

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WESTMINSTER CITY SCHOOL**

Westminster, London

LEA area: Westminster

Unique reference number: 101153

Headteacher: Mr Richard Tanton

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale  
19385

Dates of inspection: 15 - 19 October 2001

Inspection number: 188314

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Non-denominational Christian Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: 11 - 16 Boys : 16 -18 Mixed

School address: 55 Palace Street  
London

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Professor Lisa Jardine

Date of previous inspection: 7 July 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
23588	Charanjit Ajitsingh	Team inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p>	
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>English (sixth form)</p>	
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	<p>Modern foreign languages</p>	
15079	Anthony Boys	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Chemistry (sixth form)</p>	
23324	Sylvia Greenland	Team inspector	<p>Geography</p> <p>Geography (sixth form)</p>	
8501	Paul Hartwright	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p> <p>Physics (sixth form)</p>	
18261	Anthony Hill	Team inspector	<p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Art</p> <p>Art (sixth form)</p>	

12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	History History (sixth form)	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
8052	Kenneth McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31850	David Nevens	Team inspector	Music	
19528	Roland Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics Mathematics (sixth form)	
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education	
10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	Business education (sixth form) Economics (sixth form)	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a smaller than average, voluntary-aided, non-denominational Christian comprehensive school for boys. There are 633 boys in Years 7 to 11 and 124 (116 boys and 8 girls) in the sixth form. The school has become considerably oversubscribed in recent years. The admissions policy requires governors to allocate 105 places to active Christian families within the Anglican Dioceses of London and Southwark and 25 places for boys practising other World Faiths. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average but rising, particularly in the current Year 7 where results of National Curriculum tests taken in primary schools were above average. The school draws its pupils from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds including a large proportion of Black-African and Black-Caribbean heritage as well as significant numbers from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese families. As a result, the proportion learning English as an additional language is high although very few are at early stages. The main languages spoken are Yoruba, Arabic, Twi/Afante and Bengali. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs is average but the number with statements is above average. 112 pupils are eligible for free school meals, a figure that, although above average, has declined in recent years.

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

The school provides a good education for all pupils as a result of the clear direction and firm leadership provided by the headteacher and governors. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 9 are well above average and standards are rising in Year 10 and above. Pupils achieve well and make good progress because much teaching is of a high quality. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils can participate in all that the school has to offer. Pupils from different backgrounds show respect for each other and mix well, making the school harmonious and free of tension. In spite of the large budget deficit the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- High standards are achieved in National Curriculum tests for English, mathematics and science.
- There is much high quality teaching, which leads to pupils achieving well and making good progress.
- The strong and very effective leadership from the headteacher, senior managers and governors gives the school a clear educational direction.
- Pupils have an enthusiasm for learning, behave well and develop very good relationships with each other.
- Rapid improvements have taken place in the short period since the last inspection.
- A good range and variety of activities are provided beyond the school day, which enrich the pupils' experiences.

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

- Standards in ICT are below average and National Curriculum requirements are not being fulfilled.
- More attention is needed to work-related aspects and careers education in the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The accommodation is poor and in a poor state of repair.
- Many subject staff do not play their part in identifying how they will support the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a large budget deficit, which has remained at this level for some time.

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

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

Senior management and governors have been instrumental in enabling the school to make good progress in raising standards and in dealing with the key issues from the last inspection in 1999. Firm leadership has provided a clear direction, with a sharp focus on successfully improving teaching and the quality of the education provided for all pupils. The provision for pupils with special

educational needs has improved, but there remains scope for further development. The budget deficit has not been reduced and remains an impediment to significantly improving the state of the accommodation. The extension of the leadership group, the development of the expertise of middle managers and the clear direction provided by the headteacher place the school in a strong position to secure further improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

When considering all test and examination results, it is important to note that the school does much better when comparisons are made with the national performance of boys, which in most cases lags behind that of girls. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were above average overall and placed the school in the top five per cent of similar schools. Results in 2001 fell slightly. GCSE results have been weaker than National Curriculum test results for three main reasons. The attainment on entry to the school of pupils in these groups was lower, they had benefited less from improvements in teaching, and the poor performance of pupils taking 'short courses' lowered overall results considerably. These have now been abandoned. The slight decline in results in 2001 was also due in part to staffing difficulties experienced in the spring term, which resulted in some classes being taught by non-specialists. There has been no significant variation in results by ethnic background, although pupils of Black-African heritage have been particularly well represented amongst the higher-achieving pupils in the school. The school failed to meet what were unrealistic targets in 2001 but is better placed to achieve them next year. Results at A Level improved in 2000 and the proportion of students achieving higher grades improved again in 2001, so that virtually all students achieved the grades that they required to take up places at higher education. Very good results were also achieved in 2000 in the Intermediate GNVQ course. It is not possible to make valid comparisons about results by gender because there are very few girls in the sixth form.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 7 to 9, where much of the teaching is good. Attainment in English, mathematics, geography and drama is above average, but slightly lower elsewhere, reflecting lower attainment on entry in other subjects. Standards are rising at Key Stage 4 as groups of more able pupils move up the school and attainment is above average in mathematics, geography, drama and physical education but below average in design and technology. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress as a result of good teaching and their positive attitudes to learning. Standards in ICT are below average throughout the school and pupils have insufficient opportunity to apply their skills in other subjects. The inspection could find no significant variation in the attainment or achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Students achieve well in most subjects in the sixth form and make good progress, again because teaching is good but also because of their commitment to their studies.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. Pupils are motivated and are keen to do well, responding with enthusiasm to the

	good teaching.
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Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons, showing respect for their teachers. They also move sensibly around the cramped and narrow corridors.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are usually polite and courteous and they mix very well with each other. They grow in confidence as they move through the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. Attendance had fallen to below the national average last year but has risen this year back to its normal level close to the national average. However, attendance in Year 11 is low and a cause of concern for the school.

Staff are successful in their efforts to make the school a calm and harmonious place. This involves senior staff being visible in the school at lesson change times when congestion on the narrow corridors can cause problems.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The high proportion of teaching that is good or better is a major factor, alongside the hard work and commitment of the pupils, in the good progress being made by pupils throughout the school. Teaching is good in English and satisfactory in science in both Key Stages 3 and 4, while teaching in mathematics is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Teaching is also good at both key stages in art, geography, ICT, music and physical education. Many teachers have high expectations and present a challenge in their lessons to which most pupils respond well. Questioning is often used well to stimulate pupils' thinking, to revise areas previously covered or to establish a discussion. Most pupils listen attentively and are keen to participate; as a result they learn new ideas quickly and consolidate their learning securely. Lessons are usually well planned with a variety of interesting activities at which pupils work hard. When support is available, pupils with special educational needs are catered for well as are pupils with English as an additional language. While most teachers are aware of the needs of these pupils they do not always adapt materials and methods sufficiently when classroom support is not available; this limits the progress made on these occasions. Similarly, support for gifted and talented pupils, while well thought out in some subjects, is less effective in others. The school has recently introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, although it is too early to evaluate their full impact. Literacy is supported well in many subjects, but there is no whole-school approach to numeracy.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, with the exception of insufficient coverage of ICT in Key Stage 4, and some lack of provision for the least academic pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and all are fully included, having the same curriculum as their peers; however, subject staff do not indicate how they will tackle the targets identified for each pupil.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language, all of whom are well integrated into normal classes. The few early learners of English are supported effectively by specialist staff in Years 7 and 8.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' personal development is good. The school provides a tolerant environment, which fosters an awareness of the needs of others. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Welfare arrangements are sound. Attendance procedures have been tightened up, although are not yet successful in improving attendance in Year 11. Behaviour procedures are satisfactory and improving.

National Curriculum requirements are met in all subjects with the exception of ICT. There are good extra-curricular activities and very good contacts with the local community. Links with parents are good. Parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's provision. The support and guidance for pupils is good overall, but better in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form than Key Stage 4.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The strong leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by senior staff, has successfully provided a clear direction for the school based on improving teaching and raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective. Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and have been instrumental in the development of the school in recent years.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring of teaching and the work of departments has enabled the school to secure improvements; however, the evaluation of test data to establish the school's effectiveness is only now being undertaken.
The strategic use of resources	The large budget deficit has not been reduced and remains an impediment to improving the fabric of the building.

The structure of the senior management of the school has recently undergone some fundamental changes, the impact of which it is too early to evaluate. Subject leaders and key stage managers are playing an increasingly effective and important role. The school is well staffed, learning resources are satisfactory overall, but access to ICT is restricted. The accommodation is poor and in a poor state of repair. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily to guide financial planning.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching is good and as a result their children make good progress.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed and they find the headteacher approachable.</li> <li>Their children are helped to become more mature and learn to take responsibility.</li> <li>Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about their children's progress.</li> <li>The quality and consistency of homework.</li> <li>The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li> <li>A small number of parents reported that younger pupils are asked for money by older pupils.</li> </ul>

The inspection team supports the parents' favourable views of the school, but found that many of their areas of concern were unfounded. Reports to parents and consultation evenings are entirely appropriate, homework is set regularly and a good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, except in the sixth form. Some pupils did complain that they are asked for money, but report that this is as much a culture outside school as in it. However, the school is to look at ways of tackling this problem.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this small school has 124 students, mostly boys but with 8 girls in Year 13, and is expanding. It is able to offer a broad range of subjects, mostly leading to A/S and A Level but with some vocational courses, as part of the South Westminster Sixth Form Triangle - a consortium with The Grey Coat Hospital School and Pimlico School. All but a very few remain in full-time education after Year 11 and just over a half remain registered at the school. GCSE results in Year 11 are close to the national average. Students come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and from a wide area of London. Many have English as an additional language, but speak it well.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is successful in meeting the needs of its students through the consortium and is cost effective. Examination results have fluctuated but standards are now rising and are close to the national average. Teaching is good in most subjects and is very good in art and geography. Most students achieve well and make good progress. Management is effective and staff support the personal development and aspirations of students well. As a result they develop into mature and articulate young adults.

#### Strengths

- Much teaching is of a high quality enabling the students to make good progress.
- The sixth form enables a high proportion of students to go on to higher education.
- Staff provide very good individual personal support and guidance for the students.
- Students become mature and have a very sensible approach to their studies. They mix well, welcome students from other schools in the consortium and form constructive relationships with each other.
- The opportunities for students to study courses of their choice through the consortium.

#### What could be improved

- Access to ICT particularly for vocational courses.
- Broadening the curriculum to include more vocational elements.
- Target-setting and the use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of the sixth form and also individual subjects.
- Social areas and the accommodation for personal study.

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

### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> Standards are rising and build upon students' results at GCSE level. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have good relationships with their students, which encourages them to work hard.
Physics	<b>Good.</b> Near average results were obtained in 2000 with several students gaining the higher grades.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Chemistry	<b>Good.</b> Although standards in 2000 and 2001 were around average, teaching is consistently good. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject encourages students to do their best and they respond well in lessons, particularly in Year 13, where good standards of written work are produced.
Economics	<b>Good.</b> Standards are improving. Teaching and learning are good overall.
Business studies	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Standards were very low in 2001. The retention rate on the advanced vocational course is also very low.
Art and design	<b>Good.</b> The consistently very good standard of teaching ensures that students benefit fully from the expertise of the teachers and make very good progress towards their examinations. The creation of a separate studio area for them to work in would allow them more flexibility to continue their studies in their free time.
Geography	<b>Good.</b> Results are average and improving. Learning is very good due to very good teaching and very good student attitudes.
History	<b>Satisfactory.</b> A Level results were below the national average in 2000 but well above in 2001. Developments are needed to share best practice in assessment and to help students to become more independent learners.
English	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average; teaching is usually good or very good. Students' skills of independent study and thought are underdeveloped.

Students have insufficient access to computers and as a result their ICT skills are below average. The standard of work seen in design and technology was satisfactory, representing good progress from the students' earlier GCSE results.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students value the good support and advice that they receive. Individual attention and personal advice are strong features, but as yet there is limited systematic sharing with students of their targets and the progress that they are making.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is well led, managed and organised and teachers' work is given a clear direction. Planning for promoting higher standards through the school development plan and the sixth form action plan is satisfactory. Girls who join the school or who attend through the consortium play a full part in lessons and the life of the sixth form. More could be done to ensure that pupils with English as an additional language can cope with the complex vocabulary and wording of examination questions.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are treated as responsible young adults.</li><li>• Teaching is challenging and encourages them to give of their best.</li><li>• Staff help them to settle into the sixth form and sixth form work.</li><li>• The choice of courses that they can study through the consortium.</li><li>• The encouragement to study and research independently.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Careers advice.</li><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

The inspection team generally supports the students' positive views of the sixth form, although there are some limitations to courses offered and access is not always possible to computers to support independent research. The team also agrees that careers advice is not systematic and co-ordinated, and little is provided to enrich the curriculum outside normal lessons.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standards being achieved throughout the school are rising. This is because of the considerable improvements in the quality of teaching, the changes made to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and the keen and interested approach to learning demonstrated by most pupils. National Curriculum test results taken at the end of Key Stage 3 have been very good for the last few years but these standards have not been reflected in other examination results as the factors mentioned previously are only now starting to have an impact. Indications from the inspection evidence are that GCSE results should improve, given the quality of the work seen in Years 10 and 11 and the progress now being made by pupils.
2. National Curriculum test results taken at the end of Year 9 have improved since the last inspection. Results were well above average in English and mathematics in 2000 and above average in science. Results in science were lower and fewer pupils achieved the higher levels. The results in all three subjects were very high in comparison with similar schools. There was a slight decline in these results in 2001. Results in English are even more favourable when comparisons are made with the national performance of boys, who achieve lower results than girls.
3. GCSE results have also improved since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\*-C grades was close to the national average in 2000 and well above results in similar schools. As at Key Stage 3, these results are more favourable when compared to the national performance of boys, who lag some distance behind girls at GCSE. When overall results are looked at by the average points gained by pupils then a less favourable picture emerges. Results are below average but above results in similar schools. The reason for this is the poor performance of pupils in 'short' GCSE courses, which lower overall results considerably. These courses have now been abandoned. Results fell slightly in 2001, partly as a consequence of some staffing difficulties experienced by the school, which meant that some groups had to be taught by non-specialists.
4. There is no significant pattern in any variation in attainment by ethnic background. School data and inspection evidence also show no significant patterns in progress either in lessons or over longer periods of time. Some individual pupils of Black-African heritage have made quite startling progress from their test results taken in Year 6 to their results in Year 9. However, by and large this group makes similar progress to all other groups. As the numbers of pupils in other minority ethnic groups are small, statistical comparisons have no validity. The learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language are being met, with the result that most are able to participate in lessons and make the same good overall progress as others in the class.
5. The attainment of pupils in English, mathematics and science on entry has improved in recent years as the school has become heavily oversubscribed and also as the result of the national focus on literacy and numeracy in primary schools. Evidence from previous National Curriculum test results taken in Year 9, that pupils have made good progress in these subjects at Key Stage 3, is largely supported by observations during the inspection. Teaching is good and as a consequence most pupils achieve well and make good progress in these subjects. The attainment of pupils on entry in other subjects is not of the same high standard and in some cases is below average. This is largely because pupils come with a wide variety of experiences from the 93 primary schools that feed into Westminster City School. These lower starting points mean that despite good teaching at Key Stage 3, attainment is often only average by Year 9.
6. Standards are rising considerably in Years 10 and 11 for a variety of reasons and do not reflect the recent below average GCSE results. The improvement in the quality of teaching has had longer to affect the progress and achievement of these pupils than for previous cohorts taking

GCSE. Measures of progress from Year 9 test results in English, mathematics and science to performance at GCSE are misleading because of the lower standards achieved in non-core subjects by Year 9. All short courses, the source of poor results, have been discontinued and pupils now follow a more coherent curriculum at Key Stage 4. There remains scope for further improvement. The school is looking towards introducing some work-related elements to meet the aspirations of the small number of pupils who become disaffected with the academic diet offered. Finally, it is only now that pupils entering Key Stage 4 have benefited from the improvements to the school in recent years.

