include the provision of a daily act of collective worship, the inclusion of control and monitoring in teaching information and communications technology in Key Stage 3 and reporting to each parent progress made by their child in this subject.
51. The school has sufficient staff appropriately qualified to meet curricular needs and they are suitably deployed. The match between responsibilities and qualifications is mainly satisfactory. The eight learning support assistants are also suitably deployed.

This is beneficial to pupils' progress. There is a well managed and effective induction programme for newly qualified teachers and for those new to the school. The appraisal scheme is under review in the light of the forthcoming changes to requirements. The previous scheme has operated only partially for the past two years as a result of union action. Training for staff development is well managed. It is appropriately focused mainly on the development of information technology skills and on teaching and learning in line with whole school and departmental priorities.

52. The school has sufficient resources to enable the curriculum to be taught. These are generally well managed and are used to support learning effectively. Nevertheless there are areas, such as history, physical education, design and technology and science, where resources are just satisfactory, for example equipment or books are now old and in need of replacement. There are enough computers in the dedicated rooms but not enough within departments thus inhibiting the development of the use of information technology within many subjects. Library resources have been improved since the last inspection with a section devoted to boys' fiction. However, some books now have too little relevance to the present curriculum, though they have been retained because it is believed that they contain useful information.
53. The amount of accommodation is adequate for the current number of pupils; it is managed effectively and runs to full capacity. An appropriate 10 year maintenance plan is part of the school development plan. Since the last inspection improvements have been made through the provision of a mathematics suite and a performing arts block. The attractive grounds are well managed. The school is free from litter and graffiti. The main building is in need of redecoration; in some classrooms the drab learning environment is relieved by display of work and posters. The accommodation for physical education and design technology is not completely adequate to meet the full range of skills being taught. A number of health and safety issues exist, particularly in the food technology area. These are known to the school and are currently being addressed.
54. The internet and electronic mail are used well but few departments make enough use of CD-ROM material and there is no evidence of multi-media compositions. The school administration system is fully computerised and assessment data are collected to track pupils' progress and to set targets for improvement. However, this is not yet being used across the school to its full potential, for example, in enabling form tutors to have ready access to pupil progress data.
55. Financial planning and administration in the school are good. The latest auditors' report was positive and the school is responding appropriately to the recommendations in the report. The school has made the transition from grant maintained status to a foundation school by prudently planning ahead and using surplus funds to manage the reduced budget. The governors play an active part in financial decisions and monitoring. They have taken important and difficult decisions to manage the decrease in income. Staff are aware of how finances have been allocated and are becoming increasingly aware of the wider issues of financial planning. Specific funds are deployed efficiently. The funding for pupils with statements of educational need is clearly identified and monitored. However, the grouping of pupils with special educational needs with other pupils, many of whom are lower attaining, makes it very difficult to ascertain with accuracy the sum spent on providing more general special needs support. Nevertheless, the school is well aware of the total funds available and the extent to which it supplements this. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and good value is achieved from the

funding allocated to supporting them. The grants associated with the specialist college status are being spent in accordance with the Arts College development plan. However, most of the changes so far have been related to accommodation and to the curriculum and have not yet had time to make a major impact on measurable standards.

56. Analysis of the school's expenditure shows that its costs are above those in maintained schools but are similar to those in former grant maintained schools. Examination results and inspection findings show that the school provides a good education. Overall the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to raise standards further in the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- continue to improve teaching and learning through:
 - ensuring that the roles of directors of studies and heads of subjects are sufficiently explicit about the monitoring expected;
 - making the monitoring roles of senior and middle managers complementary;
 - where necessary providing guidance and support to those members of middle and senior management less experienced in these skills;
 - where possible and appropriate involve teachers in monitoring activities to develop a climate of self-evaluation;
 - ensuring that issues arising from monitoring activities lead to further development;
 - drawing on the existing good monitoring practice in the school;
 - improving consistency in use of the school's assessment procedures;
 - encouraging the special educational needs department to provide guidance on matching work to pupils' needs, especially those with lower attainment, and improving procedures for producing and implementing individual education plans*; (paragraphs 18, 22, 23, 40, 48, 49, 65, 85, 103, 109, 115, 140)
- help pupils, including students in the sixth form, to improve attainment further through
 - increasing the consistency of marking and other informal assessment within and between subjects;
 - encouraging teachers to show pupils what they need to do to improve through marking;
 - drawing on existing good marking practice in the school;
 - involving individual pupils in agreeing their own academic targets and helping them to find ways of achieving them*;
 - involving form tutors more in supporting pupils in achieving their targets and in monitoring overall progress in reaching them;
 - ensuring that the skills required by pupils, particularly those new to the school, to cope with the different demands of advanced level studies are developed sufficiently strongly; (paragraphs 6, 23, 25, 40, 41, 65, 76, 83, 85, 92, 103, 109, 115, 140, 150)
- increase the use of information and communication technology across the range of curriculum subjects through

- revising schemes of work to ensure that they include appropriate use of information and communications technology and meet the needs of the revised National Curriculum and advanced level key skills commencing in September 2000*;
 - using the nationally funded schemes of information technology training to enhance teacher knowledge and skills in this aspect of teaching where it is needed;* (paragraphs 9, 21, 76, 103, 115, 122, 123)
- ensure that statutory requirements are met in providing a daily act of collective worship, teaching control and monitoring in information and communications technology in Key Stage 3 and reporting to parents their children's progress in this subject. (paragraphs 26, 30, 42, 50, 103, 118)
58. In addition to the more major issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
- * involving parents more in formulating and reviewing IEPs; (paragraphs 40, 44)
 - * increasing delegation of responsibility within provision for pupils with special educational needs; (paragraph 49)
 - * encouraging greater curricular liaison with primary schools to help continuity in provision;* (paragraphs 26, 87)
 - * increasing access to information technology across the curriculum in Key Stage 4*; (paragraphs 28, 123)
 - * considering appropriate ways of grouping for arts subjects which do not rely on setting in other subjects;* (paragraph 26)
 - * increasing opportunities for oral exploration of ideas and opinions in English and history in particular; (paragraphs 60, 115)
 - * where necessary, raising expectations of lower attaining pupils in English and history lessons; (paragraphs 65, 112)
 - * encouraging appropriate use of mental mathematics; (paragraph 75)
 - * increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop skills in scientific investigation; (paragraphs 87)
 - * where necessary improving class management skills*; (paragraphs 22, 86)
 - * improving the accuracy of assessment, especially of lower attaining pupils, in geography and history; (paragraphs 106, 109, 112, 116)
 - * improving the consistency in identifying criteria for judging the successful impact of development plan targets on learning; (paragraph 47)
 - * improving the presentation of all information to parents so that it is more readable; (paragraph 43)
 - * using information technology to help form tutors support the progress of their form groups;* (paragraph 54)
 - * improving accommodation particularly for design technology, physical education and art storage;* (paragraphs 53, 95, 104, 152),
 - * upgrading resourcing in aspects of design technology and the library;* (paragraphs 52, 104, 152)
 - * completing health and safety work in food technology and some toilet areas* (paragraph 53).

Items marked with an asterisk are already identified in the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

173

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

61

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	23%	39%	34%	2%	1%	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	907	254
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	90	18

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	37	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	91	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	110

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17
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Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1%
National comparative data	7.9%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9%
National comparative data	1.1%

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	100	82	182

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	74	77	72
	Girls	73	68	52
	Total	147	145	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (54)	80 (66)	70 (58)
	National	63 (64)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (29)	49 (42)	30 (34)
	National	28 (34)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	80	69	80
	Girls	80	64	69
	Total	160	133	149
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (78)	74 (69)	82 (42)
	National	64 (na)	64 (na)	60 (na)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (61)	43 (43)	33 (6)
	National	31 (na)	37 (na)	28 (na)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	1999	97	86	183

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	55	96	96
	Girls	50	85	86
	Total	105	181	182
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	57 (48)	99 (96)	99 (99)
	National	49.9 (44.4)	97.7 (89.6)	98.9 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40.9 (40.1)
	National	37.8 (37.0)

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

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
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	1999	46	53	99

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	16.4	16.9	16.7 (15.6)	3.3	2.5	3.0 (3.0)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.8)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	0
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	8
Indian	152
Pakistani	19
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	6
White	912
Any other minority ethnic group	26

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian	7	
Pakistani	2	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	59	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 - Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	72.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	495

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	3,297,221
Total expenditure	3,231,815
Expenditure per pupil	2,848

**Deployment of teachers: Y7
– Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.3
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Balance brought forward from previous year	79,340
Balance carried forward to next year	144,746

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	18.4
Key Stage 4	15.7

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1158
Number of questionnaires returned	217

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	47	6	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	53	13	3	0
The teaching is good.	46	46	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	12	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	40	8	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	52	12	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	41	47	3	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	49	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	39	6	1	7

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

ENGLISH

59. Attainment in English is above national averages at all key stages. Passes at grades A* to C at Key Stage 4 have steadily improved over the past three years. The boys' results are well above the national averages and there was only a slight difference in favour of the girls in 1999. GCSE English Literature shows a similar upward trend over the last three years with results now well above average. The percentage of students achieving A to E grades in A level in 1999 was above average for comprehensive schools and has been sustained at 100 per cent for several years. In 1999. Key Stage 3 English results were above average with 80% of pupils achieving a level 5 or higher.
60. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in most lessons and is good in many. Pupils' work covers a variety of writing styles for different purposes and audiences. Pupils across the ability range are able to write at length in well-structured paragraphs. They read a range of literature and are encouraged to become independent readers being helped by regular library lessons. In oral work pupils take an active part; they express themselves clearly and fluently. However, pupils do not spend enough time on oral work to explore their ideas and opinions in greater depth. Pupils' proof reading skills are developing but there are still some simple technical inaccuracies in their writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
61. At Key Stage 4 attainment is good in almost all lessons. Pupils are able to build on their Key Stage 3 experience and develop their understanding of writers' intentions. The more able pupils annotate their texts appropriately and there is evidence in their work that they are able to empathise with the behaviour and feelings of characters being studied. They read fluently and expressively with increasing confidence. However, they do not always have enough confidence in their own judgement when analysing more difficult and unfamiliar texts. In speaking and listening activities, the pupils show good use of vocabulary and articulate their responses confidently. They do not always yet adjust their views when presented with persuasive arguments and opinions different to their own.
62. The attainment of post 16 students is generally good. Students read a range of complex texts, which help them to understand and appreciate different cultures, themes, setting and atmosphere. They develop good skills of critical analysis and show sound understanding of the terminology used in literary criticism. They use textual references in their essays to support their points of view. However, occasionally they do not sustain their concentration for the whole of the session. Their proof reading and editing skills are continuing to develop but they do not always correct their work sufficiently. During class discussion they are confident in expressing their thoughts and feelings. They are good at presenting a well-organized and sustained argument.
63. The quality of learning is sound and in many lessons good across the key stages. Overall pupils make good progress. Key Stage 3 pupils are able to identify the purposes of different texts and recognize articles that are designed to inform and persuade readers. Their skills of creative writing are becoming more sophisticated. However, there is too little opportunity for pupils to take initiative in the lessons.

Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress in the majority of lessons and most have a positive attitude to learning. They further develop their writing skills and become confident when writing about difficult issues that require argument. Post 16 students show interest and make progress in their work. They learn about the importance of setting and atmosphere and are able to develop their viewpoints and interpretation of different genres.

64. Pupils and students are usually well behaved, concentrate and usually keep focused on lesson tasks. They interact well with each other in the learning environment of the classroom. However, the boys behave more confidently in expressing themselves in whole class oral situations.
65. The quality of teaching is good in the majority of lessons. Most lessons are well planned and are taught effectively. Teachers use a range of teaching styles, but exposition is the preferred method of delivery. Teaching is carried out at a good pace sufficient to ensure pupils concentrate and motivation is maintained in most lessons. A good feature of many lessons is the feedback session to ensure pupils are kept on task and to reinforce learning. There is a strong commitment for pupils and students to achieve, and good planning for the majority of lessons contributes to this. Teachers' good subject knowledge is demonstrated in a variety of lesson activities and is well used to engage and interest the pupils. However, teachers need to raise their expectation of the lower attaining pupils and to ensure that they are given ample feedback on their written work so that they are clear what they need to do to improve and how to achieve this in their work. There is no evidence that pupils carry out self-assessment to enable them to take sufficient ownership for their work. There is insufficient range of texts relating to a variety of cultures which reflect the nature of the school population and society at present.
66. The sound and decisive leadership with its collegiate style of management coupled with the dedication of the teachers to raise pupil achievement are the two main strengths of the department.
67. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. The examination results have continued to improve over the last three years and are well above national expectations. The department caters for the full ability range and the school has increased the time allocation for Years 10 and 11. A concentrated effort has been made to improve classroom activities that provide sufficient challenge for the majority of pupils. However, targeting the standards achieved in English by pupils only takes place in Years 10 and 11 and not sufficiently across Key Stage 3 and post 16.
68. Drama is taught as a separate subject though many of the skills learned contribute to attainment in English as well as to literacy more generally. Attainment in GCSE examinations has been below standards achieved nationally. Current attainment at Key Stage 3 is at least in line with what can be expected from pupils at that age and often better. Pupils develop their skills competently through activities such as a melodrama involving pre-twentieth century characters. At Key Stage 4 these skills are refined and pupils are able to perform more complex tasks such as the development of political theatre. Work in A level performing arts is of a very high standard with movements selected with the audience in mind and with clear analysis of how this could be developed.

69. Teaching in drama is good and often very good. Expectations post 16 are very high and much supportive criticism is given to help students to progress. The pupils and students are well motivated and keen to participate.
70. The work in drama is well organised with good links made with subjects such as English, religious education and personal, social and health education. The performing arts course provides an effective progression route post 16. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, workshops and visiting specialists provides very good opportunities for further development and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. The new performing arts block has improved the facilities and has enhanced the quality of provision.