7. The National Literacy Strategy for Key Stage 3 is developing well and training has been provided for teachers. Plans are in hand and some of its recommendations have already been implemented in the English department, but the strategy is not yet fully embedded. The standards of speaking and listening are strong, supported by good teaching which often invites pupils' opinions. The policy of sharing objectives and evaluations with pupils is in place and is already bearing fruit in an increase of confidence in handling language. There is a good whole-school policy of including subject-specific key words in the planning of lessons (although this is not always or even routinely practised). Technical errors in pupils' writing are not systematically marked: practice is inconsistent from subject to subject, and in some subjects such errors are not marked at all. Nevertheless, with the evidence of the confident speaking and listening, and of the influence of a strong English department, standards of literacy overall are good.
8. At present there is no whole-school policy on numeracy across the curriculum but there are policies in some departmental handbooks. Numeracy skills are taught as part of the mathematics' curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy has been embedded into the scheme of work for the current Year 7. This will be extended to other years as they progress through the school. However, there is no application of number or key skills course in the sixth form. There is no evidence that a lack of numerical skills affects access to the curriculum for any pupils. Number skills are evident in many areas of the curriculum with data handling and display skills evident in many subjects, such as geography and history. In science subjects, numerical skills, both with and without calculators, are frequently used in all key stages. Measurement and the use of three-dimensional concepts are used in art and in design and technology. Where seen, students in the sixth form are effective in using the numerical skills necessary for their particular courses.
9. Attainment in ICT has been a cause for concern to the management of the school for some time. Recent changes to the subject's management, teaching and organisation are in their infancy and, although it is too early to see a lasting improvement, there are clear signs of a revival taking place. Standards have suffered considerably in the past because of shortcomings in teaching, the failure to implement the National Curriculum and poor access to ICT resources. Standards have been low for some time and GCSE results poor. Teaching has improved considerably at Key Stage 3, but still does not provide a sufficiently continuous programme for pupils in Years 8 and 9. There is also insufficient access to computer facilities for pupils to use their skills to support learning in other subjects. The previous lack of a co-ordinated response to this requirement of the National Curriculum has resulted in frustration in many subject areas and in pupils not achieving as they should. A lack of access to suitable equipment and software also affects the progress of pupils at Key Stage 4. Apart from the few studying ICT at GCSE, pupils are expected to receive their entitlement through other subjects. These shortcomings have been recognised by the school and plans are being developed aimed at eliminating these weaknesses and raising achievement.

### **Sixth form**

10. A Level results have fluctuated in recent years. 1997 was a good year by recent standards but 1999 was particularly weak. Results improved in 2000, but were still below the national average. The proportion of students gaining A-C grades improved to 50 per cent in 2001, but only just over three-quarters gained an A-E grade. The results enabled a high proportion of the students to move into higher education, including four going to either Oxford or Cambridge University. The results of the small number of girls who joined the sixth form were too few to be statistically significant. Cohort numbers are generally too small to make comparisons

between performance in each subject or by ethnic background. Furthermore, the school has not yet undertaken a sufficiently rigorous analysis of results to establish whether students do as well as they should based upon their earlier GCSE results. Only 40 per cent of A/S Level examinations taken by Year 12 students in 2001 resulted in an A-C grade and just under three-quarters yielded an A-E grade; as yet no national figures are available for valid national comparisons to be made. A small proportion of each year group study vocational courses. All but one of the eleven students entered for intermediate level qualifications in 2000 passed, comparing very well with the national pass rate of just under 75 per cent.

11. Some individual target-setting is undertaken, but it is not used either as a tool to establish the relative progress made by students in subjects or as a way of raising standards overall. Insufficient analysis of data is undertaken; a matter recognised by the school. A high proportion of the students who start A Level courses continue with them to the final examination. This is not consistently the case for GNVQ business studies, where a considerable proportion drop out before completing the course.
12. Most students are achieving well and making good progress on their courses. They respond well to the high quality of much of the teaching by working hard and developing a mature approach to their studies. Inspection evidence from observations in lessons and from an analysis of students' work indicates that standards are rising in most courses and are now close to the national average. There are some exceptions to this. Standards in mathematics, chemistry, art and geography are above average, but they are below average in business education. Students also do not have sufficient access to ICT to support their learning in general, and this restricted access to students studying the advanced vocational business course is hampering their progress. There is also evidence to indicate that students with English as an additional language have some difficulty interpreting some of the complexities of wording in A Level questions. Staff are looking at the best way these students can be supported so that they can achieve the potential in examinations that their work during the year would indicate.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. The response of pupils in lessons was good or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection. This is a further improvement since the positive picture described at the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic groups show a good degree of interest, enthusiasm and motivation in their learning. They respond well to the consistently good teaching which they receive, particularly the brisk pace in many lessons and the variety of interesting and relevant activities. They greatly appreciate the help given to them by their subject teachers and form tutors. Because of these features, and their growing maturity, their attitudes improve even further as they move up the school and into the examination years in Years 11, 12 and 13. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils are attentive to the teacher, settle quickly to productive activities and work very well with each other. Very good attitudes were seen in most subjects but pupils particularly enjoy lessons in English, physical education and ICT where they are highly motivated and keen to do well. Very occasionally, pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes when the teacher is new to them or fails to engage their interest. This was seen in a very small minority of lessons in mathematics and science, and particularly amongst pupils of just below average ability.
14. Pupils' behaviour is good and of a similar nature to that reported in the last inspection. Behaviour was good in most lessons seen, because teachers have created a learning environment based on a high level of mutual respect. This results in teachers and pupils being able to concentrate on learning activities and so pupils make good progress. Pupils behave very well in the daily assemblies held in the school hall. This is due to the highly effective supervision by senior and tutorial staff, which creates a calm and disciplined atmosphere at the start of the school day. Around the school, pupils cope very well most of the time with the difficulties of moving along the narrow corridors and staircases and of playing games of football in the small playground. The number of permanent exclusions continues to be well below the national and local average. Fixed-period exclusions have risen slightly since the last inspection but compare favourably to local and national averages. Whilst exclusion rates have

been falling amongst most ethnic groups, they have risen in the Black-African and white groups. The school can find no significant reason for this from a careful analysis of each case.

15. In a very small number of lessons, mainly in Years 7 to 9, behaviour was unsatisfactory or poor, with pupils becoming over-boisterous and sometimes provocative. The reasons for this included: delayed starts to lessons which unsettled the pupils; teachers having insecure skills in the management of classroom behaviour; and lessons not planned to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. A small number of parents at the meeting with inspectors expressed concern about older pupils bullying younger ones, for example by demanding money. Pupils interviewed during the inspection confirmed that this does occur to pupils in Years 7 and 8 but said that they quickly develop strategies to deal with this. They also reported that it is often a feature of their experiences outside school. They feel confident in going to form tutors or more senior staff if the problem were to get serious. Older pupils comment that there is a more trusting atmosphere in the school than a few years ago. Issues surrounding peer pressure and bullying were effectively explored in a Year 9 personal and social education lesson observed during the inspection.
16. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good overall. A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils of many different ethnic groups mix together so well. There is no tension between any of the groups represented in the school community. Girls in the sixth form are treated with respect. The very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and most teachers are a major factor in enabling good progress to be made in many lessons. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and pleased to talk about their work. As they move up the school, pupils grow in confidence and maturity. However, they have limited opportunities to take responsibility for life around the school. For example, although there is a school council run by a sixth-former, it has a low profile within the school and some pupils do not feel that their ideas and suggestions are taken sufficiently seriously.
17. Attendance at the school is broadly in line with the national average. It dipped below the national average in the last reporting year because pupils could not get to school on the number of days when movement around London was severely disrupted by tube strikes and demonstrations. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average and below the local average. In the first half term of the current school year, attendance was around 92% and there were good levels of attendance in many classes seen during the inspection. However, attendance in Year 11 is unsatisfactory. This is because a small number of pupils find it difficult to cope with their GCSE examination courses. Punctuality at the start of morning and afternoon sessions and for lessons is generally satisfactory. Pupils are mostly successful in overcoming the difficulties of travelling across London to arrive at school, moving around the awkward accommodation between classes, and returning to the site after breaks and lunch-times. This is because they like school and see it as a secure and friendly place in which they can learn and achieve.

### **Sixth form**

18. Students' attitudes to their life in the sixth form are very positive. They talk with great confidence and maturity about their experiences and views of the school. They value the small size of the sixth form in which they are known well and supported as individuals. In the lessons seen, their attitudes to learning were always at least satisfactory and in over half the lessons they were very good or excellent. Students are very well motivated, work hard, and participate fully in discussions and other activities. By the time they leave school, they have developed into independent learners and are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Some return to contribute to the general studies programme on university and career options. The prefects and other senior students play a valuable part in school life as role models, for example at assemblies, and by undertaking various duties. However, students' involvement in personal development and enrichment activities is not as great as it should be. The pressures of examination courses and part-time jobs and the lack of a defined programme of physical education and cultural opportunities restrict this participation. This weakness is recognised by the school and the sixth form consortium. Students' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection and is the major factor contributing to the good progress now made by pupils throughout the school, and also to rising standards. Only a small number of lessons, less than 5 per cent, are unsatisfactory set against over a quarter that are very good or excellent. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects and is good overall in English, mathematics, art, geography, ICT and music. Teaching is very good overall in drama.
20. Many teachers have a high degree of subject expertise, which they show through the enthusiasm with which they teach and the interest and hard work that they generate in their classes. Teaching is often brisk and purposeful. For example, a sharp and productive pace was generated throughout a Year 8 games lesson and resulted in the well-behaved and co-operative pupils making good progress in developing their basketball skills. Many physical education lessons move learning forward rapidly, to which most pupils respond well and participate vigorously. Questioning is often used well by teachers to generate a pace to learning as in a Year 8 ICT lesson. Here the teacher effectively revised the terminology associated with databases, which reinforced learning well. A brisk pace was also generated through questioning in a Year 10 chemistry lesson. All pupils were keen to answer and then settled quickly to the tasks set and applied themselves conscientiously to the work. Questions were also framed well by the teacher in a Year 11 drama lesson. The pupils' understanding was probed and the teacher was able to demonstrate high expectations of what he felt they could achieve.
21. High expectations are a feature of much of the better teaching in the school. Staff challenge pupils to think and extend their learning whenever possible. High expectations were clearly visible and effectively communicated to pupils in a top Year 9 geography group looking at the natural resources of the Amazon basin. Questioning was used very well to summarise previous learning and activities were changed at regular intervals to move new learning forward rapidly. Lessons such as this are well planned and have a good structure that balances direct teaching with pupil activities. Most teachers are acutely aware of the varying needs of pupils in their classes, whether they have English as an additional language, special educational needs or particular talents. They then adapt the materials or their teaching styles accordingly. This generates confidence in the pupils who feel that their contributions are valued.
22. In some cases, classes need firm management by their teachers if productive learning is to take place. A difficult Year 9 group responded well to the clear requirements for their behaviour in an art lesson. In the same way, careful planning in a well-structured Year 10 English lesson ensured that the pupils were required to concentrate and work hard from the moment that they entered the room. Most pupils show considerable respect for their teachers. This allows teachers to teach and pupils to learn. This was observed in a low Year 9 science set, where the pupils responded well to the interesting lesson and the teacher's calm but firm manner.
23. In the best lessons pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing because of the dialogue established with them by their teachers. The learning objectives for the lesson are made clear to the class and these are regularly reviewed, both as the lesson progresses and at its conclusion. This enables the pupils to see if they have achieved the lesson aims and also acts as a valuable assessment of progress for the teacher. This is supported in many cases by very good marking of work, which gives helpful, evaluative and diagnostic comments to enable the pupils to see how to improve the quality of their work. It is possible to track the impact of this marking in subsequent tasks as pupils try to respond to the guidance given. This high quality is not evident in all classes and remains as an inconsistency identified in earlier inspections. Some marking is superficial and adds little to the pupils' understanding either of the progress that they are making or of how they might improve. In some books, marking had not taken place for several weeks.

24. Where pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn on an individual or small group basis and given the well-informed and sensitive support of learning support teachers, they make good and very good progress in those lessons. Where learning support assistants, or learning support teachers, support them in mainstream classes their progress is accelerated because they have well-informed and targeted support, as individuals or groups. Where there is no targeted support, the progress of pupils is generally no more than satisfactory, because the individual education plans are not well targeted on the pupils' individual needs. Subject targets do not take sufficient account of the specific learning needs identified by the special needs team. They tend to be too generalised and related to social and personal behaviours, rather than learning behaviours. Nonetheless, some teachers in some departments are sensitive and aware of those on the special needs register and take positive steps to simplify or vary the work. This enables these pupils to play a full part in the lesson and make the same good progress as others.
25. Some weaknesses remain that need to be tackled either because they are contributing to unsatisfactory teaching or because they detract from lessons that otherwise have many good features. A small number of teachers are not always successful in controlling the behaviour of some pupils. They do not achieve silence or gain the pupils' full attention and at times talk over unnecessary background chatter. This slows lessons considerably and results in some frustration amongst those pupils who are keen and attentive. A further shortcoming is that some teachers, again a small number, spend too much time talking to their classes without any significant interaction with pupils whose learning becomes passive as they listen but do not participate. While this style is necessary on occasions it is unhelpful to learning where it is adopted as the dominant and only teaching style.
26. Much progress has been made since the last inspection in reducing the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching and increasing the proportion that is of a high quality. The focus placed by senior management on increasing teachers' awareness of how pupils learn, and requiring them to adopt methods that support learning by all more effectively, has been rewarded by rising standards. The school's target of achieving at least 90 per cent satisfactory teaching has been easily exceeded; sights should now be raised by setting challenging goals for achieving more teaching of a high quality.

### **Sixth form**

27. Teaching is equally good, if not better in the sixth form, as all of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory and almost a third was very good or excellent. As in Years 7 to 11, teachers have high expectations of the students, who they challenge through their direct teaching and the activities that they provide. This leads to the students becoming highly motivated, showing considerable interest in their work and developing a desire to succeed. Teaching is good in most subjects; it is very good in art and geography but only satisfactory in design and technology and history.
28. Most of the staff teaching sixth form students have good expertise and knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They communicate their own interest and enthusiasm for their subjects to their students who become equally interested in what they are learning. Lessons are carefully planned and structured well to balance direct teaching with a variety of interesting tasks and activities to meet the needs and aspirations of all students. Relationships are strong and built on mutual respect. Students are often given their head and are encouraged to challenge teachers during discussions. The few girls who attend either as part of the consortium or who have joined the sixth form roll in Year 13, are encouraged to participate and play a full part in all lessons. They report that they feel that their contributions are welcomed and that they are as valued as any other student.
29. Many of these positive characteristics are to be seen in the best lessons. The teacher's good subject knowledge was a contributory factor to a very effective review of work in a Year 13 chemistry lesson. Clear explanations by the teacher helped to develop the students' theoretical understanding. Similarly the very good knowledge and understanding of art was used to good effect by the teacher to discuss work with individual Year 13 students. The teacher also used positive criticism well to challenge the students to think more widely and to a

greater depth. Very good learning took place through a combination of theoretical and practical work in a Year 12 geography lesson, where the teacher illustrated important points using a very good display of diagrams. The organisation of a Year 13 geography lesson promoted independent research and required the students to explain their findings to others.

30. Some teaching, such as in history, lacks imagination and does not inspire the students. Teachers spend an excessive amount of time talking to the students, who are not sufficiently involved in their own learning. Students also did not participate or respond well in several English lessons in spite of the best efforts of the teacher.

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

31. Overall, the range of learning opportunities provided by the school is satisfactory. The school has reviewed the curriculum since the last inspection report, putting targets in place, and evaluating results. The curriculum is broadly satisfactory in the range of subjects offered, and in the quality of the content in the various subjects. However, the requirements of the National Curriculum are not met for ICT in Key Stage 4, where only those who take it as an option have the requisite teaching. In many subjects the lack of access to ICT, and the limited range of materials for pupils to use, limit the opportunities that can be provided. Moreover, the allocation of time for music is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3, resulting in some lowering of standards. For their weekly games lesson pupils have to travel to Mitcham, a journey which can only be sensibly accomplished by timetabling games every afternoon. This puts constraints on the timetable and results in physical education teachers teaching subjects other than games. The school has coped well with these constraints, and there has been no adverse effect on standards. All pupils attend an assembly every day, a commendable feat of organisation, requiring rapid movement in narrow corridors. Pupils respond sensibly. However, the fifteen minutes during which they are in registration is generally not well used.
32. The curriculum also has considerable strengths. It gives equality of access to all pupils in both key stages. There is now greatly improved provision for those with special educational needs, though this has not yet permeated the teaching in all subjects. The school has rationalised the curriculum in Key Stage 4 by abolishing the short courses, and improving the range of activities in many subjects, such as physical education and art. The time for ICT in Key Stage 3 has been improved by blocking it with personal, social and health education (PSHE), giving pupils a lesson of each in alternate half terms. The cross-curricular mapping of ICT has now begun.
33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Improvements have been made in staffing, evaluation of the provision, building strong links with parents and with local further education colleges. The recently appointed assistant headteacher, who has oversight of the provision, has made a significant impact on the developing role of the special needs co-ordinator and the improving provision. The improvements made have not yet effectively fed through to the main school. There is a clear need to ensure that all staff understand the provision and the role they should play in it to make it fully effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. It is the whole-school provision that is appropriately the current focus of the development plan for special educational needs.
34. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is uneven. The school has arranged for such pupils to have individual targets to be monitored by a senior teacher, but departments vary in the way they identify and support such pupils. The mathematics department foster their ablest pupils by well planned extension work, but little is done for those gifted in modern foreign languages. However, two outstanding swimmers are strongly encouraged by the school and supported financially in their training.
35. Satisfactory arrangements are made for teaching and supporting pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils at early stages of learning English are identified and their needs met through focused support in Years 7 and 8. This enables most pupils to develop sufficient language skills to be able to access the curriculum provided and become increasingly

successful by Key Stage 4. There are some similar shortcomings as with the provision for pupils with special educational needs, in that subject staff do not always adapt the materials that they use to meet the identified language needs of pupils.

36. Over half the curriculum for pupils ages 14 to 16 consists of a compulsory core. The four option blocks provide sufficient choice for most pupils, subject to guidance and discussion with parents, but there is little that is vocational, and this limits choice for the less academic pupils. Work experience is arranged for all pupils in Year 10. This is generally well organised and much appreciated, but little is done to motivate low achievers through work placements. Pupils receive comprehensive advice from the head of sixth form about courses available to them if they stay in school. The resources provided for careers advice in the library and sixth form centre are unsatisfactory. As yet, there is no careers education for younger pupils.
37. The school succeeds in maintaining very good links with the 90 or more primary schools who send pupils to Westminster. Despite the organisational difficulties every pupil is visited before he arrives. Such visits also serve to drive forward curriculum development, as teachers learn more about what the primary schools are doing. Departments such as design and technology also support these feeder schools with computer software.
38. Provision for PSHE is satisfactory. It is compulsory in Years 7 to 9, and in Years 10 and 11 taught in a number of themed days, covering topics such as citizenship, health and drugs education, target-setting, careers advice and industry links. Some very good teaching was observed in Year 9, giving pupils insights into moral dilemmas. Staff have engaged in two training days on drugs education, and a school policy is in preparation, but not yet published. Provision for sex education is satisfactory.
39. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Artists in residence, art clubs, and visits to galleries, museums, theatres and exhibitions all enlarge pupils' general education. Pupils made giant puppets for the Thames Festival in 2000. Physical education offers a wide range of activities after school, which are well supported. There is some weakness in modern foreign languages despite a three-day visit to Paris. The department does not exploit the ease with which pupils can now reach the continent. There are many visits arranged by the history department, and a broad provision of fieldwork in geography.
40. The school is very much aware of its role as a Christian foundation with a multi-faith intake. As such it places great emphasis on exalting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural diversity. Development in these aspects is good overall, and is improving. Staff have been consulted about the implications of moral and spiritual development for pupils in their subject areas, and are required to show how they promote spiritual and moral development through their teaching. To achieve its aims the governing body has appointed a chaplain who spends half his week in the school, teaching, organising events such as the Remembrance Day service, and taking assemblies. Further development of his role as a counsellor is planned. Assemblies take place for all pupils every day, and these include an address, a prayer, and very often a reading from the Bible, aiming thereby to give pupils an awareness of the spiritual dimension in their lives, and a moral context in which to live. Pupils show their involvement by listening attentively and clapping the speaker. Perhaps the best example of awe and wonder generated in class came when pupils had to imagine and then express through drama the feelings of people in prison, and did so with great sensitivity.
41. The school takes every opportunity to create a community with high moral standards. That they have largely succeeded is shown by the air of courtesy apparent among nearly all pupils. The school is very successful in fostering an atmosphere of tolerance, friendship and harmony among pupils from different racial backgrounds. As a result it is a school remarkably free of racial tension. Pupils are frequently reminded of what is right behaviour. If they do wrong they are conscious of how far they have offended. Good moral debate was observed in personal and social education lessons, and in discussions about the commercial exploitation of the Amazon.
42. The school's provision for social development is also good. The school council encourages pupils to feel responsible for the community they live in, and visits to places in London or Paris

(besides their intellectual outcomes) teach pupils how to relate to each other. The physical education department makes a particular contribution by reinforcing good relationships and the concept of fair play. In their themed days, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are helped to develop as well-adjusted citizens, who can recognise the talents and individuality of others.

43. The school's provision for cultural development is good overall, with particular strengths in the teaching of art, music and drama. The recent school production of *Oliver* gave opportunities for pupils of all ages to take part. There are close links with the Africa Centre in Covent Garden. A recent visit by a practising writer from the Centre led to pupils writing their own poetry and reading it aloud. Pupils use the Internet to explore cultural issues in this country and abroad. An awareness of other cultures is fostered well in art and music. Pupils study the art of many countries including that of India and China. There are externally funded projects, which allow pupils to experience African drumming, and the music of Japan, Java and India. They are also involved in the Royal Opera House Educational Plan. Recent developments include the formation of a steel band and a Malay band.

### **Sixth form**

44. The school's provision for the sixth form curriculum is good, despite some limitations. It meets the needs well of the more academic students whose aim is to continue in higher education. The recent revival of the Consortium with Grey Coats and Pimlico schools has resulted in an overarching provision that allows a good width of choice. Nonetheless, a weakness in vocational courses results in only half the school's Year 11 population staying on into the sixth form. Those who choose to continue in the school's sixth form like what it offers, and few drop out. Overall, there has been marked improvement over the last three years.
45. Over three-quarters of all students are studying four or more courses. A useful programme of general studies is organised, but students have few opportunities in school time to widen their general awareness of political, social and cultural issues unless they are taking the relevant examination subjects. They have no organised physical education or games. Work experience is available. Despite the lack of a careers teacher the school has arranged useful links with local commerce, particularly with Merrill Lynch, local hotels, firms engaged in tourism, and the Riverside Project. Even richer are the links with universities. These include fruitful contacts with London School of Economics for mathematics and economics students, with Kings and Imperial Colleges, with Selwyn College, Cambridge, and with the London hospitals. With the London colleges, the school has taken part in new initiatives for students with good potential who are currently underachieving. Students pay tribute to the degree of care and advice they receive in planning their entry into work or higher education.
46. The sixth form provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, continuing the strengths of the main school. Although social areas are cramped, sixth formers have developed a strong sense of community, shown by friendliness amongst themselves and loyalty to the school. The sixth form dinner, held three times a year, gives some indication of this. The prefect system offers opportunities for responsibility, and a range of role models for the rest of the school. Sixth formers help in the library and with paired reading schemes, and take a lead in the school council. They visit New Scotland Yard in a venture designed to forge closer links between the police and young people. Work with the Stephen Lawrence Trust led recently to Stephen's father giving an assembly. Those present remember it as a moving and spiritual experience.
47. Recent improvements in the provision of art, music and drama have tended to focus on the main school so cultural development is weaker in the sixth form. However, sixth formers have visited Tate Modern, and taken part in the drawing workshop. They have access to life-drawing classes after school, and took leading parts in the production of *Oliver*.

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

48. The school's arrangements to ensure the welfare of pupils are satisfactory. Staff in the reception office, one of whom is a qualified first aider, deal appropriately with pupils who are sick or injured during the school day. Because of their sound record-keeping and good knowledge of the pupils, they are able to monitor visits to the medical room effectively. Systems for implementing the school's responsibilities for health and safety are in place. Senior staff provide good levels of supervision at transition points of the school day, including when older pupils return from breaks and lunch-times spent outside the site. A number of health and safety hazards were identified during the inspection. Many of these arise from the poor state of the cramped accommodation. The school has been slow in the past to deal with some of the necessary repairs, but the new site manager and his team are swiftly putting in place a programme of work and some of the hazards were seen to be tackled during the inspection. Arrangements for child protection are not completely secure as the post of designated teacher is being transferred from one member of the senior staff to another. The new designated teacher has not yet received training in her role, but she does have access to good advice from experienced staff as well as the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). There is no policy or information in the staff handbook to help guide staff on child protection matters.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Since September, the school has employed a full-time family liaison worker to assist teaching staff with the monitoring of absences and latecomers. She is already providing a valuable service by contacting parents on the first day of a child's absence, or when a pupil arrives late, and 'chasing' parents for letters to confirm the reasons for absence. The school makes good use of its computerised registration system to monitor individual pupils' attendance. The EWO, who is employed jointly with one of the partner schools, is used very appropriately to follow up longer-term absences, in particular by making home visits both in the school's borough of Westminster and in other boroughs all over London. The school has been slow to devise alternative packages of support for the few pupils who become increasingly disaffected with the formal curriculum as they get older. In part, it has been hampered in this work by the lack of provision available in the borough; for example there are no schemes for vocational experience and education offered in out-of-school settings.
50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school's measures have been successful in maintaining a below average rate of exclusions since the last inspection. The PSHE programme continues to help younger pupils to explore scenarios of bullying and peer pressure. There are clear policies and procedures for dealing with behaviour, bullying and exclusions. However, techniques for the management of pupils in classrooms are not always applied consistently by all teaching staff. There have been delays in setting up a learning support unit within the school because of the difficulties in recruiting suitable staff and in finding an appropriate room. These problems have now been resolved and the school is now in a good position to establish a unit that can help pupils with issues of behaviour and their re-integration following exclusion.
51. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. The assessment and marking policy details clearly the procedures to be followed for assessing pupils and sets out the overarching principle of assessment as a tool for learning. Arrangements for assessment are embedded in the policy and its purpose is that pupils should have an idea of their own progress and be able to identify their own strategies for learning. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are very good in English and art and good in mathematics, design and technology and geography. However, the procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in physical education are being revised in the light of the new, more firmly graded attainment targets. In some subjects, such as geography and English, there is good use of assessment to help pupils' attainment and progress. For example, teachers in geography have the record of Year 10 grades and predicted grades, which are used to help pupils to understand how to move from one grade to another. Teachers support pupils through pupil interviews and tutorials to agree progress and targets, which enables pupils to know what is expected and motivates them to work towards achieving the target. However, the impact of assessment on curricular planning is not secure in all subjects. Although most departments have devised clear and understandable criteria for achieving each of the National Curriculum levels, these criteria are not always used systematically by teachers to aid planning, or to guide pupils towards achieving higher standards.

52. There are sound procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress. The form tutor monitors the progress and targets of each of the pupils in the form in order to be aware of their overall progress. There is half-termly monitoring across the school. In Key Stage 3, at the end of a module, pupils have an indication of how they are matching the national levels and this information is kept in their exercise books. Departments lead in setting targets as part of self-review and steps are being taken to make the process more rigorous across the school. In Year 10 examinations, GCSE grades are awarded in relation to the pupils' current performance and these are used as a vehicle for achievement in Year 11 and as a focus for improvement. The pupils also understand how the numerical mark translates into GCSE grades and they want to get into dialogue to improve their grades. Informal tests are given as part of a unit of work and practice of examination related questions for the preparation for GCSE are part of the culture within the school. A monitoring framework for sampling in relation to attainment has been recently established and there is a timetable for the random and year group sampling of books. As part of the action plan on assessment, an electronic tracking system is being developed to map each student through and between key stages and align the tracking system with assessment practices within the school.
53. The school provides effective support and guidance for its pupils. The senior staff act as good role models by being visible around the school site and maintaining a calm, disciplined and friendly atmosphere. They are ably assisted by sixth form students who are present at the school gates and in assemblies at the start of the school day. Pupils in all years and students in the sixth form highly value the help and time given to them by their form tutors and other pastoral staff. The school makes appropriate use of a range of people who can support pupils with particular problems, for example the learning mentors, the chaplain and a counsellor from an outside agency. However, it has not been able to establish a link with a health agency. There are good arrangements for the transfer and induction of pupils into the school from over 90 feeder schools across London. A system of target-setting days has been successfully established, when pupils in Years 8, 9 and 11 and their parents meet form tutors to discuss and review progress and steps to improvement. A very good programme to raise achievement is starting in Key Stage 4. This comprises individual interviews with pupils based on their performance data, to be followed by a range of strategies such as mentoring by senior staff, a workshop on learning and revision skills and the use of outside agencies, speakers and volunteers.
54. The special needs co-ordinator has built a strong team, which is having a positive impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Much work has been put into developing systems of support and communication, and paving the way for a fully networked provision that can easily be accessed by subject departments. In order to maintain the pace of improvement, ways must be found to secure the links between the special needs department and subject departments. Initiatives, such as the 'inclusion centre' being planned for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, are positive and forward thinking. In order for these initiatives to make their full impact on pupils with special educational needs, they will need to be part of every teacher's understanding and be fully supported in their practice.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Assessment***

55. Assessment procedures in the sixth form are inconsistent, but satisfactory overall. In most subjects, teachers are able to gain a clear picture of the progress and attainment of students. They use this to support their progress and in some cases adapt the curriculum and the way in which it is taught. Regular testing, using examination questions, takes place in several subjects, such as geography. In some cases A Level grades are given for each piece of assessed work, for example in history, giving students a clear idea of the progress that they are making. Individual tuition is provided to help students improve the standard of their work, and the very good practice of individual tutorials in art has a strong influence on the subsequent work of students. However, the systematic tracking of students is not sufficiently undertaken to ensure that sixth form staff know how well students are performing across all subjects. The school has plans, alongside those of the consortium, to set minimum target

grades, ensure tracking of students is standardised across the consortium and establish a means by which students' targets are monitored.

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

56. The advice, support and guidance provided to students in the sixth form are good. Students are very pleased with the way in which the school helps them to settle into the sixth form and sixth form work. Most of those entering the sixth form from the main school feel that they were given helpful and constructive advice on what they should do after their GCSEs. Those for whom the sixth form is not suitable are given considerable help by staff in finding appropriate placements elsewhere. Students joining the sixth form from other schools feel welcome and appreciate the individual attention they receive. As in the main school, students value the help given them by teachers and they particularly appreciate the high level of personal advice, support and guidance which is provided for them by the head of the sixth form. However, the tutorial support of students is not yet based on a systematic tracking of students' progress and setting targets. The consortium is introducing this later in the term. Students' attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored and followed up, using the school's good systems and also the good arrangements with the other sixth forms in the consortium.
57. The head of sixth form has established a very effective programme to help students decide on what to do and how to achieve their ambitions when they leave. This involves extensive use of outside speakers from universities, businesses and public services as well as past students. Students would like more contact with the external careers officer when making their decisions. Provision of and access to careers resources, such as printed materials and computer software, are unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, most students are successful in proceeding to appropriate continuing education or employment. Even after leaving, they still have access to the advice and support of sixth form staff; for example, one tutor offers a supervisory session to students completing their vocational courses at other colleges.