MATHEMATICS

71. In GCSE examinations in 1999 the proportion of pupils who gained grades in the ranges A* to C and A* to G was well above the national average. These results sustained the high standard achieved in 1997 though with a slight drop in 1998. They were well above those of similar comprehensive schools. Within these high standards, slightly more boys than girls achieved the highest grades for the second year running. In A level mathematics students gained a higher proportion of grades A and B than was the case for comprehensive schools nationally, whilst the proportion gaining grades A to E was in line with results nationally. The small number of students who studied further mathematics at A level achieved high grades. Only a small number of A level students failed to gain a grade in 1999, improving on the performance of 1998. In National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, levels of attainment were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools, with little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
72. In lessons at Key Stage 3 and 4 most pupils are achieving better than average standards for their age and have improved on previous attainment in mathematics. At Key Stage 3 pupils at all levels gain an appropriate understanding of the principles of algebra, the higher attaining pupils for example in Year 7 being able to solve simple equations. Pupils are able to recall what they have learned in earlier lessons in, for example, basic knowledge about angles and then to apply this to more difficult problems such as the angle patterns formed by parallel lines. Some pupils have weaknesses in basic numeracy, which inhibit their achievement, turning to using a calculator when it would be more appropriate to use a mental or written method. Overall mental methods are not sufficiently well developed. There is some evidence that in the first term of Year 7 some of the higher attaining pupils are covering ground with which they are fully familiar from Key Stage 2. However, both within lessons and throughout the key stage they make good progress, so that by the end of Year 7 and throughout Years 8 and 9 most pupils are achieving standards above average for their previous attainment. The very great majority of pupils have good attitudes to their learning, they concentrate well, listen to the teacher and apply themselves to their work. They work well as individuals and are able to cooperate when the opportunity arises. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well, they make good progress and in some cases are achieving overall average standards in mathematics. For example, pupils with special educational needs in a Year 8 group achieve a good understanding of how angle bearings work on a map and can explain orally what they understand.
73. At Key Stage 4 there is a consistently high level of work in algebra, with for example middle attaining pupils in Year 10 able to solve simultaneous equations by algebraic and graphical methods. Pupils have a good knowledge of work from previous

lessons and are able to apply their understanding to new work. There is a good standard of work across the attainment range. At foundation level pupils acquire an understanding of a wide range of topics covering number, algebra, space and measure and the use of data and statistics. At the intermediate and higher levels pupils are confident with more advanced concepts in algebra, such as the rules of indices and the meaning of fractional indices. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have positive attitudes to their work. They concentrate well, make clear notes from the lessons, and present work clearly and legibly. They are able to discuss the work constructively with each other and many give good explanations when asked.

74. The standard of work being achieved in the A level lessons is good with, for example, Year 12 students in mechanics able to handle the concepts and to solve problems of centre of gravity in non-uniform shapes. Knowledge and understanding of statistical distributions is becoming well established. Students have a very good attitude to their work, both within class and in the completion of homework. At all key stages there is a good standard of behaviour in mathematics lessons and both boys and girls make similar progress and have similar overall levels of attainment.
75. The teaching in all the lessons observed was satisfactory or better and in three-quarters of the lessons was good or very good. Aspects of the teaching which contribute well to learning include the good match of work to the attainment level of pupils, based on teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. Work is put into an appropriate context for pupils, which promotes their understanding. There is appropriate repetition, reinforcement and encouragement where needed. In addition to the match of work to attainment, achieved through the setting of pupils, teachers give extension work where needed. Lessons are generally well structured, making good use of time and with a pace appropriate to the attainment of the pupils. Lesson objectives are clearly set out and explanations on the whole are very clear. Some lessons have an emphasis on mental mathematics, for example, by using a short oral and mental starter to the lessons. However, this aspect of the work is not sufficiently well developed in order to promote the pupils' capabilities with mental mathematics. In some lessons where pupils should be using either mental or short written methods to solve problems, some are permitted to use calculators. Some lessons have valuable plenary sessions, which draw together what has been learnt, but this is not sufficiently evident across all lessons. Many lessons include questioning to draw out the pupils' understanding. However, in some lessons too many questions are closed and do not give sufficient opportunity for pupils to explain how they got an answer or how they worked something out. In the sixth form there is systematic presentation of the work and approaches to problem solving, with the use of supportive explanatory worksheets, to supplement the text books. Mathematics homework is set regularly throughout the school.
76. The use of formal assessment through departmental tests and examinations is well developed, with end of year examinations being graded to the overall attainment of pupils. The head of department sets a clear direction and standard for work within mathematics. There are high expectations of both pupils and teachers. Marking of pupils' work is, however, uneven, with the best giving constructive comment and encouragement, whilst some pupils' books contain only basic marking. Although expectations are high, the formal monitoring of teaching and learning is not well developed, through, for example, a programme of lesson observation within the department. There is inadequate use and application of information and communications technology within mathematics lessons.

77. Although there is no whole school numeracy policy, pupils make use of their knowledge and understanding of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum. They use tables and graphs to represent results of experiments in science and at higher levels are required to use and manipulate formulae. In geography graphical representation is used to aid understanding. In technology pupils make satisfactory use of measurement, and there is good application of numeracy and the use of graphs in A level sports studies.
78. Since the previous inspection the high standards of attainment in mathematics have been maintained. Mathematics teaching has been brought together in a new classroom block. All the priorities of the department development plan have been carried out, including the provision of a range of new text books and the re-writing of schemes of work.

SCIENCE

79. In 1999 standards in external examinations at Key Stages 3 and 4 were well above the national averages. However, pupils achieve less consistent standards at A level. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in standards except post 16.
80. In the science national tests for 14 year olds, pupils' results have been well above the national average and above the average for similar schools for the past last three years. In each year group, pupils currently attain standards in their lessons that are in line with national expectations. The higher-attaining pupils attain standards that are above national expectations. Year 7 pupils could draw the symbols for a switch, bulb and ammeter and by Year 9, higher attaining pupils could use the ammeter and a voltmeter appropriately. They could test a leaf for starch and outline the process of photosynthesis. Lower attaining pupils could make electromagnets. A group with a high proportion of pupils with special needs attained levels just below the national expectation. They knew that the angles of incidence and reflection of light are the same. Overall pupils' attainment in scientific investigation is lower than that in other aspects of science.
81. Pupils achieved results in double award GCSE science in 1999 that were well above the national average in grades A* to C and A* to G, with all pupils achieving a grade. The school performs well in GCSE science in comparison with similar schools. These results represent a rising trend of success over the last four years from below to above average. In single award science, the small number of pupils who took the examination achieved results below the national average, but appropriate to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs all achieved a grade in science. Boys attained higher results than girls, which is contrary to the national picture. Performance in GCSE double and single science is just below that in most other subjects in the school. Standards in lessons and work are in line with national expectations. Year 11 pupils can use word equations and many can use symbols and balance equations. Higher attaining pupils can calculate the rate at which the velocity of a car decreases when travelling at a given speed. Year 10 pupils have a good understanding of respiration and breathing. As in Key Stage 3 attainment in science investigations is lower than that in knowledge and understanding.
82. In 1999 in comparison with national figures, students' attainment in A level physics was average in grades A to E and the higher grades, but in biology was lower than average. Chemistry students attained below the national average in grades A to E but they attained above the national average in the higher grades. In both biology

and chemistry there were problems in staffing. In 1998, both biology and chemistry results were higher and above the national average. Attainment in lessons and work is in line with national expectations but in each class there is a wide range of attainment. Year 12 physics students are able to use appropriate practical techniques when carrying out experiments on the kinetic energy of spring extension. Year 12 biology students can set up a microscope and observe and draw a range of plant tissues. Year 12 chemistry students have an appropriate knowledge of halogens.