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

58. Only a small number of parents attended the meeting with inspectors and returned the questionnaire. These parents expressed some mixed views about the school but overall they were positive about what the school provides and achieves for their children. They are particularly pleased with the school's expectations for their children, the progress their children are making and the quality of leadership and teaching. Parents choose the school, which is oversubscribed, because of its Christian ethos, pastoral support and the recommendations of others. Some parents have concerns about the range of activities outside lessons, the amount of homework, and the information they receive about their child's progress. The inspection team found that all these aspects are at least satisfactory and often good. Some parents reported difficulties in making contact with staff by telephone. Inspectors found that the administration staff are low in number and work in cramped conditions but that telephone calls are dealt with appropriately. The telephone numbers of senior pastoral staff, including in the sixth form, are published in the governors' newsletter to parents and voicemail facilities are available. However, the learning mentors, who supervise a group of Year 10 boys with behavioural difficulties, are not easily accessible by telephone. Parents are pleased with the provision in the sixth form, with one parent commenting on '...the fantastic bunch of young people...' who attended a sixth form dinner. Students themselves are very satisfied with the sixth form at the school. They feel that they are treated as responsible young adults and that teachers help them to settle in and fulfil their potential.
59. There are good links with parents, which result in an effective partnership between home and school. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The governors produce a termly newsletter, which is supplemented by more frequent letters from the headteacher, all of which give useful information on school dates, events and policies. Parents are contacted individually when their child is making good progress and also when there are concerns. Important letters are sent directly to parents by paid post rather than pupil post. The new family liaison worker telephones parents when their child is absent or late or has failed to hand in their homework. Parents receive interim reports on their child's progress as well as a full

annual report. The annual reports provide very good information from Years 7 to 10 but, up to now, reports in the examination Years 11, 12 and 13 have not been so detailed and students have not been involved in making a written self-evaluation of their progress. The prospectuses provide clear information about life in the main school and the sixth form, although the sixth form prospectus says little about the arrangements for developing independent study skills. The governors' annual report does not include some of the important information that is required by law.

60. There are strong and effective links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parent partnership evenings are held every term and usually run as a workshop on issues such as 'counselling', the 'Code of Practice', the use of computers and so on. Parents and pupils also work together on career action plans.
61. Parents' involvement with their child's learning and development and with the work of the school is good. There is good attendance at meetings with staff to discuss pupils' progress each year and transition to the next stages of learning at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13. Parents are involved in setting targets with their children in Years 8, 9 and 11. Most parents sign the homework diaries regularly and these are monitored well by staff so that any comments can be picked up. Many parents contribute to an amenity fund, which has been set up to augment the school's resources. Parents were consulted through the school association on the development of the school's mission statement and improvement plan. There are good links in ICT where parents have been involved in the strategic plan and attend classes outside school hours. Parents are invited to a range of school events; a recent very popular one being an international evening when families brought in items of food from the many different communities represented within the school. Some parents contribute their expertise to the sixth form programme which advises students on the options available when they leave.

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

62. The good progress made by the school in the last few years can be attributed largely to the high quality of leadership and management. The clear direction given to the school by the headteacher and senior management, with the strong support of a group of very committed governors, has been instrumental in the rapid improvement that has taken place. Raising standards through high expectations and improving teaching have been at the centre of the school's work. Staff share this commitment and work hard to support plans to improve the school.
63. The management structure has undergone several changes to accommodate the different circumstances and needs of the school. These have been effective, but have relied very heavily on the efforts of the headteacher and deputy head. The rigour with which areas for improvement have been identified, such as the Key Stage 4 curriculum and provision for ICT, is a testament to their work, as is the vigour with which improvements have been pursued. Action has been taken to remove weak teachers and to improve the performance of others. However, the impact of this has yet to be seen in improving GCSE results. The headteacher and deputy head have worked very effectively as a team and the structure has now entered a new phase with the appointment of a second deputy head and the introduction of a larger leadership group. All senior managers have clear roles and responsibilities, focused on identified priorities for school development such as ICT, target-setting and educational inclusion. This structure had only been in place for a few weeks at the time of the inspection - too early to evaluate its effectiveness. Staff involved have a clear picture of what needs to be done and how they intend to go about it; they already work well as a team.
64. There have also been many changes at middle management level, which have served to strengthen the school. Subject and key stage leaders have become increasingly effective and greater responsibility is now being placed upon these staff as their expertise develops. One particular area where more is being expected of middle managers is through the establishment of regular subject reviews to support the monitoring undertaken by senior management and the school's external consultants. The careful monitoring of departmental work by the headteacher and deputy head has enabled areas of weakness to be identified, priorities for action

established, targets set and progress made. One aspect of this work that senior management is seeking to develop, alongside departmental reviews, is the use of examination and other data to evaluate the effectiveness of the school. Some use is currently made of data, for example to analyse examination performance by ethnic group. However, as target-setting becomes more sophisticated senior managers recognise the potential for further work in this area.

65. Governors have played a leading and crucial role in the improvements seen in recent years. A core of committed governors, ably led by the chair, has provided strong leadership and has been successful in moving the school forward. Clear targets have been set for senior management, which have been rigorously reviewed and have served to generate a momentum for change and improvement. Individual governors have a high level of expertise, and they have supported the plans for improving the school through the well-organised committee structure. Challenging questioning has ensured that the implications of action taken by the headteacher have been carefully thought through, and as a result governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors also recognise that their role can now change as the school becomes successful and management stronger.
66. One impediment to further improvement is the high budget deficit, the reduction of which was a key issue at the last inspection, and its impact in particular on the poor state of the school buildings. The appointment of a bursar following the last inspection failed to solve the financial difficulties and indeed only made them worse. With the financial skills of the United Westminster Schools' Trust, strengthening the procedures in the governing body and transferring responsibility to a deputy head, the school has now established a clear picture of its financial position. A repayment plan has been established, although not yet formally agreed with the local authority, that seeks to reduce the deficit over a period of years. Additional funding provided by the trust, although reducing, has been crucial to maintaining some financial stability. Financial planning is now secure and supports the school's priorities for improvement. Governors now monitor the budget rigorously. The principles of best value have not been formally adopted but do underpin much of the school's financial management systems.
67. The decision to appoint high quality teaching staff and to have comparatively small classes has been a significant factor in standards rising. This has, however, been at the expense of refurbishing classrooms, which are in a poor state of repair. The school is well staffed with a good range of experience amongst teachers, all of whom are qualified in their teaching subject or one that is closely allied to it. Good arrangements for the professional development of staff and managing their performance are in place and the programme for the induction of newly qualified teachers is effective. Administrative staff, low in number for a school of this size, work well in the cramped office space. The nature of the site and buildings present many problems. The site is very cramped, with only limited playground space. Games lessons have to take place at fields in south London, requiring a long coach journey for staff and pupils. Many rooms are small and department rooms are scattered around the school. Few departments benefit from offices or storage rooms. Corridors are narrow and present considerable difficulty for the free movement of staff and pupils. Many areas are in a poor state of decoration and repair. Taken as a whole, the accommodation is poor. The one bright area is the new library and learning centre, which is a valuable and well-used resource for pupils. Management and governors recognise the inadequacy of the accommodation and have been successful in securing funding for a new science block, which, once opened, will release rooms presently used for science.
68. Learning resources in the school are satisfactory in most subjects and capitation is generous in some areas. Sufficient up-to-date textbooks are available throughout the school, although several subjects would benefit from an increase in specific resources in the library. History resources do not cater for the whole ability range, drama resources are unsatisfactory and there is a limited number of instruments at Key Stage 4 in music. The number of computers is below average for a school of this size making it difficult for subject teachers to find appropriate times in computer rooms, which are in regular use by the ICT department. Resources for learning for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient age-appropriate reading books for reference and leisure reading and there is only

one computer available to pupils in the special needs department. The possibility is being explored of bringing commercial software on stream that will support literacy and numeracy special needs.

69. The school has come a considerable distance under the astute leadership of the headteacher and governors. As a new period of the school's development begins challenges remain, but the school is well placed to secure the improvements in standards that it is seeking.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

70. Many aspects of the leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There is a commitment to improve the provision that is shared by subject staff, school management and the sixth form team. The revival of the consortium in recent years has been supported by the ever-closer liaison of staff from the three schools. There is a commitment from senior management and governors to explore further the possibilities of the consortium for providing a wide range of opportunities for all students. The provision of sixth form courses is managed well by subject departments and the key stage leader. Priorities for development have been identified for individual subjects in addition to the overall provision. Some priorities, such as in art, have been identified following an analysis of examination results, while the monitoring of the performance of students in geography has also highlighted areas for development. Planning for improvement is now also taking place effectively through the consortium, with priorities for development established following a recent inspection of post-16 education in Westminster. These priorities are now being turned into action within the school. One example is that the school has not previously had a rigorous process of target-setting and has not used examination data consistently to establish the effectiveness of teaching and the impact of the work of sixth form staff. Plans are now in place to tackle these matters, with staff given clear responsibility for putting procedures into place.

### ***Resources***

71. Staff teaching sixth form courses are well qualified. They have received suitable training to keep updated with changes to examination syllabuses. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory but there is one major shortcoming. Students do not have sufficient access to ICT either in lessons or to support their independent study and research. The facilities of the learning resource centre are used regularly, but the demand for the computers often outstrips their availability and sixth form students also report that the network was out of action for a considerable period of time last year. Students report that they have books for all subjects, many of them being recently purchased by the school to meet the increased demand for places on some courses. The large size of some groups presents difficulties because of inadequacies in many areas of the accommodation. Classes in chemistry, for example, are too large for the laboratory limiting the possibility for students to perform experiments individually. Study facilities in the sixth form block and the sixth form social area are also inadequate.

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

72. To raise standards and build on the good progress made in recent years, the school should:
- (1) Ensure not only that all National Curriculum requirements for teaching ICT skills are met but also that requirements in other subjects for access to ICT are fulfilled.\* (paragraphs 9, 31, 68 and 133-137)
  - (2) Broaden the Key Stage 4 curriculum to include more work-related elements and a more coherent careers education programme. (paragraphs 36 and 49)
  - (3) Ensure that departments are fully involved (i) in identifying how they can support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and (ii) in providing teaching focused on meeting their individual needs. (paragraphs 24, 33 and 54)

- (4) Prepare and agree a plan for the reduction of the budget deficit.\* (paragraph 66)
- (5) Prepare and implement a plan for the redecoration and refurbishment of the accommodation, paying particular attention to classrooms, corridors and other common areas. (paragraph 67)

### **Sixth form**

73. To improve provision for sixth form students and raise standards, the school should:
- (1) Improve access to ICT for all students and in particular for those studying vocational courses. (paragraphs 71, 173 and 175)
  - (2) Broaden the subjects available to include more vocational courses that can lead directly from Key Stage 4.\* (paragraph 44)
  - (3) Improve target-setting as a means of raising standards and increase the analysis of examination data to evaluate the effectiveness of sixth form provision.\* (paragraphs 11, 56 and 70)
  - (4) Improve the study and social areas for sixth form students. (paragraph 71)

\* These items have already been identified as priorities, either in the school development plan or the sixth form consortium development plan.

## THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

74. All pupils who have English as an additional language are well integrated into the mainstream classes and take full part in the activities that the school provides. They are assessed on entry to the school in Year 7 or when they join during the year and the identification of those needing additional support is made and recorded in a register. In addition, there is regular updating of the register after assessments are made in January and May to ascertain pupils' progress and to identify any areas of particular concern. Pupils with English as an additional language who also have special educational needs are supported mainly through the learning support team as there is as yet no effective liaison between the teachers of English as an additional language and those who work with pupils with special needs.
75. A senior member of the staff has been recently appointed to oversee and provide an effective management of this crucial area of learning and for improving liaison with parents, the local community and the local authority. There are two teachers, one full time and the other part time, who provide language support. They focus on pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Regrettably, the full-time teacher was not in school as a result of an accident and, therefore, only a few lessons were observed. However, discussions were held with a senior member of staff and the other teacher to establish the level of support available and its impact on learning.
76. There are no withdrawals from lessons and in-class support is provided mainly in Years 7 and 8 for those who are at early stages of learning English. There are fewer than fifty pupils receiving such help. There is no joint planning with the subject teachers. During the inspection, no effective partnership teaching with subject teachers was observed in classes. This practice could benefit improving the pupils' skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson on fiction reviews taken in the school library, the specialist teacher for English as an additional language concentrated on giving help to five pupils individually in reading and understanding difficult words and phrases. Those five pupils were sitting on different tables and therefore, they did not get the full benefit of a whole lesson of additional support from the specialist teacher. The English teacher worked with the whole class as usual. In another lesson in Year 10, the support teacher sat between the two pupils with English as an additional language and enabled them to access the tasks well and extend their learning through a lot of encouragement, good use of questioning, opportunities for speaking and listening and developing dictionary skills.
77. Occasionally, teachers of English as an additional language get a copy of the lesson plan from the subject teacher and on the basis of that, they plan their teaching and resources. However, such provision is limited and is not consistent throughout the school. It is dependent upon the interests of individual teachers and the departments and the availability of teachers of English as an additional language.
78. Most pupils with English as an additional language have acquired sufficient language skills to function well and make good progress in all subjects. Subject teachers have good strategies for meeting the general needs of these students. They also seek support for those who are at early stages of learning English. However, in Year 13, concern was expressed that some students struggle with understanding examination questions in mathematics because of language difficulties. The school is considering assessing such students in the sixth form with a view to providing support. The severity of need and the quality of support provided throughout the school impacts on the quality and pace of pupils' learning. Teachers are generally sympathetic to the needs of pupils, but their first language is rarely used to support their learning. There is little recognition or celebration of pupils' first languages so much so that some pupils associate English language support with special needs and, therefore, are reluctant to receive it.
79. There are no bilingual assistants employed in the school nor are there enough high quality, culturally relevant aids and other learning resources to extend pupils' learning and reinforce their self-esteem.

80. There are some steps that the school should take to improve the provision for pupils with English as an additional language. Co-ordination and planning across all departments should be strengthened. Teaching and learning support for identified pupils, and particularly for the new arrivals, needs increasing to enable them to have full access to the whole curriculum. Finally the school could valuably develop a more inclusive environment in which diversity of first languages and cultures is recognised and celebrated to enable pupils to develop their self-esteem.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	136
	Sixth form	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		55

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	2	33	52	43	6	0	0
Percentage	2	24	38	32	4	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	1	11	17	10	0	0	0
Percentage	3	28	44	26	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	633	115
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	112	0

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	39	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	174	1

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	455

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	7.7

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	125	0	125

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	96	101	81
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	96	101	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (72)	81 (66)	65 (60)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (36)	52 (35)	35 (22)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	86	95	100
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	86	95	100
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (76)	76 (70)	80 (42)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (37)	46 (34)	46 (29)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	119	0	119

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	51	107	114
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	51	107	114
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	43 (38)	90 (90)	96 (92)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33
	National	38.4

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	46	5	51

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	13.8	10.8	13.5	3.7	n/a	3.7
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	108
Black – African heritage	172
Black – other	6
Indian	24
Pakistani	24
Bangladeshi	30
Chinese	15
White	246
Any other minority ethnic group	123

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	48.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.5

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

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	307

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.3
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	18.54
Key Stage 4	17.14

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	29.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	4	0
Black – African heritage	14	1
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	8	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2,762,693
Total expenditure	2,740,050
Expenditure per pupil	3,563
Balance brought forward from previous year	-225,140
Balance carried forward to next year	-202,497

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	757
Number of questionnaires returned	95

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	40	7	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	39	51	2	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	48	13	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	40	15	1	6
The teaching is good.	32	56	5	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	43	16	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	40	9	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	49	13	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	47	42	3	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	41	7	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	27	20	2	15

### Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents of younger pupils are concerned that their children are regularly asked for money by older boys, and that the school staff seemed unaware of this problem.

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- In Key Stage 3, standards are above national expectations, and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Teaching is good, with teachers sharing their high expectations with their pupils.
- Pupils learn well and have good self-knowledge of their learning.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

#### Areas for improvement

- There needs to be closer liaison with staff supporting pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Access to reading for pleasure should be improved.

81. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were above average and well above average when compared with similar schools. While full results with national comparisons have not at the time of writing been published, the picture is broadly similar for 2001. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, 67 per cent of pupils attained grades A\*-C in English Language, and 44 per cent in English Literature. The national averages for these are 56 and 61 per cent respectively. In 2001, 47 per cent of pupils gained A\*-C in English Language, and 56 per cent in English Literature.
82. The inspection shows that attainment is above average in Key Stage 3, and average in Key Stage 4. There has been a difference in the prior attainment levels of different cohorts of pupils, and teaching, which has progressively been more participative, has had greater influence in beginning to establish greater independence of learning skills among pupils in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4.
83. The first of the three elements of English, speaking and listening, is good in Key Stage 3. Pupils listen to each other and their teachers carefully, respectfully and often analytically. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were observed conducting mock interviews with one as the character Caliban and the other as the interviewer, and in that these were improvisations, very well developed speaking and listening skills were shown. By Year 9, pupils have good levels of attainment, and individuals in the lowest set were seen giving talks about their reading to the whole class. They had prepared well, spoke with confidence, and made good contact with their audience. The teacher had given them clear targets according to the different levels of the National Curriculum, and all who participated improved their attainment to a point above average expectations, largely because they understood their objectives. In Key Stage 4, pupils express themselves carefully, but are less at ease with the demands of speaking in a formal context. Pupils in a Year 10 group found it difficult to express themselves fluently, although one pupil talked confidently about an author's use of metaphor. A top Year 11 group showed only average understanding of what is necessary for good expression. Although they listened analytically, their responses were not well controlled: a hero was described as "a person who does good stuff", and, when asked what a tyrant was, only one word answer - "killer" - was provided. In another Year 11 group, however, there was good, lively and mature discussion of poetry. All in all, this leads to a conclusion that speaking and listening in Key Stage 4 is no more than average.
84. In the second element of English, reading is good in Key Stage 3, with pupils showing good understanding of what they read in class. The Year 7 group studying a version of *The Tempest* showed a very sensitive perception of Caliban's problems, and of some of the main issues of the play. In a top set in Year 9, *Animal Farm* and its political implications were discussed intelligently and knowledgeably, with pupils showing very good understanding of the

author's intentions and methods. Standards in reading aloud are variable; however, there is not an established culture of performance. While some reading aloud is fluent and accurate, much is flat and lacking in expression. This is also true in Key Stage 4, where attainment overall is in line with the average. Pupils show good knowledge of the texts studied and satisfactory powers of response and analysis. In Year 11 a set of lower-attaining pupils were showing good understanding of mood in poetry, constructing simple graphs to show how it changes. In a set of higher-attaining pupils, however, the understanding of *Macbeth* was not well developed, with pupils preferring to observe the obvious and to rely on their teacher to take them further.

85. Some lively examples of the third element of English, writing, were seen from pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Higher-attaining pupils produced work which is, by the end of the key stage, accurate technically and interesting to read. Some carefully composed work was seen in Year 9, where pupils had produced their own version of Farmer Jones' speech in reply to Old Major in *Animal Farm*. These showed an often witty blend of pompousness and irony. Pupils who attain at an average level for the school also produce some carefully worded and imaginative material, like an entertaining piece on *How to trap a Ghost* in Year 8. Even those whose writing is not so skilled produce well-sequenced narratives and draw from a reserve of vocabulary which is in line with what might be expected of pupils of these ages, so that the overall judgement on writing is that it is above average for Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, writing overall is judged as average. Some of the higher-attainers are writing very competently, producing some accurately written accounts and summaries of parts of books they read. There is a good variety of sentence structure, and the work is often quite copious, without being very exciting - although some have produced spells based on those of Macbeth's witches which were amusing, and showed a good command of rhyme and metre. Average levels of attainment are recorded by the majority, who write correctly and carefully, but rather obviously. There are good attempts to find the right word, but from a store of vocabulary which is not extensive. With some of the pupils, however, there are too many technical inaccuracies, such as mis-spellings, or frequent misuse of apostrophes. With lower-attainers there are similar and more inaccuracies, and writing tends to be as pupils speak, without much consideration of purpose or audience.
86. The quality of pupils' learning is good, as a result of their own motivation and of the good teaching they receive. The teachers' approaches are collaborative, and engage pupils' commitment. These accompany high expectations, which are communicated to pupils through the sharing of objectives at the beginning of every lesson, and a review of progress towards them at the end. These expectations are also implicit in teachers' questioning techniques, which show clearly what is required without giving easy answers, thus enhancing learning and driving progress. Pupils respond very well, eagerly, readily and analytically in Key Stage 3, and at least after consideration in Key Stage 4. The skills of independent learning, however, are underdeveloped, particularly in Years 10 and 11. There is no doubt that pupils enjoy English, and this increases their capacity to learn. Their behaviour, while sometimes boisterous and excited, is usually at least good and, in response to the good teaching, they work hard and make good progress in Key Stage 3 and sound progress in Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make progress in parallel with their peers. Individuals and small groups are well supported when learning support teachers or assistants are provided.
87. Teaching was good overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers have very good class control, and they plan so well and the lessons are so well structured that pupils have little chance to go off the task. They try to promote and celebrate success, in the displays of work on classroom walls or in the encouraging way in which they talk to classes or individuals. The sharing of objectives with classes has already been mentioned as a characteristic of the good teaching: it is recognised that this is ready to go further in the setting of continuously revised targets for individuals. Marking is good, with some analysis and target-setting, although no examples were seen of referring back to check whether advice had been taken. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and they like and know their pupils well, setting appropriate work for their differing levels of attainment. They communicate their plans to learning support teachers and assistants, though there is little joint planning, nor any routine involvement in the lessons except supporting specific pupils. Formal assessment of progress

in all three elements of English is regular, detailed and thorough, and the analysis of results is well used in judging past performance and planning future provision. The department seeks to broaden and enrich pupils' experience, as for example, through a very enjoyable visit from writers from the Africa Centre observed during the inspection.

88. The subject is very well led and managed. There is a clear vision and perception of the priorities for the subject and the school. The subject team are well integrated and committed to the continuous improvement of standards. The library is a very pleasant, recently remodelled space, used mainly by sixth formers for quiet work or whole classes for a regular library lesson. The stock, however, particularly in fiction, is limited. This is to some extent mitigated by book boxes in English classrooms, but this is not an extensive resource, and does not make a wide range of books for leisure reading readily available.

## DRAMA

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

### Strengths

- There are high standards of attainment in both key stages.
- Students are well motivated and achieve well.
- Teaching is very good, with high expectations of attainment and behaviour.
- The subject is very well managed.
- It provides good support for the development of literacy - particularly speaking and listening - throughout the school.

### Areas for improvement

- There is a need for improved liaison with the English department.
- The teaching environment needs attention, and resources need enhancement.

89. Standards in drama are at least in line with national expectations by the age of 14, and in some aspects of their work individual pupils are attaining above expectations. In the GCSE examination for 1999, 67 per cent, and in 2001, 75 per cent of pupils attained grades A-C. (No results were recorded for 2000). These results compare well with national averages for this subject, which tends to have high rates of success because, although pupils have to develop the associated skills with the subject, there is not the body of knowledge to be retained over time, which is a feature of many other subjects.

90. By the age of 14, pupils show good levels of concentration and involvement in their work. They collaborate in their groups in a mature manner and, in a Year 8 class, were observed producing very well structured improvisations with good understanding of a variety of devices. They showed good audience awareness and their desire to amuse was often very successful. In Year 9, pupils showed that they had good knowledge of drama conventions, and their presentations communicated messages (about the campaign for racial equality in the stand made by Rosa Parks in the U.S.) which were clearly demonstrated.

91. In the GCSE classes made available in the Key Stage 4 options scheme, attainment is good. In the presentations on the subject of domestic violence, which were observed in Year 10, pupils showed good confidence, and took risks in performance which were above what might be expected at this stage. In Year 11, among other good presentations, one performance about the effect of life in prison was outstanding in its blend of structure, of mood, of theatrical ploys and of rhythmic speech devices.

92. Pupils' learning and progress in drama are of good quality. They approach the subject with good motivation, which is met with a shared enthusiasm by their teacher, who provides them with a framework and objectives which show them the way to go and the targets towards which they should work. In spite of their excitement in drama, they almost always work well, and enjoy the process.

93. Teaching is always at least good, usually very good, and sometimes excellent. There are high expectations of both attainment and behaviour. Lesson objectives and activities are made clear to pupils in advance, and their progress towards objectives is clearly evaluated at the ends of lessons, usually (although not always) in collaboration with pupils.

94. The subject is very well managed by a well-qualified and enthusiastic subject leader, who is also the only teacher. There is a thorough and well-structured programme of study in Key Stage 3, supplemented by the Trinity Drama Examinations. In Key Stage 4, the GCSE syllabus is followed. There is good extra-curricular provision in rehearsal clubs for Key Stage 3 and a coursework club for Key Stage 4, as well as whole-school productions, like *Oliver* last year, in which about 60 pupils took part.
95. Resources for drama are satisfactory. The drama studio is a useful space, which has been improved by lively displays. It is however, not carpeted; the floor is dirty and pupils are unwilling fully to use it in performance. The environment is not well maintained: windows are broken and dirty, and walls need redecoration. There is also a need to enhance resource provision in terms of properties, costumes and masks.
96. Drama makes a strong contribution to pupils' social and moral education, through the collaborative work on controversial topics which is undertaken. It also contributes very well to pupils' standards of literacy, reinforcing speaking and listening as an element of English. There is, however, insufficient liaison between the departments of English and drama to give this shared aspect of the curriculum its full possible impact upon pupils' learning.

## MATHEMATICS

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

Comparisons with national figures indicate a rise over time and build upon students' results at GCSE level. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have good relationships with their pupils: this encourages them to work hard.

### Strengths

- The department secures very good results in public examinations at Key Stage 3 and GCSE.
- Teachers establish good and fruitful relationships with pupils.
- Teachers plan lessons well, share objectives and provide relevant material for all pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The use of a wider range of teaching strategies.
- More use of constructive comments when marking pupils' work.
- Numeracy across the whole curriculum.

97. Since the last inspection, standards have risen to levels above the national average at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE. From work seen in books, lessons and from discussions overall standards are above those expected of pupils at the age of 14. There has been a gradual rise in attainment over recent years and standards seen are slightly higher than current test results. Standards for pupils at the age of 16 are good but there is the capacity to improve further and build upon the good levels of achievement at the age of 14. The most able pupils are extended well at Key Stage 4 and the very highest-attaining pupils take their GCSE examination early in Year 10. In the past these pupils have studied GCSE statistics in Year 11 and gained good grades. The current Year 11 pupils who sat GCSE in 2001 are studying part of the A Level course offered to students in the sixth form.
98. Teaching overall is good at both key stages. A majority of lessons seen were satisfactory or, in many cases, good and only two lessons were judged unsatisfactory. Because of well-planned lessons, pupils now achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The impact of this is in the gradual rise in standards with pupils gaining better results than might be expected. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to prepare lessons well. The better lessons started well with lesson objectives outlined to the pupils; they then contained clear teacher exposition illustrated by well-chosen examples. This enabled pupils to attempt subsequent problems with confidence and hence make good gains in knowledge and understanding. The work for the pupils was well matched to their ability and in several

instances there was different work for pupils of different abilities in the classroom. Although the unsatisfactory lessons were planned effectively they needed more challenge. Better lessons ended with a summary of what had been achieved during the lesson. If appropriate there were also indications of what the progression was going to be during the next lesson. The division of lessons into short manageable sections encouraged pupils to work at a good pace by giving tasks a short time limit and adhering to it. Better lessons were also tempered with a degree of humour. This sustained a good working atmosphere and firm control without being overbearing and pupils responded well to this. It also created an atmosphere in which pupils could give solutions to problems to the whole class without embarrassment. Pupils also felt that they could ask their teacher for help and receive extra assistance when needed.

99. The good teaching enabled the pupils at both key stages to make good progress. Pupils in Year 7 are taught in their tutor groups. This means that there is a wide range of abilities in each class. Different or extension work is used to enable all pupils to access the curriculum. The presence of learning support assistants in many classes is of great help to the lower-attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 7 build upon the work covered at Key Stage 2. There is some review before progressing to new work because the pupils come from a large number of primary schools. Their number skills are consolidated and the work for the year covers all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. In Year 8, the higher-attaining pupils confidently use indices and powers when working with numbers and can factorise and expand brackets when using algebra. In Year 9, this has developed into quadratic expressions and the solution of involved equations. From work seen the higher-attaining pupils work securely at a standard above the level expected for pupils at the age of 14. The lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, also make good progress. This good progress is reflected in the very good results in the national tests for pupils at the age of 14. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 build upon their successes of earlier years and make good progress with some taking their GCSE examination early. These pupils display good algebraic skills and their reasoning is further enhanced using and applying their mathematics to the solution of problems and investigations. Average and lower-attaining pupils are encouraged to do their very best and this is reflected in the high proportion of pupils who take the intermediate level examination at GCSE and obtain good grades. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is supported well in lessons, and some pupils receive specialist support.
100. The department is well led. A comprehensive scheme of work has been developed to continue the improvement in examination results. It includes regular opportunities for assessment, and investigational tasks are also included. Each assessment is followed by constructive comments for improvement and an indication of the level of work for each pupil. There is also a departmental review after each assessment to consider possible changes to teaching so that improvements can be made. Assessment is used to group pupils by ability so that they can work at a level that best suits their ability. The accommodation for the department is poor. There is a lack of computer facilities for use in classrooms and the access to central facilities is limited. There is a sound development plan in place that is designed to continue the improvement in results.
101. The teaching rooms are poorly decorated and too small to enable teachers to use a wide range of teaching strategies in the classroom. There is no central office to provide a focus for the department and to safely store GCSE coursework. The current office is very small and has to act as a store for books and equipment. It is also away from the main teaching area. The rooms are poorly decorated and there is a subsequent lowering of morale that reduces the quality of teaching. One teaching room is in need of curtains as bright sunlight affects the teaching quality of many lessons.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**, with some good features.

### Strengths

- Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about their subjects.
- Results in Key Stage 3 tests are above national averages.
- The curriculum allows all pupils access to science courses at a suitable level.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are usually good.
- Support for learning is generally good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class.

### Areas for improvement

- The progress pupils make on average in Key Stage 4 is less than might be expected.
- Monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment.
- There is a need for some professional development in order to increase the range of teaching and learning styles in use.
- The use of ICT in lessons.
- The appearance of some of the accommodation; display is unsatisfactory in many areas

102. Standards in science are satisfactory overall. Progress is being made by pupils across both key stages but is not quite as good as might be expected given their prior attainment.
103. The Key Stage 3 test results have shown a steady improvement over the past three years and are above the national average. Standards of work examined in the sample of work and in lessons were average overall, although some work reached a higher standard than this. For example, some pupils in a lower Year 8 set were able to relate the rate of digestion of sugars and starches to the relative size of the molecules. Furthermore, some pupils in Year 9 could give a reasoned explanation for observed differences in heat absorption in terms of the colour of the absorber and could identify some real life situations in which this is important. Standards of work seen were broadly similar across all aspects of science, although the opportunities to show competence in investigative work were more limited.
104. Results in the GCSE examinations in Key Stage 4 have been around the national average overall in recent years, with results for the separate sciences being higher than the results for double award science. This is due in some part to the fact that the higher-attaining pupils tend to opt for separate sciences in preference to the double award course. Although standards are average overall, there are differences between individual subjects with physics being above average, chemistry around average and biology below average on this year's results. The standards seen in lessons in Key Stage 4 were satisfactory overall and were above average in a quarter. Pupils in Year 10, for example, showed a good understanding of ionic bonding and were able to explain some observed effects in terms of bonding. In another Year 10 class pupils demonstrated a good understanding of atomic structure and were able to raise interesting questions on the basis of their previous knowledge.
105. Teaching of science in Years 10 and 11 is usually satisfactory and is good in some classes, although a relatively high proportion was unsatisfactory. The best teaching is characterised by enthusiasm and good knowledge of the subject from teachers who are careful to match the methods and demands of the subject matter to the pupils being taught. In these lessons behaviour is well managed and lessons are conducted at a good pace and at a level which challenges pupils to achieve high standards. For example, in one lesson on the GNVQ science course, pupils with special educational needs were required to carry out experimental work to determine the best conditions in which to grow tomato plants. All were able to satisfactorily set up experiments and some could predict the effect of changing the temperature or size of the sample on evaporation rates. Skilful teaching encouraged them to behave well and co-operate with each other in carrying out practical work. In the less effective lessons, teaching lacks pace and often relies on mundane approaches with an excess of note-giving and over-reliance on uncritical use of published schemes. Work in these lessons is sometimes set at a challenging level but insufficient progress is expected from pupils, leading

to wasted time and some unsatisfactory behaviour, which is inadequately managed. The opportunities for pupils to use ICT within science lessons are currently limited and this is an area in need of further development. The department has eight lap-top computers available for use in the laboratory but the hardware associated with these, for example data-logging equipment, is in need of upgrading.

106. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in science and the support provided for these pupils in class is good. Support for learning is generally good in the department. Helpful study guides have been produced, for example for investigative work, and staff are available after school to help pupils with difficulties. A policy for identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils has been written and is in the early stages of being implemented. The development of literacy and numeracy within science lessons is good, with numerous opportunities for calculation and graphical work, as well as an insistence from staff on the use of correct scientific vocabulary and nomenclature. This helps to promote good learning.
107. A good system for assessing pupil performance and setting targets has recently been devised and is in the process of being implemented. The departmental handbook contains an appropriate marking and assessment policy but it is not followed consistently by all staff. In particular there is often a reliance on end of unit tests to assess pupils' progress, with not enough attention being paid in some classes to informal assessment within lessons. The use of assessment information within the department is, however, improving and is satisfactory overall.
108. Overall, the science department is improving in effectiveness. Management of the science department is another area where improvement has occurred and is satisfactory overall. There is now an appropriate staffing structure with different members of the department having clear, delegated responsibilities. The departmental development plan sets out clear and appropriate priorities. The head of department communicates enthusiasm for the subject and is beginning to establish a clear educational direction for the department. There is now a need to ensure that effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan takes place. There is a particular need to devise effective arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that pupils make in lessons.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- The improvement in standards of work, resulting from good planning and teaching.
- The well-informed, strong and enthusiastic leadership of the department.
- The management of change that has enabled the department to record significant gains in recent GCSE examination results.
- The implementation of the new curriculum.

### Areas for improvement

- Resources for learning.
- Accommodation and storage.
- The use of computers to develop artwork and research.
- The celebration of pupils' work in high quality displays around the school.

109. Standards in work and lessons seen during the inspection are good overall. Pupils arrive at the school with varied and generally limited experience of art, and attainment is below average. They make good progress in their first three years and, by the end of Year 9, standards are average and pupils achieve well in lessons. The numbers opting for the GCSE examination course are rising steadily, as standards of work are rising. Too few pupils took the GCSE examination in 2000 to make fair comparisons with national averages, but the results and the provisional figures for 2001 indicate an upward trend that is now close to the national

average. The quality of teaching is good and often very good, and this has driven standards upwards over the past two years. The department is strongly led and teachers work well together, indicating a good capacity for the further improvement that the teacher assessments and estimated grades suggest.

110. In work seen during the inspection at Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is at an average level. Sketchbooks show very good development of drawing skills with higher-attaining pupils showing an excellent control of line, tone and texture in observational drawings. Painting skills are less well developed and many pupils lack confidence in mixing and applying colours to their work. They know the primary and secondary colours and are able to blend them and control hues and tones effectively in watercolours. Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress in lessons as other pupils. Lower-attaining pupils lack the fine motor skills to produce a 'hard edge' in their paintings and the results of their colour blending lack fluency. The paints used by the department are difficult to mix and many pupils are frustrated in their attempts, ending up with messy results. In work seen during the inspection at Key Stage 4, the level of attainment is average, although several pupils are working at above average levels and are anticipating good A\*-C results in 2002. Observational studies are a strength and pupils have a good sense of form and space, controlling tone expertly to convey depth in their drawings. They study the work of Picasso and use the analytical cubist style to break up and re-compose the images they draw. In a well-planned study of the work of Gaudi, pupils drew his unusual architecture and selected patterns to prepare collage studies, before coiling clay forms influenced by his chimney pots. They learned to join clay carefully and achieved a good standard of finish to their work, building on skills developed in earlier lessons of clay modelling.
111. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and pupils generally respond well. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are particularly well motivated and put much effort into their work. They enjoy lessons and most concentrate well on the planned tasks. Pupils in Year 9 sometimes hold up the progress of a lesson by their noisy and challenging behaviour. On occasion, when teaching is no more than satisfactory, the lesson is delayed as the teacher deals with unsatisfactory behaviour that has started before pupils enter the room. Teachers are determined to deal with the boisterous behaviour effectively, but as yet they do not have sufficient strategies for managing it in a positive and fully effective way. There is no technician support in ceramics lessons, where preparation and clearing away are particularly time-consuming. In the majority of lessons throughout the school, teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding of the subject to challenge pupils and guide them in their work. They make good use of the unsatisfactory accommodation and resources to ensure that pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that leads them towards success in the GCSE examinations. The excellent relationships they have with the majority of classes ensure that pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to make good progress in them. Lack of forethought in the planning and preparation for some lessons leads to an untidy start and a rushed finish, slowing the pace of the lesson down. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of standards and these are effectively raising the level of attainment in the department. It is an improving department.
112. The department is led with a very clear sense of direction that is frustrated by the lack of money available to improve resources and accommodation. The department is keen to introduce textile art and to improve the location and use of computers, to enable pupils to digitise and animate their work. This will be done without lowering the very high standard of drawing that is a strength of the department. The display of pupils' work in the art rooms is vibrant and does much to improve the shabby decoration. There are very few displays of work in public areas, such as the dismal corridors. The unframed display in the foyer to the hall is very poor and does not reflect the standards aimed at by the school. It fails to celebrate the very good artwork of pupils that is displayed and gives a poor impression of the school to parents and visitors.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

#### Strengths

- Effective management.
- Some good teaching.
- Good analysis of assessment results.

#### Areas for improvement

- The schemes of work and the frequency of assessment.
- The range of materials used.
- The use of ICT to help presentation.
- Accommodation, including health and safety.

113. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has improved recently so that it is now near to the national average. GCSE results for all technology subjects combined were very low in 2000. They were also very low when compared with other subjects in the school. Results for resistant materials and for graphics products are both very low. However, early indications are that the most recent results for GCSE electronic products have improved in 2001.
114. Lesson observation and an analysis of pupils' work show that attainment during Years 7 and 8 is near to the national expectation. During Year 9 attainment is below expectations generally, although some pupils' work is good. Pupils' notebooks are generally well respected and pupils have pride in the presentation of their work. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' attainment in lessons was in line with expectations, although over a longer period notebooks are below average due to work not reflecting the complete design process and not being completed. Coursework develops from these ideas but in many cases presentation is below average, partly due to the lack of use of ICT. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well in their ability group due to good teaching and extra help from classroom assistants. Those with English as an additional language are fully included in classes and gain help from their peers so they make effective progress.
115. All observed teaching was satisfactory or better in the Years 7 to 11. More than half was good or very good. In line with this, most learning was good. Teachers have a wide knowledge and understanding of technology although the design process needs to be taught more fully. Literacy is given emphasis and cutting lists encourages numeracy. ICT is not given enough prominence, mainly due to its lack of availability. The pupils do not therefore associate the importance of ICT for improving communication and presentation. Planning is generally adequate and sometimes very good but some lessons would benefit from having a more distinct beginning, middle and end. This could improve pace during lessons and provide additional motivation, thus increasing learning. Similarly, more frequent assessment and the regular use of National Curriculum levels would inform the pupils of their progress and give clearer targets for improvement.
116. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 generally show enthusiasm and have positive attitudes to their work. Teachers work hard on pupil management but find that some Year 9 and Year 10 classes do not learn so effectively because the behaviour of a minority is unsatisfactory. This directly affects the variety of possible teaching strategies. Some of the work could be more directed towards the project in hand so that the pupils have a clearer vision of the final outcome. More able students are quickly identified and given additional encouragement. This policy is effective in ultimately gaining some higher examination grades. Social and moral considerations are addressed where many manufactured items are being made for other people with the aim of improving their quality of life. The use of a router greatly improved the quality of picture frames in a Year 12 class. The use of questionnaires encourages students to consider the views of others in addition to their own. Teachers encourage the sharing of ideas but could place more importance on evaluation. They could also make more efficient use of the technician provision for the department.
117. Most students in Years 10 and 11 are able to choose a technology option but a few follow a science course instead. The range of materials used is too limited. Wood is frequently used but metal, plastic, textiles and food are not often made available. ICT is not readily accessible in the department and is therefore not sufficiently used in the production of students'

coursework. These limitations prevent the requirements of the National Curriculum from being met. Pupils with special needs are grouped together in Years 7, 8 and 9 where they are taught by the head of department and benefit from classroom learning support assistants.

118. A comprehensive assessment system has been designed. This provides data from coursework and examinations, enabling the progress of different classes and individual pupils to be monitored effectively. Curriculum planning is modified by this assessment information but could be more firmly based on national curriculum requirements.
119. The department is effectively led by a co-ordinator who has a clear educational direction for the subject. Schemes of work are being developed but need a more coherent structure. Each member of the department has taken responsibility for developing a specific subject area. Staffing is now more stable so that learning has better continuity and progression. Targets have been identified and steps have been taken to achieve the aims but there is a need to refine those that are achievable within the department. Learning resources in terms of tools and machinery have been improved considerably in recent months, but some machinery has not been installed and cannot therefore be used. Dust removal is not satisfactory.
120. Accommodation is very poor due to the shape and size of the rooms, the lack of natural lighting and the poor state of decoration and walls. Together with occasional flooding, these factors present a poor image for the subject and create serious teaching difficulties.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Standards of attainment overall are above average.
- Teaching is good, leading to a good standard of learning.
- Assessment of pupils' work is good, giving guidance on how to improve.

### Areas for improvement

- Opportunities are missed to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the subject.
- ICT is not used well enough as a tool for teaching and learning.
- Very poor accommodation limits the use of resources in some groups.

121. Standards overall are above average by the end of Year 9. Pupils have learned good mapwork skills. They read and write well and have learned to investigate, record and explain various geographical processes such as coastal erosion and economic development. Achievement is good throughout Years 7 to 9 for all levels of attainment. Pupils learn well when their work is challenging and interesting, as in two Year 7 lessons combining mapwork and data handling to compare methods and timing of journeys to school. This enabled good development of skills as well as achievement of new background knowledge about London. Learning is less good when work is limited to textbooks and worksheets, as in a Year 8 lesson studying the management of coral reefs.
122. GCSE results for grades A\* to C were below the national results for boys in 2000 and fell for the years 1999 and 2000. This fall can be partly attributed to changes in examination entry policy whereby the Certificate of Achievement for lower-attaining pupils was abandoned and all were entered for GCSE, and partly to a long period of staff absence, which resulted in groups being taught by supply teachers. Results were in line with results for other subjects in the school. Results in 2001 show an improvement. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* to G has risen steadily for the last 3 years and in 2001 all pupils gained a pass grade.
123. The standard of Year 10 and 11 work in lessons and in samples of work is above average. Pupils achieve well because of teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations, and the good organisation of lessons. For example, in a very good Year 11 lesson about economic development in South East Asia the teacher's lively delivery and detailed knowledge of the

topic gave pupils the confidence to hypothesise independently about changes from primary to tertiary economies. Weaker lessons failed to interest pupils because the work held no challenge; for example, in a Year 10 lesson about river drainage basins where the theory held no links to pupils' own experience.

124. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers know who they are and give additional help, but very little work is provided specially suited to their needs. The progress of pupils whose first language is not English was not seen to be affected by their level of language acquisition. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds are well integrated and all achieve equally well. Standards of literacy are high among all levels of attainment. Numeracy skills are used when needed, as in converting data into graphs. There is little evidence of the organised use of ICT in pupils' work, although some in Year 11 have used it effectively to present their coursework.
125. Overall, the quality of teaching in all year groups is good, which results in good learning for most pupils. All lessons were satisfactory or better and over one-third of lessons were very good. Teachers have a wealth of background knowledge and experience, which they use well to extend the information in textbooks. Skilled questioning promotes learning by linking new information to pupils' own background knowledge. For example, in a Year 9 lesson about development of the natural resources of the Amazon, pupils were able to dispute the claim made in a video that there could be a newly-developed community with no violence. This deepened their understanding of the lives of the iron ore miners. Most pupils are well motivated and interested in their work, which is a tribute to the standard of teaching and contributes to good learning.
126. Management suffers from having two senior members of staff on the team whose wider duties make it difficult for them to contribute to the development of the subject. The department is improving on a number of fronts. New schemes of work are in place, although these do not include reference to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Assessment procedures are good and individual pupil progress can be tracked. In Years 10 and 11, targets are set through individual tutorials. Most lessons are challenging, although there is still a limited range of resources and activities, partly because of the constraints of the accommodation. Some rooms are too small for the groups that use them and rooms are isolated from each other, which means that teachers have to carry books and equipment around and this sometimes restricts the quality of resources used. Overall this is an improving department.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Orderly and interesting lessons.
- The range of extra-curricular activities.
- Examination results in 2001.

### Areas for improvement

- Teaching methods.
- Greater consideration of how pupils learn.
- Departmental development.

127. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectation. GCSE results have fluctuated over the last four years. The percentage of high grades had been at or a little below the national average for three years, but in 2001 was well above. Results in the GCSE short course have been consistently successful. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the key stage.

128. Standards observed in lessons were in line with these results. In Year 9, the ablest pupils, working at levels above the national average, are able to describe how the slave trade operated in the eighteenth century. They write imaginary diaries, and argue about the attitude of the church to slavery. They write accurately and present their work neatly. Middle and low sets are at and below nationally expected levels. They are alert, and give spoken answers, which reveal a good knowledge of the material, but writing is often limited to copying information given in a work sheet. The lowest sets show interest and ask perceptive questions, but weak literacy skills impede their understanding of the textbook.

129. Standards observed in Years 10 and 11 also range from above to below national expectation. The most able pupils have a wide vocabulary, which they can use confidently. They can use the textbook to describe, for instance, the events which led up to the Korean War and the reasons why the United Nations were empowered to intervene. Some pupils are articulate but many say nothing. In both key stages, pupils can explain what a contemporary illustration or quotation given in the textbook might mean, but are weak at discussing its reliability and do not refer to such sources in their writing. Infrequent access to ICT limits research and opportunities to handle historical data. Most pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress. There is no clearly observed difference in progress among those of different ethnic origin.
130. Standards of teaching are satisfactory throughout the main school. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and communicate this to pupils, explaining historical events clearly and interestingly. However, they talk at the expense of discussion by the pupils. As a result pupils have little opportunity to air their views, defend their opinions or learn from each other. They are not required to investigate and research, or to probe different interpretations of events. Accordingly their progress is limited to what the teacher tells them to do. They are not encouraged to become independent learners. This is particularly true for the middle and low sets in Years 8 and 9, who make slower progress than those in the top sets. Some of the marking is excellent, and where that is so the pupils can learn much from guidance about their weaknesses and how to improve. The pupils with special educational needs sometimes struggle to understand because they have to use the same books as the top sets. They are supported in some lessons but the assistant cannot always give the necessary help because the teacher is talking so much. This is also true of a few pupils who do not speak English at home and are still struggling with the language.
131. The management of the department is satisfactory. Three of the four teachers have been in the school for many years, and work well as a team. They organise a valuable range of extra-curricular activities, exploiting very well the opportunities given by working in the middle of London, and taking pupils further afield to places such as Canterbury. The cramped and dilapidated condition of all the classrooms, and the fact that they are widely scattered, makes it more difficult for teachers to teach imaginatively and help each other. They need to buy a wider range of books to suit all abilities, and widen the use of ICT. Teachers need now to share good practice, such as methods of marking, and consider how to give pupils more opportunities to learn for themselves. Further improvement would result from regular monitoring of pupil performance, and evaluation of teaching methods.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Standards in ICT have been unsatisfactory throughout the school but recent changes in the management, co-ordination, teaching and resourcing of the subject are beginning to improve progress and attainment.