83. In all the lessons pupils learn at least satisfactorily and make progress. They gain new knowledge and skills and increase their understanding. In the majority of lessons pupils are productive and work at a good pace. In a Year 9 class with a large number of pupils with special educational needs, the teacher made sure the pupils knew what they were doing by relevant and focused questioning, she circulated to help them. As a result, pupils could explain what they were doing and why. They made good progress. In a Year 12 physics class, students were challenged to think when carrying out a practical based on the kinetic energy of a spring. Pupils have a good understanding of what they know through regular tests at the end of units. In Key Stage 4, a term of revision has ensured that pupils are aware of areas that need further work. However, pupils do not always know how well they are doing during the unit. Marking in Year 11 coursework and Year 12 provides clear feedback to pupils. However, not all teachers provide such clear guidance on what pupils can do to improve their work.
84. Pupils are usually well motivated and most expect to work hard and settle quickly. They have good relationships with the teacher and work effectively in groups when carrying out practical work. Most, including those with special educational needs, take a pride in their work though in a few cases it is not finished even after requests from the teacher. In most lessons behaviour is good apart from a few classes where chattering slows the pace.
85. Teaching in science is always at least satisfactory and contributes to the standards pupils attain. Teachers are confident about their subject and most are able to teach a wide range of abilities. For example, in physics and biology, teachers are confident about teaching both A level students and pupils with special needs. Most teachers plan effectively for the lesson and provide access to all pupils. Teachers are aware of pupils' special educational needs. They have links with the special needs department and, for example, use worksheets designed to suit different levels of need. Some give particular thought and care to the progress of lower attaining pupils. A good example of planning was seen when pupils were learning about how our bodies fight diseases. The teacher provided a good range of activities and, together with the learning support assistants, supported the pupils in their learning. Most teachers introduce the lesson clearly and draw together the main points at the end of the lesson. For example, in a Year 12 physics lesson, the teacher drew the threads together very well by using the results of a dice molecule game to challenge the students to think about how molecules move. Most teachers maintain a good pace to the lesson and give pupils clear time limits. Many use concrete examples to explain abstract ideas. In a brisk Year 10 biology lesson the teacher used a bunch of grapes to help to get over the idea of air sacs in the lungs and middle ability pupils learnt effectively. All teachers regularly set homework. However, not all mark work regularly or consistently.
86. Weaknesses occur when teachers have not planned in sufficient detail. For example in a Year 10 class on rates of reaction, the teacher had not told pupils what they must

complete by the end of the lesson. As a result some pupils did not finish their work. Weaknesses also occur when teachers do not check what pupils know before moving on. There are some examples within pupils' exercise books of unfinished work. In a few classes, teachers do not manage pupils effectively. In a Year 12 chemistry class, although the teacher had planned the lesson in detail, during the discussion background chatter reduced the effectiveness of the teaching and students' learning about covalent bonding.

87. The science curriculum is broadly based and balanced and meets statutory requirements. However, insufficient use is made of information technology. The school provides sufficient time for the teaching of science. Since the last inspection, the science faculty has increased the range and variety of activities in lessons. Within the school there is satisfactory planning for continuity and progression in pupils' learning. However, at present the schemes of work do not sufficiently acknowledge pupils' work in Key Stage 2. This results in some unnecessary duplication. A post of responsibility has recently been allocated to address this. In Year 9 and at Key Stage 4, the provision for science investigation and its assessment is good. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the teaching of the skills of science investigation in Years 7 and 8 and in the use of information technology. The faculty follows a clear policy on assessment. Teachers use assessment to place pupils in groups and provide an appropriate curriculum.
88. The science faculty is clear about the direction it is taking to improve results. The acting head of faculty is continuing the initiatives set up by the school and previous head of faculty and helps to sustain a good climate for pupils' learning. He monitors pupils' examination and test results but not pupils' work or teaching. Accommodation is just sufficient although a very small number of classes are taught in classrooms. Learning resources are satisfactory apart from the provision of computers. However, there are plans to improve provision. The technicians work efficiently and effectively and they help teachers to deliver the curriculum. Suitable attention has been paid to health and safety issues since the last inspection.

ART

89. GCSE results in art have been consistently above the national average over the last three years; the pass rate for the small number taking A/S level is 100 percent. A level art results have also been consistently well above the national average over the last three years. They are among the best results in the school. Attainment in current work is above the national average overall; at the end of Key Stage 3 it is above the national average, and remains so by the end of Key Stage 4. Similarly, attainment in sixth form lessons is above the levels typically reached nationally. These findings therefore reflect standards shown in external examinations. Pupils with special needs attain well, and the nature of curriculum delivery is such as to provide extension and refinement of opportunities for the more able.
90. Some very good directly observed drawing was seen from Year 7 pupils, with life drawing from sixth form pupils of a good standard. Three-dimensional work from relief to free standing figures is seen, and much is of very good quality. Sketch books show the level of commitment by many students. Pupils' work rate is high. For example, one Year 9 pupil set the task of drawing her own hand for homework, produced three effective examples in different media. A bottom set Year 7 class had found the portrait project hard in its original form. The teacher adapted it to make it more accessible, and the result was a set of portraits full of excitement and vitality –

and of good quality. Overall pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

91. The response of pupils is good at all levels. They are keen to succeed, but enjoy doing so very much. There is a real sense of commitment and enjoyment in lessons. Numbers opting for art at Key Stage 4 have been growing, but there is still potential for more growth in this area.
92. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is good; it is very good at Key Stage 4 and with the sixth form. High expectations are the norm, but are linked to supportive methods and appropriate content. Basic skills teaching in art is good. A firm foundation of directly observed drawing is laid in Year 7 and developed through the school, from the trainer at the end of Year 7 to life drawing with the sixth form. Planning and target setting are good. Pupils know what is expected of them, and how they are to achieve these targets. Feedback in lessons is good, and teachers share their passion for art with pupils, who respond very well. The staff share a common view of art education, and an equal determination to help pupils attain high standards. Pupil learning is equally good at all levels. The working atmosphere in all lessons is very good; pupil commitment is shown by their constant self review of their own work as it goes on.
93. Around 200 pupils take part in the variety of opportunities provided outside the mainstream curriculum, including a good programme of visits to galleries and art trips – recently to Barcelona (a focus on Gaudi and Dali) and later this year to New York, the focus of which is the Museum of Modern Art and a new skyline. Such exciting activities always feed back into the curriculum. Artists in residence are a regular feature in the department, and an artist working with re-cycled materials has had a great impact on the work of current Year 9 pupils.
94. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and incorporates art from a wide range of historical periods and a very wide range of world cultures. Although the role of mainstream art in the curriculum is strong, the high quality of art in the school is firmly based on first hand experience by pupils. Art plays a very positive role in the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and plays a particularly important role in cultural development. Display is very good in the department and around the school, with more permanent large scale works in many areas; this display both celebrates pupil attainment and improves the overall school environment.
95. The department is well led. Resourcing has been improved. Art accommodation is generally good, but with poor storage. The ceramics room, which was criticised at the last inspection, remains inadequate and overcrowded but money has been set aside to deal with this.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

96. In 1999 GCSE results were above the national average in A* to C grades and in line for A* to G grades in graphic products, product development, and electronics. Results in home economics (food) were below average in 1998 and 1999 when a very large number opted for this subject. The department was following an older syllabus at that time which did not consolidate Key Stage 3 skills. This has now been replaced by a more modern food technology course. Otherwise, there has been a rising trend in results in all other technology subjects with a significant increase in the number of A and B grades every year since 1996. There has also been an increase in the conversion of predicted D/E grades to C, because of the department commitment to starting coursework early in Year 11 after mainly skills teaching in

Year 10. The department looks set to exceed its targets this year, which are fairly low as a consequence of the low food technology results in the last two years.