### Strengths

- Teaching in ICT lessons at Key Stage 3.
- Teaching on the examination course at Key Stage 4.

### Areas for improvement

- The cross-curricular provision for ICT in all years, particularly at Key Stage 4, to ensure that requirements are met for all pupils to have appropriate opportunities to use ICT.
- The provision of ICT resources, to bring the number of computers nearer to the national average for a school of this size.
- Increase the range of subject-specific software on the computer network to ensure that it meets the needs of all curriculum areas.
- Access to computers outside lesson times.

132. Attainment at GCSE has been below the national average in recent years and the percentage of A\*-C grades was significantly lower this year. Results have also been significantly below the school average.
133. In lessons and other work seen during the inspection, attainment overall at Key Stage 3 was below average. However, the recent reorganisation of arrangements for managing, teaching and assessing ICT are beginning to have a beneficial effect upon standards. Teaching by the new team is good. The scheme of work is providing appropriate challenge and it covers the required aspects of ICT, although the use of sensors for monitoring change should be developed further. In Year 7, pupils have one ICT lesson per week. They are now making good progress and attainment is mostly satisfactory. Following a thought-provoking whole-class introduction by the teacher in a Year 7 lesson and with good use of rapid question and answers, most of the class quickly learnt how to import animation into their presentations and use it to good effect, for a specific audience. In some lessons more could be covered with greater use of whole-class teaching. In Years 8 and 9, there is less time available for ICT lessons and progress is not so rapid but standards in Year 8 are improving and moving closer to expectations. In Year 9, pupils' skills and knowledge are improving but many basic skills and a sound understanding of core software functions are not well developed. They have much ground to make up in most aspects of ICT in order to bring them up to a satisfactory standard overall. For example, many of the pupils in a Year 9 class using a spreadsheet to list information were unable to explain how to use a formula to total a column of figures.
134. About one quarter of pupils at Key Stage 4 take GCSE in ICT. Past performance has now been analysed in detail and the information is being used to inform planning. Teaching and assessment arrangements for this course have undergone significant changes for this year. Teaching in lessons observed was good. This is resulting in most pupils on the course making progress in relation to previous skills and knowledge but pupils in Key Stage 4 have an inadequate foundation from earlier years upon which to build and attainment is below average. The arrangements for the remainder of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory and National Curriculum requirements are not being met. There is autonomous use of ICT by sixth form students for some classwork, coursework and higher education entry forms but, and on the whole, ICT skills are not developed well and attainment is below average. There are no planned opportunities for students in Years 12 and 13 to improve their ICT skills.
135. Almost without exception pupils are keen to take advantage of the opportunities which they have to develop their ICT skills and knowledge. They work diligently and are able to co-operate well in pairs and small groups. However, opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum in all years are inadequate and insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection. There is considerable variation in the level of use by subject departments and "New Opportunities Fund" ICT training for teachers is slow to begin in most departments. At the time of the inspection a curriculum audit was taking place in order to inform planning for a co-ordinated cross-curricular approach. However, the overall level of resources militates against departmental use as the number of computers is below average for a school of this size. This situation is exacerbated by the limited access for pupils outside lesson times. Some of the accommodation is cramped with both inadequate seating and space for working around computers. Some subject-specific resources, which have been purchased by departments, are not yet available via the computer network; this is further restricting teaching opportunities and the range of experiences available to pupils. Adequate numbers of new textbooks are available for courses.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Staff commitment and their subject knowledge.
- Both French and German are offered to GCSE level.

#### Areas for improvement

- To increase opportunities to practise listening and speaking skills.
- To extend the use of the foreign language in class by teachers and pupils.
- To focus on target-setting.

#### French and German

136. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in GCSE French was close to the national average. Results in 2001 show an improvement. No national comparisons are as yet available. In German, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in 2000 was well above national average. The number of pupils taking the examination in 2001 was lower, but all gained A\*-C grades. Again there are no national comparisons to date.
137. In lessons seen and from scrutiny of work, pupils make satisfactory progress in both languages by the end of Year 9. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to speak in both French and German and have the confidence. In the higher-ability groups, most pupils try hard with pronunciation. In a higher-ability Year 8 French lesson on illness, pupils were able to express themselves fluently in full sentences, through the use of exciting visual and written stimuli. They understood the grammatical structures required. Brisk question and answer made everyone feel involved and helped reinforce speech patterns. The majority of pupils had English as an additional language and also study German. They achieve well in lessons. In a Year 7 lesson on school subjects, a taped script was used for listening and pronunciation practise. This set the tone of the lesson and whole-class repetition of words was taken seriously. The lower-ability classes are enthusiastic, but pronunciation is often poor. In reading comprehension, pupils are taught how to pick out key words for answers. There is good recall of prior learning, often the result of homework. Listening skills vary according to ability group. The lower groups can cope with short passages and answers. A higher-ability lesson in German, based on making excuses, began with a listening task, which provided the basis for a written task. Here the emphasis was on grammatical accuracy. Pupils are able to reason for themselves and are curious about grammar, for example the use of "eine" and "einen" in sentences. They are accustomed to using dictionaries and glossaries. Written work tends to be consolidation work. In general pupils with special educational needs achieve according to their ability. There was little evidence of extended written tasks.
138. Progress and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory, although standards are low. Long-term staff absence has had a detrimental effect on pupils and motivation is poor. Pupils in Year 10 French lessons were keen to give presentations, but pronunciation left much to be desired. Pair work and role-play provide opportunities for independent practise. Reading comprehension is good and pupils are learning important examination techniques. Listening is a challenge, but with clear explanations by the teacher and by practising a few examples, pupils are encouraged by their success. Written work seen in all ability groups is very much worksheet based, but there were some interesting lengthy pieces of French coursework on holidays.
139. Teaching overall is satisfactory. In Years 7, 8 and 9, one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. The rest were satisfactory or better. In Years 10 and 11, all lessons were at least satisfactory, with over half good. The good lessons are a result of clear objectives shared with the pupils, confident teaching, brisk pace, good classroom management and a variety of activities. Teacher expectations are high and pupils enjoy challenge. A Year 7 French lesson had some good features as the lesson came alive with games of noughts and crosses and "loto." The overhead projector was effectively used in a Year 11 German class, enabling pupils to build up sentences covering a range of difficulty, using strips of pictures. Some challenging homework is set and pupils can achieve according to their ability. There are extra tasks for the higher ability and often choice of levels of work. In some lessons, poor attitudes by a small minority at times hindered progress. There were instances where the teacher could have spoken more in the foreign language and at times opportunities to provide challenge were missed. The unsatisfactory Year 9 French lesson began well, with some interactivity, but the pace dwindled, pupils were confused and the planning was not secure.

140. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The schemes of work and handbook have been up-dated. Although classrooms are in very poor decorative state, the language staff have made the rooms more cheerful by the mounting of posters, pupils' work, photos and useful charts. The regular monitoring of lessons is not yet fully in place. ICT is not used to advantage. There are plans to establish links abroad, to make language learning more meaningful.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Effective leadership, co-ordination and development.
- Imaginative and appropriate schemes of work, which advance the development of the key skills of performing, composing and listening.
- Good teaching, which demands high standards from pupils, and promotes them through clear lesson objectives, careful and supportive classroom management and effective learning strategies for pupils of all abilities.
- Successful learning which benefits from pupils' commitment to their progress, their obvious enjoyment of activities in the subject and the value they have been encouraged to place on each other's achievements.

### Areas for improvement

- Additional curriculum time for pupils at Key Stage 3 in order that they can develop a more comprehensive range of skills to a higher standard.
- More opportunities for Key Stage 3 pupils to develop critical judgement by the appraisal of their own creative work, and that of others.
- More involvement by pupils in reviewing previous learning at the start of lessons and in the resume at the end of the lesson.
- Progressive accumulation of music literary skills, including reading conventional notation and using technical language, throughout both key stages.
- Much more fluency in ICT skills as resources are made available.
- Full adoption of the successful pupil profile assessment system currently in use in Key Stage 4, for pupils in Key Stage 3.
- Appropriate use of homework in Key Stage 3 to develop self-learning and contribute to the process of assessment.
- To prepare for the raised expectations of pupils in Key Stage 4 so that in the future it will be possible to continue music courses in the sixth form.

141. Standards of work seen during the inspection were average and sometimes slightly above average in Key Stages 3 and 4. These improving standards are being achieved because of good teaching throughout the subject, the positive attitude of most pupils to their learning, the developing profile and focused leadership of the subject area and the impact of instrumental studies and extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school.

142. At Key Stage 3 the good level of learning in music is promoted in lessons, which build appropriately on previous experience but which challenge all pupils and help them to integrate key skills within the framework of creative imagination. Performing and composing are organised positively in an appropriate structure of whole-class and group activity. The starting points for practical tasks use a wide variety of music, from Japan, India, Senegal and Java as well as Europe, and permit pupils of differing standards to achieve well. In a project on the Blues in Year 8, for example, all pupils produced sound work from the basic worksheet, but several used their time very productively to develop more sophisticated and individual results. At all stages during group work, pupils work well together and receive strong support from their teacher. Pupils are confident performers, and although in Year 7 their enthusiasm is generally greater than their technical skill, this difference becomes less marked as they progress into Year 9. Throughout the key stage pupils are less sure about music literacy, technical

terminology and computer skills and few can sight read well, unless they have individual instrumental lessons. No written homework is set in any year of this key stage. As pupils have only one music lesson each week, the careful use of homework would help to connect lessons and develop knowledge and understanding. This would also bring the subject in line with others in the school, as well as providing more information to support the assessment system.

143. At Key Stage 4, pupils are learning well, particularly to maximise the opportunities for individual development in composition and performing by the effective use of time and resources. The relatively large number of pupils (22) in Year 10 stretches the teacher's capacity for personal monitoring, but pupils' good experience of helping each other in Key Stage 3 sometimes alleviates this problem. Compositions in progress by pupils in Year 11 show enthusiastic and confident manipulation of attractive ideas influenced by a variety of styles, such as reggae, baroque polyphony and African drumming techniques, using conventional, computer generated and graphic notation. There is awareness of tonal and dynamic contrasts, but little use, as yet, of modulation. At this level, pupils' writing about music demonstrates growing understanding, but sight-reading, confidence in conventional notation and technical terminology are still under-developed. Their skill with the technology of computer-generated music is better than is evident at Key Stage 3.
144. At both key stages, development is impeded by barely adequate accommodation, which although purpose-built more recently than the main school building, has only one relatively small and dark classroom, which is constantly subjected to noise by other music, drama and physical education activities. The condition of much equipment is depressing and ICT facilities are so restricted that learning in that area is unsatisfactory.
145. Curriculum opportunities are enhanced by visiting instrumental teachers for piano, percussion, brass, guitar, strings and woodwind, a range of interesting ensembles, from hand chimes to singing and rap, and the participation in several initiatives which have been available through artistic and cultural organisations in the City of London. The instrumental teaching is of high standard and is informed by the immediacy of teachers who are professional performers. All pupils opting for music at Key Stage 4 have free instrumental lessons, a facility which not only supports their personal development but is providing a growing musical resource for the school. Pupils report enthusiastically about their participation in the Royal Opera House Education Project, African Drumming, The Tribal Tree Composition Project and the DJ Project. The growing profile of music in the life of the school is amply demonstrated by the enthusiastic response of pupils in using performing and recording facilities at lunchtime and after school. Other indicators of growing improvement show that, although the number of instrumental teachers has increased and there are now 60 pupils learning instruments, there is still a growing waiting list for instrumental tuition. The number of pupils choosing music at Key Stage 4 has increased from 4 in 1999 to 22 in 2001 and the school mounted its first musical theatre production in 2000.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The clear and purposeful leadership of the head of department.
- The teaching is good and contributes significantly to the pupils' learning.
- The good extra-curricular programme.

### Areas for improvement

- Increase the use of the facilities of the local sports centre to compensate for the poor on-site accommodation.
- Ensure that all members of the department give pupils the opportunity to take part in the planning and evaluation of their work.
- Extend the newly introduced assessment system so that it covers all pupils.

146. In July 2001, a small group of pupils sat the GCSE in the subject and gained pass grades that were well below the national average. In September 1999, the subject was not offered to the pupils, but was re-introduced in September 2000. A small but enthusiastic group of boys took up this offer, and are now into the course's second year. They are producing coursework notebooks that are generally well presented and detailed and they are making good progress.
147. Pupils arrive at the school from their primary schools bringing with them a variety of physical education skills and experiences, with a significant number of them having skills that are lower than expected. They quickly respond to the good quality teaching, make good progress, and by the time they are 14 years old most of them are attaining levels that are in line with national expectations. They perform well in a range of activities. Some are not able to swim when they start at the school, but they get the opportunity to have swimming lessons at the local sports centre. By the end of Year 7 there are very few who are still non-swimmers. Most pupils can demonstrate a variety of swimming strokes and swim with confidence. In games activities, most pupils are confident performers and are developing the skills to enable them to compete successfully. Progress is enhanced by well-targeted activities that challenge and extend pupils' thinking and performing. Pupils know how to prepare themselves for physical activity and some are able to lead their classes in warming-up routines. Some of the pupils can observe accurately each other's performances and comment on what they see and what needs to be done to bring about improvement, but others are not given enough opportunity to develop this aspect of their work.
148. This good progress is maintained during Years 10 and 11, and by the time they are 16 years old most of them are reaching standards which are at least in line with national expectations and a significant number of them are doing even better. Good standards of skill are demonstrated in a wide range of activities, particularly in soccer and basketball. Pupils have good levels of understanding of attack versus defence strategies and apply them in various conditioned games situations. The new schemes of work developed during the last two years are making a positive contribution to the long-term progress as all teachers use them to set tasks that develop skills gradually across the years. Pupils have a good knowledge of rules and tactics and are able to undertake a range of roles including performing, officiating and coaching.
149. The standard of teaching is good. All lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory and the vast majority were good or very good. Lessons are conducted in an orderly manner, with expectations clearly stated so that pupils are aware of what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve performance. Lessons are conducted at a brisk, demanding pace, achieving an appropriate balance of activities and offering pupils a range of appropriate challenges. The professional swimming and basketball coaches make very positive contributions to the good standards pupils achieve in these two sports. There is an expectation that pupils will work hard and behave well and generally these expectations are met. Pupils respond very positively to the enthusiasm and energy of their teachers. They work hard, are co-operative, and are well behaved. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and are given much support by their teachers and their fellow pupils and reach levels of attainment that are appropriate for them. Teaching is sensitive and there is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum offer.
150. During the last two years the curriculum offer has been revised and with the extended use of the facilities of the local sports centre, the range of activities has been increased, and the balance of time allocated to the various activities has been improved. This has resulted in a broader and more balanced offer that is meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There is no provision for physical education for sixth form pupils. The procedures for assessing and recording of pupils' attainment are in the process of being revised with the now more finely graded attainment targets taken account of. Comprehensive information is being kept in a readily accessible form for all Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils. This system now needs to be extended to all pupils.

151. Staff give very freely of their time to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities before and after school. It is not possible for lunchtime activities to take place as physical education staff travel to the school's playing fields at Mitcham at this time. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have the opportunity to take part in a soccer tour to Holland. There is also an outdoor activities holiday to Tunbridge Wells where pupils take part in rock climbing and abseiling. The school takes part in many inter-school competitions and gains much success. Many boys have represented the district in a number of sports and some have gone on to represent Middlesex and London schools teams in athletics and swimming.
152. The on-site accommodation is a matter of concern. Although the redecoration of the gymnasium and the refurbishment of the changing room have improved the situation, this single indoor facility, plus a very uneven playground, is inadequate and pupils' attainment is being inhibited. The school's playing fields are extensive, well maintained and of excellent quality, but the forty-five minute coach ride to Mitcham is not a productive use of the time allocated to the subject. Some use is made of the excellent swimming, squash and sports hall facilities of the nearby local sports centre. As it seems unlikely, in the short term, that the school's on-site provision will be radically improved, the school should investigate the possibility of expanding the use of the facilities of the sports centre.
153. This is a well led and well managed department. The department's development plan identifies a range of appropriate priorities. Good quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work and helps the delivery of the subject. Staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other and show a strong commitment to their pupils.