97. A few pupils have followed A level courses every year and achieved a grade. Attainment in the 1999 national end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments was above average; girls did particularly well at level 6. Again the trend shows a general improvement from 1997.
98. Standards seen during the inspection were above average overall, in agreement with the test results. In food technology, lessons and work seen showed a great improvement. Pupils in Year 10 were already doing work which puts them on course for a good examination result. Their knowledge of normal healthy diets and special diets, for example that for coeliac disease, is quite extensive. Higher attaining pupils in graphics complete one point perspective drawings of a kitchen or a garden with a high degree of skill.
99. Pupils working for a GCSE in textiles, which counts as an art subject, showed a very high standard of work in learning the couching technique. In Key Stage 3 textiles, which is a technology subject, pupils learn with great interest about the fashion industry, designing clothes well and making items from a variety of fabrics, the properties of which they have tested. In Key Stage 4, pupils in a product development lesson gave various common examples of shell structures. In Key Stage 3 electronics, pupils learn to solder components accurately on a printed circuit board. Those who opt for this subject at GCSE understand and describe the functions of components such as relays in switching on lights or motors.
100. The quality of teaching was generally good; of the thirteen lessons observed, ten were good or better and four were very good. One was unsatisfactory because of insufficient variety of activities and inconsistent behaviour management. A major strength in teaching is the very good expertise in teachers' subject specialities, particularly at Key Stage 4. Although the rotation system of skill acquisition in Key Stage 3 is not ideal, pupils gain most by the specialist teaching, despite time being short. Another strength is the very good planning of the department. From Year 7 onwards, pupils have their own module booklets, produced in the department, which clearly show the learning outcomes expected by the end of the module. Teachers show pupils how to improve throughout each module by careful assessment and evaluation of their work, encouraging them to achieve the highest possible standards. Skill acquisition is solid because of this structure, but individual talents cannot always be extended freely in the time allowed.
101. Pupils in Year 7 follow a skills course straight away which familiarises them with the working techniques and surroundings. They progress rapidly, becoming responsible for their own work in a very short time. Those with special educational needs progress as well as their peers in this practical subject, though needing more help with the acquisition of technical language. All teachers work at a brisk pace and have very high expectations of the work to be completed in each lesson, and of its quality, offering successive challenges.
102. There has been a significant improvement in the variety of teaching methods used since the last inspection. Good use is made of teacher exposition of theory, for example the principle of moments was explained very well in terms the Key Stage 4 pupils understood fully, enabling them to make calculations exemplifying structural techniques used in bridges. Objectives are clearly communicated both at the beginning of lessons and with the project booklets. Most lessons include an element

of practical work, and the unsatisfactory lesson was so because the lower ability pupils were expected to do mostly written work during the lesson. The badly designed workshops and food rooms do not adequately meet the demands of the modern curriculum, but teachers make the best use of them and lessons are well organised. Teachers set regular homework, but pupils are so well motivated that often take it upon themselves to do extra.

103. The curriculum has strengths in the wide range of options offered at Key Stage 4, reflecting the department's expertise, but there is insufficient practical provision for learning about control systems, and not enough use is made of information technology, particularly in control and graphic design. The department has no working computer; the computer suite has to be booked in advance which stifles spontaneity, but classes are regularly taken to computer rooms to extend knowledge of, for example, how transistors work by screen simulations of circuit diagrams. In Key Stage 3, the overall assessment process is good. It is not sufficiently common to all of the subject areas within design and technology and there are some discrepancies between departments. This reveals insufficient monitoring of the classroom teaching and moderation of work between different subject areas. Not enough use is made of assessment to track pupils through the department, which would enable more accurate setting of targets for improvement.
104. Resources are just satisfactory, but there are important omissions for the modern curriculum, for example CAD/CAM equipment (computer assisted sewing machines). Food rooms are not modern nor hygienic. The workshops are dingy and much of the machinery is old and in need of replacement. The lack of working computers necessitates a waste of time going to and from the computer room.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Performance at GCSE has remained at or just above the national average in recent years and the percentage of students obtaining A* to C grades in summer 1999 was just above that nationally. As a popular option the number of pupils entered for geography each year is high and almost all pupils achieve a grade at GCSE, reflecting the high standards in the department. Attainment at A level is in line with prior attainment but just below national averages.
106. The 1999 results of teacher assessment at Key Stage 3 indicated a broad ability range with some pupils working at very low levels. However, these lower levels were not reflected in classroom work or in samples of pupils' work, where attainment is generally at nationally expected levels.
107. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 attainment is at national expectations, with pupils making good progress throughout both key stages. The presentation of work by pupils is good and reflects increasing knowledge and ideas in geography. For instance in Year 7, pupils were able to apply knowledge of the hydrological cycle to geographical models. In Year 8 pupils had a good grasp of the concept of a business park in Manchester and were able to compare this with one in the local area. The use of local area fieldwork in Key Stage 4 is particularly effective in helping pupils to understand their immediate environment and pupils managed with some confidence, local geographical data. Pupils listen well and can apply ideas and knowledge learnt in previous lessons to new situations, for example in Year 10, when comparing urban growth in Hillingdon with that of Edinburgh. Pupils also develop a good understanding of quite complex geographical models, such as

urban zones and functions. Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress in Key Stage 4. However, there are a number of situations in both Key Stages 3 and 4 where pupils were less than secure with their knowledge of location both in the British Isles and around the world.

108. Pupils' attitudes to work are good and they enjoy their work. They are attentive and hardworking in lessons, respectful of their teachers and cooperate well with each other; this contributes significantly to the high standards achieved in the department. Pupils are at ease in asking for help or in offering solutions to questions when they are less sure of the correct answer.
109. Teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is good, which makes a significant impact on pupils' learning. All teachers have high expectations of their pupils, regardless of their prior attainment. Work is well planned to meet and challenge the needs of all pupils. Teaching incorporates a range of class activities including rigorous teacher exposition, individual pupil work, paired and group work, which helps to maintain good pace in the lessons. Literacy skills are reinforced very effectively in some lessons supporting the schools' policy on literacy. All year groups have provision for fieldwork opportunities, such as visits to the local area. Although work is regularly marked, teachers' comments aimed at helping pupils understand what to do to improve their work are not consistent enough in frequency and quality. Where work was deemed by the teacher not to be of a high enough standard, it was generally not followed up by pupils or teachers after the initial marking. Assessment of pupils' progress is good at Key Stage 4. The levelling of the work of lower ability pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is not sufficiently accurate. In particular the accuracy of the marking is not sufficiently moderated against exemplar materials or with other schools.
110. The management of the department is good. Clear documentation supports the work of the department. Systems are in place to monitor students' progress. The monitoring of teaching and, through this, the sharing of good practice are not developed. The development plan has appropriate priorities which link with the whole school development plan. Resources are adequate but not over generous but there is a sensible rolling programme of text book replacement. The departmental rooms lack blinds which limit the effective use of the overhead projector. The classrooms are tidy, but display work is a variable in quality and usefulness. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. However, information and communications technology is still insufficiently developed within the schemes of work and in lessons, although recent in-service training means that there is capacity in the department to develop this area.

HISTORY

111. GCSE results over the last few years, including 1999, have been outstanding, well above the national averages for grades A* to C and well above the school's average. However, the cohort of pupils studying history at Key Stage 4 represents generally a group of more able pupils. A level results are also good and above the national average with a high number of students consistently achieving grades A to C at A level each year.
112. For summer 1999 teacher assessment results at Key Stage 3 were below the nationally expected levels. Attainment reflected in lessons and in pupils' work at the

end of Key Stage 3 suggests that there are not as many pupils working at the lower levels of attainment as the teacher assessment suggests. Many Year 10 students are already producing good GCSE standard work. In Year 12, students' attainment exceeds expected levels at this stage in the A level course.

113. Students of average and high ability make particularly good progress throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. The presentation of pupils' work becomes more sophisticated with age and pupils develop a mature style of writing by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary effectively and have a good sense of chronology within the period being studied. By the end of Key Stage 3 students have gained a good grounding in all aspects of the history curriculum and more able pupils are particularly proficient in evaluating written and pictorial sources for usefulness and reliability. Less able pupils find some materials difficult to interpret, particularly complex text materials. Generally pupils are able to prioritise the important factors that lead to an event happening, and understand the economic and social influences of events, such as trade and the expansion of the British Empire. In Key Stage 4 pupils learn how to access increasingly difficult source materials and understand complex issues, for example, problems facing the Weimar Republic between 1919-1923. Pupils have a good understanding of concepts such as 'cause and effect' and 'consequence' which are well developed by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Sixth form students are confident learners, including those students who have only recently joined the school. They use a variety of communication forms including problem solving activities which draw on cross curricular skills, and extended essay writing.
114. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good, and often very good. They take pride in their work, with exercise books and folders neatly kept. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, They are enthusiastic and in Key Stage 4 can work on their own to improve their work without external pressure.
115. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Lessons are well structured, usually have good pace and often present the pupils with a variety of activities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of pupils. There is some over reliance on photocopied materials particularly at Key Stage 3, which often leads to unnecessary cut and paste activities. Support materials and work sheets produced do not always meet the needs of less able pupils who sometimes find them difficult to interpret, especially in Key Stage 3. Both written and pictorial sources are used more effectively in Key Stage 4 to obtain the maximum information from evidence. Some, but by no means all teaching, places insufficient emphasis on developing speaking skills either through the questioning of pupils or in organising discussion and presentations. Teachers mark the pupils' work carefully but there is inconsistency across the department in the clarity of written guidance to help pupils to make further progress. In the sixth form feedback is good on students' essay work. Teachers generally manage their classes well and have good relationships with pupils. There is insufficient development of information and communications technology in lessons but some pupils are using computers at home or are using the internet in the library to research work.
116. The history department has maintained its good standards since the last inspection and made progress on the issues raised in 1996. Strategies for providing work for students of different abilities are under-developed, particularly for the less able in Key Stage 3, and schemes of work need further development. The principles of assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 should be revisited, in order to arrive at

accurate levelling of the lower ability pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 5 was above average in the 1999 end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments, but was below average for level 6. Girls' results were much higher than boys', and accounted for all the higher levels. Boys' results were below average. In 1999, both candidates entered for A level achieved a grade. 27 pupils were entered for GCSE information systems in 1999; they gained an above average percentage of A* to C grades, but below average A* to G. Despite the lower than average results for boys at Key Stage 3, more boys than girls choose information and communication technology in Key Stage 4. No particular trend can be seen yet, but results show that the introduction of the general skills course in Key Stage 3 has been successful in enabling pupils to gain the expected levels, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, there are few pupils who achieve more.
118. Standards seen during the inspection were in line with the test results. Pupils have appropriate keyboard skills and are capable of accessing software on the network with ease. They have all used the word-processor satisfactorily during their course and most are able to use it for homework and projects. Most pupils have satisfactory research skills, and for many, these are good. They successfully use the internet and CD-ROMs for research, and are adept at sending e-mail; many pupils do this in French or German as well as English. There are many good examples of eye-catching poster displays where pupils have incorporated text and pictures to make an attractive layout. By the end of Key Stage 3, all pupils have used spreadsheets to model hypothetical situations, based on profit and loss calculations for tuck shops or camping gear purchase, for instance. Their graphic design skills, however, are not well developed and the current Key Stage 3 pupils have not done work in control and monitoring. The department is therefore currently not meeting its statutory requirement to cover the complete information and communications technology curriculum in Key Stage 3.
119. Standards seen in the database and spreadsheet projects done in the context of a CD-ROM reading library by the current Year 11 show that these pupils are in line to achieve a grade at GCSE. Similarly, the A level projects on systems administration show good insight into the setting up and running of a local area network, similar to the one in school.
120. Pupils learn skills well through the interactive course followed at Key Stage 3, and many higher ability pupils are making good progress, taking tests when they are ready so that they are not held back by slower classmates. Skills are enhanced when pupils have a computer at home. Pupils show interest in their work and mostly work individually, though do consult others whilst working on joint projects. They are particularly well motivated when they see results of their endeavours presented attractively, for example, lower ability pupils printing an attractive check list for a camping expedition using spreadsheets with different fonts. Advanced level pupils are conscientious and keen to succeed.
121. Pupils enjoy information technology lessons and work hard but infrequently use the skills in other subject lessons. They are especially keen to send and receive e-mail. Older pupils make good use of this facility to send their A level projects home where they can complete work. On the occasions when pupils have to share a computer

because the group is too large or there has been an equipment breakdown, their progress is inhibited.

122. Teaching seen was all at least satisfactory and much was good. Teachers who take the skills and examination courses have good subject knowledge, know the requirements of the scheme, especially for word-processing, data-analysis and spreadsheets, and are competent in using the network. They direct pupils well. The scheme of work is satisfactory. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and pupils are often allowed to enhance their research skills on the internet for the last minutes of a lesson. Some teachers provide extension work. The computer systems are easy to use; if equipment fails, it is dealt with swiftly by the technician, though he has a heavy workload. Skills acquired are appropriate, but pupils are not given sufficient opportunity in other subjects to develop them, except in music, business studies, GNVQ courses and modern languages, where information technology is used very well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in information technology lessons when there are enough classroom assistants present to help.
123. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the quantity and quality of hardware and software. Five rooms are dedicated to computers, four of which are available for booking by all departments when computer courses and business studies do not need them. Most departments have used the booking system, but it is not satisfactory for spontaneous use. The only major user is modern languages; few departments have their own computers and therefore cannot use the network software. This severely inhibits information technology work in geography, for example. Departments generally do not plan for extensive computer use, because it is difficult to arrange so far in advance. Consequently, only those pupils who follow a specific information technology course gain a qualification in Key Stage 4 because other departments currently cannot contribute enough information technology work for pupils to gain a recognised qualification. In the last four years, pupils' skills have improved considerably at Key Stage 3, but not yet enough in Key Stage 4 to allow good use of information technology to be made across the curriculum in all subjects. There is at present no director of information and communications technology faculty despite the school's attempts to make an appointment. The present head of department works hard but progress in making further developments of the subject is slower than is needed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

124. Attainment in the languages department is good post 16. Students have performed well and results have been consistently good although entry numbers have been very small. Pupils' performance in their first foreign language in GCSE has been almost exactly in line with national averages over the last three years. The small number of pupils taking a second language achieved results significantly above national averages. Girls' performance is better than boys. This is an issue which the department is currently addressing and the gap has closed from 22 per cent to five per cent over the last two years. The Certificate of Educational Achievement is successfully used as a more appropriate means of examining pupils unlikely to achieve a GCSE grade. At Key Stage 3 in 1999 teacher assessment grades were almost exactly in line with national figures.
125. The standard of attainment seen in post 16 lessons is good. Students make confident use of the target language to communicate in real situations, their listening skills are good, and they have good reading and writing skills. At Key Stage 4 attainment is satisfactory overall, but with the lower ability sets performing below the

national average. Year 10 pupils continuing with German as a second language reach higher standards than those nationally. Other top set pupils do not all perform at such a high level. At Key Stage 3 attainment seen is satisfactory overall with the majority of pupils performing in line with national expectations in all four attainment targets. Pupils with special educational needs perform as well as their peers in the same set. For example, in a Year 9 French class, these pupils built on previous knowledge at the same rate as the others.

126. Learning by pupils of all levels of prior attainment levels is good at all key stages. Post 16 students make good progress in their understanding of the language, in their ability to communicate orally and in writing, and in their use of reference sources. At Key Stage 4 pupils build on previous knowledge, they consolidate vocabulary and structures and can use them in real contexts such as role-play situations which were recorded for presentation to their peers in a Year 10 German class. At Key Stage 3 pupils develop new skills which they can adapt to different learning situations. Language is acquired which can be transferred from the spoken to the written word , for example, in a Year 9 French class where pupils are collating information for a booklet on the school.
127. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject, and behaviour in the department are good at every key stage and in almost every lesson. Post 16 students show interest and respond well to challenges set in both French and German. At Key Stage 4 pupils work co-operatively with each other for example in the computer room. They can also work independently. At Key Stage 3 pupils come to the lessons expecting to be challenged. They are attentive and sustain concentration, for example in a Year 9 French class working on school plans.
128. The overall quality of teaching is good. There is evidence of excellent teaching, and it was at least satisfactory in all but one lesson. Across the key stages teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and in most cases they use the target language well in their lessons. Best practice is exemplified by clear objectives, brisk starts to the lessons and sustained pace with active involvement on the part of the pupils. Effective use is made of time and resources, pupils are well-managed and they are given the opportunity to practise their communication skills. Teachers' expectations are generally high, although some more able pupils need to be challenged further by differentiated activities. There are plans to provide opportunities for extended reading. Homework is set regularly. Day to day planning , marking and assessment are good. Monitoring of marking and assessment takes place, the monitoring of teaching is not yet in place.
129. Since the previous inspection, the department has made very good progress. Under strong leadership, the profile of the department within the school has been raised considerably. The department has been particularly successful in improving the attainment of boys, in promoting the second language, and in ensuring that pupils experience teaching which develops communication skills. Information and communications technology has been successfully incorporated into the teaching, and pupils regularly use their skills for word processing and for design and research work. Although the department would benefit from another teaching base, accommodation is now satisfactory.
130. The department makes good use of the foreign language assistant. She is particularly effective in her work with an extra-curricular club for Year 7 pupils. Their motivation and attainment are raised by their attendance at this club. Many pupils

benefit from contact with French and German speakers either by correspondence, or by visiting the countries on organised trips. Classroom displays are good, they act as a teaching aid and celebrate pupils' achievement. Some textbooks and equipment still need to be updated, but the resources in place are generally put to good and imaginative use.

MUSIC

131. GCSE results in music showed an average 84 per cent pass rate at A* to C in 1997 and 1998, well above the national average. This was followed by a sudden drop in results in 1999 when only two pupils took the examination. This is too small a number of pupils to indicate a significant change in the department's performance.
132. There have been no A level candidates for music in the past two years. The one student at present in Year 13 is expected to achieve a high grade. Sixth form students also have the option of A level Performing Arts, a course now in its second year, which enables pupils to utilise their musical skills in a broader context.
133. Towards the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of pupils in performing and composing is close to, and often slightly above, national expectations. Pupils perform and compose with some fluency across the key stage. They use electronic instruments and record their work. Singing is encouraged and Year 8 pupils were observed singing in three parts and creating vocal riffs for a popular song very well. Since the last inspection pupils are given many more opportunities to develop practical skills in music lessons.
134. Pupils' attainment in listening and appraising meets national expectations. Pupils are introduced to musical vocabulary through discussion and question and answer sessions, but they are rarely given written work to consolidate their learning. Homework is sometimes, but not consistently, used to reinforce classroom activities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are given good support. They are fully integrated into classroom music activities. There has been overall improvement in the standards pupils attain at Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is broadly in line with expectations with accurate playing and appropriate awareness of the effect within an ensemble. Pupils try hard to identify what makes a good performance.
135. Pupils respond very well in music lessons at all key stages, whether working as a whole class or in groups. They support each other, instrumentalists showing others what to do or generally sharing ideas with one another. They listen to each others' work and are critical in a positive way.
136. Classroom music is taught by two well-qualified and experienced teachers. It was only possible to observe one during the inspection. He shows exceptional musical skill, versatility and enthusiasm. He uses a good range of activities and teaching strategies at all key stages. Particularly noteworthy is the use of information and communication technology and the way pupils are introduced to more sophisticated techniques as they move through the school.
137. Seven visiting teachers teach a range of orchestral instruments, voice and percussion effectively. Since the last inspection, more pupils have been encouraged to take up instruments through an Arts College funded initiative which allows some pupils to take lessons at no charge. There is now a good balance of boys and girls on this scheme.

138. The curriculum is well-balanced. Schemes of work are clear and show evidence of progression. In practice, the balance of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is weighted towards composing and performing. Pupils are intermittently assessed in listening and appraising, but in general pupils are less well monitored in this area of the music curriculum.
139. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to choose music from an option block which embraces a large number of subjects, not an uncommon pattern in schools. The number of pupils taking GCSE varies significantly from year to year and it is difficult to sustain an effective A level music course.
140. Assessment arrangements are generally satisfactory but lack sufficient consistency. A good feature is the way pupils are engaged in evaluation of their own recorded performances after class discussion. At Key Stage 4 pupils compare and discuss their performances in terms of the GCSE marking criteria. Assessment of musical knowledge and understanding is reliant, however, on end of year examinations and there is too little on-going assessment.
141. Accommodation and resources are very good in the music department, with improvement in the number and range of classroom percussion instruments since the last inspection. All pupils have access to resources out of school hours. Extra-curricular activities are many and varied, from the choir and junior strings to the jazz band and steel band. These activities are well-supported by pupils and the annual school production is a key feature in the school calendar.
142. Music is a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. At Key Stage 4 groups of pupils have the option to study GCSE physical education. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving an A* to C pass was well above the national average for comprehensive schools and that for similar schools thus sustaining the trend over the past four years. The small number of girls taking the course does not make gender comparisons meaningful. Though no Year 11 GCSE lessons were observed, a scrutiny of a sample of pupils' folders indicates they have a good understanding of body systems and, for example, of the place of sport in society. In Year 10 lessons pupils display a secure knowledge and understanding of health-related fitness issues as well as the muscular and skeletal systems. GCSE dance has also been introduced as an option this year. Pupils work well in small groups and are making very good progress overall.
144. In 1999 the proportion of students achieving higher grades in A level physical education was similar to that nationally. Meaningful gender comparisons are not possible because of the small number of girls taking the course. Over the past four years the number of students achieving higher grade passes has fallen by half. Members of the faculty suggest this is because of an all round decline in the calibre of students. Work by present Year 12 students suggests this is the case though in lessons observed they showed, for example, a secure knowledge and understanding of components of fitness as well as a good understanding of the organisation of sport of sport in the UK. Though no lessons were observed in Year 13, a scrutiny of a sample of their folders suggests they are making good progress and attaining well in relation to syllabus requirements.

145. The proportion of pupils achieving at or beyond national expectations in teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 is not significantly different from that nationally. Standards at the time of the previous report have been at least maintained. Boys were performing better than girls. In lessons, the majority of fourteen year-olds attain at national expectations in the games and activities taught and many beyond. All have a good understanding of health-related fitness and the effects of exercise on the body as well as the need to practice in order to refine their skills and techniques. They can lead their own warm-up and, for example, name the muscle groups being stretched. In hockey pupils are aware about how individual skill refinement influences the outcomes of competitive games. In basketball pupils' ball control skills and dribbling and passing skills are secure in both drills as well as in competitive games. Their shooting skills though are less well developed. This is because of the lack of rings in the gymnasium and the lack of correct court markings. There are no significant differences in terms of gender.
146. Though no lessons were observed in the course that all pupils follow in Year 11, faculty records and teacher assessment indicates that the majority of sixteen year-olds are attaining the national expectations with a significant number working beyond. Standards at the time of the previous report have again been at least maintained.
147. Though no pupils identified as having special educational needs were observed to have additional help, they are well supported and integrated in lessons and make progress in line with their capabilities.
148. The majority of pupils and students respect the ethos within which the subject is taught. They work very well together in pairs and small groups and are supportive of one another. They also show respect for the capabilities of one another. Pupils' positive attitudes and the way they respond to consistently high expectations helps to create an effective learning atmosphere.
149. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There are no differences between the key stages. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and is more often good or very good and is an improvement since the previous inspection. The overall quality of teaching is having a positive impact on the quality of learning and progress made. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan practical and theory lessons well. All lessons are clearly structured and learning objectives are shared with pupils and students. In practical lessons skills are clearly demonstrated and broken down so that pupils know what is expected of them and how they can make progress. Effective and realistic skills drills are also helpful in this respect. In a Year 9 boys' hockey lesson, for example, this was effectively done when teaching the skills and techniques required for the hit and also in a mixed Year 8 basketball lesson. Teachers pay due regard to safety and ensure that pupils are suitably warmed up, being encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their own warm-up. Effective questioning by teachers not only allows them to establish the extent of pupils and students' knowledge and understanding, but also encourages their speaking and listening skills and use of correct terminology. In all practical lessons teachers recap and consolidate previously learned skills and techniques. Pupils are involved in planning and performing thus increasing their understanding of what they are doing. Sometimes there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in peer evaluation, for example in a Year 9 boys' hockey lesson where this could have ensured a greater understanding of correct technique in both drills and small-sided games. Good use is made of praise, encouragement and constructive criticism. Sometimes at the end of lessons evaluative opportunities have a tendency to be too

dependent on teacher comments rather than encouraging pupils to say or show what they have learned. All teachers successfully convey the expectation that all can have success in practical lessons thus boosting confidence and motivation. The variety of activities in all lessons helps to ensure that pupils concentrate and work at a good pace. Though the few non-participants are usually involved, for example, in observation tasks, they are not always as fully involved as they should be.

150. Appropriate homework is set for those following the GCSE and A level courses. However, the marking does not help pupils to see how they can improve consistently enough.
151. The curriculum for the course that all pupils follow is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. GCSE physical education and dance at Key Stage 4, A level physical education and post 16 recreational provision all contribute well. A very good range of extra-curricular activities further enhances pupils' learning experiences. This includes recreational as well as a range of competitive opportunities. As a result of the continuing dedication and enthusiasm of staff in supporting extra-curricular activities individuals have had success at district level in a variety of games and activities and several boys have achieved regional rugby honours. A variety of teams have had success particularly at borough level.
152. Though the school has extensive playing fields and hard court areas, some aspects of indoor accommodation are unsatisfactory. Despite the best efforts of the school these have not been improved since the previous inspection. Effective, informative and celebratory displays do not hide the overall depressing and tawdry appearance of the indoor facilities. Shower provision does not provide the privacy expected by both boys and girls and has a negative impact on standards of hygiene. The faculty is fortunate though in being able to use the newly built dance studio.
153. The major change since the previous inspection has been the recent creation of a physical education faculty to replace what was a boys' department and girls' department. Effective leadership and management is providing a clear direction and focus for physical education in the school and the faculty is well prepared for the required changes in the curriculum and assessment. However, there is not yet enough sharing of good practice to raise the good quality of teaching even further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. At the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils taking GCSE is well above the national average. Pupils' achievements in the subject are enabled by good teaching and support given by teachers to the self-selected group of pupils. The achievement of current post 16 students in A and A/S levels is above average in line with recent results.
155. The attainment of pupils who follow the general course in religious education is good overall by the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4, in relation to the end of key stage expectations of the non-statutory model syllabus for religious education. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils produce detailed and well-presented work which reflects their understanding of key areas of study, for example, the role of prayer in Christianity and other faith communities. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the major religions and show their ability to be reflective about current moral and social issues. The attainment of post 16 students taking the general course could not be judged as the curriculum is delivered in three half day conferences, once each term and no written work was available for scrutiny.

156. Overall pupils make good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils' good behaviour and pride shown in completed and attractively illustrated work are significant contributory factors. They make very good gains in the attainment target learning from religion, which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Year 7 pupils make greater gains in their learning overall in both attainment targets because they have more curricular time than that available for Years 8 and 9. In Key Stage 4 depth of coverage of the scheme of work is limited overall by this factor.
157. Post 16 students show a sound understanding of a range of philosophical perspectives and are able to apply them to current moral issues in their oral and written work. Constructive comments by teachers and regular and thorough marking help them to make progress. Students following the general course are given the opportunity of listening to external speakers and taking part in workshops in termly conferences on relevant and appropriate current themes, for example, the Millennium and its significance for groups and for the students themselves.
158. In the lessons observed pupils' attitudes to the subject were generally positive. Pupils behave well in lessons where teachers use strategies which encourage pupils to participate actively in doing challenging tasks in addition to the usual whole class teaching.
159. Teaching is satisfactory or better at all key stages and in a third of the lessons observed, very good. In these lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies and encourage pupils to offer their own ideas. Learning is helped by including investigation and evaluation, sound planning and a range of resources for different ability groups. Pupils' progress is more limited in lessons where too much guidance is given to them and where the work planned is not challenging enough. Visits to places of worship enable pupils taking GCSE and A and A/S level courses to have direct and culturally enriching experience of local faith communities.
160. There is good leadership and management of the department and a thoroughly planned scheme of work. There are appropriate targets in place for the development of the subject. Although formal annual reviews with the head are carried out and these monitor target setting for GCSE and A and A/S level pupils, they do not include a review of pupils taking the general course. The scheme of work reflects pupils' religious backgrounds and the diversity of faiths in the community, and makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.