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

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

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

### ***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Chemistry	1	100	47	0	6	1.00	0.87
French	1	100	78	0	17	2.00	1.81
Full Design and Technology	1	0	75	0	25	0	2.09
General Studies	9	78	72	0	18	1.44	1.87
Mathematics	3	67	63	33	17	2.33	1.56
Religious Studies	2	50	76	0	19	0.50	1.96

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	6	100	96	67	45	6.67	6.42
Biology	13	62	88	15	34	3.23	5.28
Chemistry	13	77	89	23	42	4.46	5.87
Economics	12	100	88	17	36	4.00	5.41
English Literature	11	100	96	55	36	6.91	5.90
English Language	1	0	92	0	31	0	5.38
Full Design and Technology	5	100	92	40	29	6.80	5.37
Geography	13	69	92	15	37	3.08	5.73
History	9	56	89	11	34	2.44	5.43
Mathematics	22	91	89	36	45	5.82	5.99
Other Social Studies	11	82	88	18	35	4.73	5.34
Physics	13	92	88	38	41	5.85	5.72
Religious Studies	4	75	91	25	35	4.50	5.57

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

#### Mathematics and further mathematics

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

##### Strengths

- The department secures very good results in A Level examinations.
- Staff establish a very good and mature relationship with students.

##### Areas for improvement

- The range of courses offered to students who are not studying A Level mathematics.

154. Standards in mathematics and further mathematics at A Level are good, but because there are only a few students who take the course, comparisons with national figures are not entirely reliable.
155. Students enter the course after having gained a grade B or above at GCSE level either at intermediate or higher level. After three weeks a basic skills test is given to the students to judge if they are entirely suited to the course. This was introduced after analysing the results of recent years. The department does well for its sixth form students; although the numbers are few, there have been good pass rates in recent years. A few girls from the sixth form consortium join the group. Standards of work seen are in line with the results. Students are confident in their use of algebra and many use graphical calculators to confirm answers to calculus questions involving finding turning points on graphs.
156. Some students resit their GCSE examination in November; this group consists of students who gained a grade D in the summer examinations. They develop their knowledge and understanding and express confidence in being able to succeed. Students who gained lower grades who wish to attempt to gain a grade C resit their examination in the summer. Recent figures indicate success with these pupils too. There are no other courses offered at present.
157. Teaching is good overall. The teachers plan effectively and this is very evident in mixed groups studying both mathematics and further mathematics. This approach encourages students to take some responsibility for their own learning. Students respond well to the more mature approach and the different relationship that develops with their teachers. The lessons are structured well and combine clarity of teaching with a good pace. Students discuss their work with each other and were seen to solve problems reinforcing their answers with proof. Marking does not always indicate the way forward, but students receive good verbal feedback on their work. Students work hard to understand the work being covered and are confident that their teachers wish them to succeed. Little use is made of computers, mainly because of the difficulty of access at lesson times.
158. The department is well managed and the teachers are mutually supportive. This provides a consistency of approach that enables students to make good progress. There is no formal monitoring of teaching but the informal discussions between those concerned with teaching the sixth form sustain an effective learning environment.

### SCIENCES

The focus of the inspection was on chemistry and physics although some lessons of biology were also observed. A Level results have been well below average in biology but the students did comparatively well compared with their performance in their other subjects. In the one lesson of biology observed in Year 12 the teaching was very good. The teacher's questioning encouraged the students to think carefully about key points as they completed writing up and discussing the results of an experiment on osmosis.

## Physics

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

### Strengths

- There is some stimulating teaching.
- Staff plan an appropriate balance between theory and practical work.

### Areas for improvement

- The provision of more modern equipment, including greater access to and use of ICT.

159. A Level physics results were near the national average in 2000. They were above average in 1998 but below in 1999. During lessons students showed average attainment overall. During practical work it was apparent that some Year 12 students were still learning to take measurements using vernier callipers, a micrometer or a stop-clock but most were confident in handling formulae and making calculations. Some Year 13 students are well above average when judged by their understanding of physical models to explain the photoelectric effect.
160. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are able to give comprehensible explanations. Relationships are good. The work is well planned, although during some discussions extra equipment items would enable students to visualise the applications of concepts more clearly. Teaching is particularly effective, and at times inspiring, when, during theory lessons, students are encouraged to develop and question mental images of physical concepts. Students learn how to write up practical investigations and use data to create graphs and make predictions. Year 12 students learn how to measure length, mass, time, density and volume and how to estimate accuracy. Work is appropriately marked at regular intervals. Feedback from teachers to students is regular and effective.
161. The students are satisfied with their progress and enjoy the course. There is an appropriate balance of theory and practical work. Many students have a specific need for a good A Level physics grade for a future career.
162. The accommodation is satisfactory but more modern equipment would be advantageous because it would correspond more closely to items used industrially and in universities. The use of ICT could be considerably extended.

## Chemistry

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

### Strengths

- Enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching leads to good learning.
- Students respond well to the teaching, particularly in Year 13, and have good attitudes to their learning which aid their progress.
- The standards achieved in lessons are good and students are able to make their own detailed notes on topics covered.
- The subject is well resourced, allowing a variety of teaching methods to be used, including appropriate practical work.

### Areas for improvement

- Examination results have been slightly below average over the last three years.
- Some marking of students' work is superficial and allows errors to go unchecked.
- Year 12 students do not always participate fully in discussion work.
- Monitoring of progress does not focus sufficiently on individual students.

163. The A Level results in chemistry over the last three years have been average in comparison with other science subjects but below national and school averages. Girls have done slightly better than boys but it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons due to the small number of

entries. Proportionately fewer students achieved the higher grades, in comparison to national figures and there were more unclassified grades than average. This may arise from the policy of admitting students on to A Level courses with a minimum grade C pass at GCSE level, as opposed to a grade B which is often required for entry to A Level courses. Feedback from the examination board on modules completed shows that appropriate standards are being attained.

164. The standards of work seen in lessons and in the students' written work are at least average and often above average, particularly in the Year 13 group where some very high attaining students are able to discuss issues about their work in some depth. Some Year 13 students, for example were able to relate oxidation reactions of arenes to work they had previously done on the oxidation of secondary alcohols; in another lesson one student gave an extended explanation of the activation of a benzene ring to electrophiles. Students' written work is usually well presented and they are able to work independently, making detailed and accurate notes on the work covered. Year 12 students have only recently begun their course and some are still adjusting to the step up from GCSE work. They tend to be more passive in their response to the work although they have good attitudes to learning and are conscientious in keeping up with work and completing homework. Standards seen in lessons and in students' written work are in line with expectations for this stage of the course.
165. The teaching of chemistry is good overall. This helps to promote a high quality of learning and good attainment in lessons. The teacher's good knowledge of the subject and enthusiasm for the work is communicated to the students. Work is well planned and set at an appropriately challenging level. Questioning is used skilfully to probe students' understanding and to help them to challenge misconceptions and errors in thinking. The teaching of Year 12 students pays due regard to the fact that they are at an early stage of their course, having come into the sixth form from a variety of other schools. Explanations here are clear and detailed and the teacher is at pains to ensure that all students understand the basics of a topic. The teaching in Year 13 extends the high attaining pupils whilst considering the learning needs of the rest of the students. The marking of students' assignments and practical work is conscientious and helpful, enabling them to improve their standards of work. Students' own notes are not usually marked for accuracy and this can lead to errors being perpetuated. For example, in one student's notes there was confusion between chemical symbols, which had not been corrected.
166. In both Year 12 and Year 13, students undertake practical work confidently and have the necessary numeracy and literacy skills to cope with the demands of the work. The quality of students' learning is good. They attend well and are punctual to lessons with few students failing to complete the course. They work hard in lessons and co-operate well with each other, participating effectively in class discussions when necessary. Relationships between the students themselves and with their teacher are good and this helps to ensure that the quality of learning is maintained and that group work is effective. Students for whom English is not their first language cope well in lessons and do not report any particular difficulties. The students entering the school through the sixth form consortium arrangement are well integrated into the course. Support for students' learning is good, with access to the teaching staff at any time outside lesson time. However, an analysis of students' learning needs tends to focus on whole groups rather than on individual needs; this is an area for development. Resources to support the study of the subject are adequate, with all students having textbooks and access to materials in the learning resource centre, which includes ICT resources and a small but appropriate reference section. Although key skills are not specifically taught, there is good development of numeracy and literacy in science teaching and students do not report any particular difficulties in these areas.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus of the inspection was on business education and economics.

### **Business education**

Overall, the quality of provision in business education is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- The teaching is good and students are fully involved in their learning.

#### Areas for improvement

- Poor results in the 2001 advanced vocational A/S Level examination.
- Poor retention rate to the new advanced vocational course.
- Lack of adequate accommodation and resources for the vocational courses.

167. The advanced vocational course in business education was offered to students in the school for the first time in September 2000. It proved to be extremely popular and 23 students were enrolled on the course. However, some of these students had relatively low-level entry qualifications for what is an A Level standard course. Of the 23 students who began only 2 attained a qualification, a C and D grade on Unit 2, the externally marked unit of the A/S course. None obtained an A/S grade since none of the internally assessed portfolio units were submitted for validation.
168. Just over one-third of these students have continued with the advanced vocational course into Year 13. These students' portfolios show knowledge and understanding of the business environment in which competitive business operates, but students need a lot of help in applying their understanding. Whilst description and presentation of data are generally at least satisfactory, a limited amount of extended analysis and critical evaluation was seen. Attainment is still well below the national expectation. There are 15 students in the current Year 12. These have made a satisfactory beginning to the course and though attainment at this stage is below the national average it is roughly in line with their prior attainment. Lack of access to ICT on a regular basis, and a lack of sufficient opportunities to go out to the workplace and undertake primary research, are holding back progress in both Years 12 and 13. Advanced vocational students have sufficient opportunities to develop the key skill of application of number, as was seen in a Year 13 lesson on business finance. Oral communication skills were demonstrated by most students, including those for whom English is not their first language. However, ICT skills are insufficiently developed.
169. The quality of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. There was a clear focus on shared and appropriate objectives, opportunities were taken to reinforce earlier learning whenever possible and pupils were actively engaged in their own learning. Students generally approach lessons with enthusiasm and interest and are well motivated to learn. They enjoy working co-operatively in small groups to discuss their projects as was observed in a Year 12 lesson on marketing.
170. Insufficient thought and planning went into the introduction of this course in business education, including the need to provide a base room equipped with access to ICT. Furthermore there is no video facility within the department and few reference materials readily available to students in the sixth form block. Although two of the teachers already had experience of vocational teaching neither had taught vocational courses in business education. In addition, there are insufficient arrangements for regular team meetings to co-ordinate and develop the course. The teacher in charge is not full time and already has other responsibilities with GCSE and A Level economics, and there is no delegated responsibility for this course. Insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this new course has taken place, which has had serious repercussions on the standards achieved by students.

## Economics

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

#### Strengths

- Standards have been improving over the past four years at A Level.
- Teaching is good - lessons are carefully planned.
- The subject is well led and managed.

#### Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used sufficiently.
- There is inconsistency in marking practices between economics teachers.

171. Results at A Level have steadily improved over the past 4 years. In 2001 the average points score was broadly in line with the national average for 2000, the latest year for which we have national figures. Six students entered the examination and all achieved a pass grade.
172. The standards reached by current Year 13 students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are also broadly in line with national averages and reflect their A/S results at the end of Year 12. The successful 11 students, out of the original 14 who began the A/S course, have elected to continue the study of economics to A Level. One of the three who failed is now repeating Year 12. Higher-attaining students show good skills of evaluation and analysis. They can apply economic and business concepts to the world of commerce and industry, as was seen in an essay discussing Microsoft as a monopoly and its effect on the market. All have acquired a basic knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied. In Year 12, students have made a good beginning to the A/S Level economics course and are attaining above the national average. They demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of a range of economic theories and concepts, as was seen for example in a lesson on "motivation in the work force". In both years, there was evidence of the application of number by students and oral communication skills were demonstrated by all students, including those with English as an additional language, who make up a significant proportion of economics students. By contrast, ICT skills are largely restricted to word-processing. There is evidence of wider reading by students both of a topical nature and from reference books. Students can undertake independent research but insufficient use is made of the Internet as a source of information.
173. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The teachers' expert subject knowledge underpins discussion. Learning is advanced by the use of probing questioning designed to make students think and to improve the use of language by those for whom English is not their first language. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives shared with students. Students' work is assessed but there are inconsistencies between the marking strategies of the three teachers and more could be done overall to indicate how students might improve. Although there is no access to computers within the department, there are ICT facilities to support independent study in the learning resources centre. Teachers do not sufficiently encourage the use of computers in the study of economics.
174. The department is well managed. In spite of cramped accommodation and limited resources the subject remains popular with students and standards are improving. The consortium arrangements, whereby one teacher and several students join the sixth form for economics, are well managed. Individual students are well supported by the department. The teacher in charge puts time aside for the mentoring of students, and students report that they feel supported.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

### Art

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

#### Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- Standards of work - drawing in particular.
- The promotion of independent learning.
- The positive attitudes of students and their excellent behaviour.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computer-aided art.
- The provision of a separate well-resourced studio area.
- The establishment of an exhibition area for students' work.

175. Standards in work and lessons seen during the inspection are good. Students are well motivated to pursue their studies, with many planning to continue on to higher education art and design courses. They are mature and committed to their very individual lines of research and practical work. The quality of teaching is very good and students benefit from the personal tutorial support that they receive. The students from other schools in the consortium settle quickly into their studies, bringing with them skills and knowledge that add to the education of the whole-year groups. Provisional A/S Level examination results for 2001 indicate standards above national averages. A Level results show a steady rise since 1998. Although provisional results for 2001 were disappointing, they relate to a small entry that cannot fairly be compared with national averages. Predicted grades for 2002 indicate an anticipated rise to above national averages. With the very good teaching and the mature response of students, this would seem to be a sound prediction.
176. Students benefit from very good teaching of the basic skills of drawing and painting, and from the very good knowledge that teachers have of the subject. They gain a broad understanding of the work of important artists from their research and investigation, which they use to develop their own work very effectively from the styles and genres they study. Some very high standards of presentation are evident in sketch and notebooks, with materials used imaginatively to explore preparatory themes for course work. The majority annotate their work very well and provide good biographical notes on the artists they study. The draughtsmanship of higher-attaining students is of an excellent standard, although they are less confident in exploring and using colour. This is the result of a too narrow curriculum in the years prior to the current staff joining the school. For this same reason, students are not as confident in exploring three-dimensional media. Teachers are working hard to encourage the use of colour in painting, printmaking, collage and mixed media work. Life drawing skills are not well developed, although there are plans to bring them into the programmes of study later this year. Lower-attaining students struggle to master foreshortening in their observational work. One higher-attaining student, who was educated to GCSE standard in Pakistan, has brought a very creative approach to her studies and is designing a large-scale interactive exhibition for her examination. Students share ideas and observe each other at work, and in this way they are becoming more adventurous and creative as a group. In discussion they show a good intellectual grasp of the subject.
177. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and teachers enjoy working with such well-motivated and responsive students. Their teaching is confident and secure and they establish a very good ethos for learning, where students are free to develop their own ideas under very well informed guidance. As a result the students are themselves confident. They are pleased to discuss their contextual work with visitors, showing a very good level of understanding of the influences on their work. The students speak of the lack of a dedicated studio area for their work. It restricts the time available for them to study when they have free time, although they all spend some time on their work in lunch breaks and after school. They are making good use of the department's digital camera, but the computer software is very limited in its manipulative potential and computers are not conveniently located for ongoing use. Students also make good use of the excellent gallery and museum resources in the area.
178. The department is improving, although staff have to work in unsatisfactory accommodation with limited good quality resources. Staff work well together under strong leadership and are keen to raise standards year on year. There are plans to extend the provision for computer-aided art and to develop further ceramics and printmaking. Staff are also looking to bring textiles art onto the curriculum as soon as resources will allow. Examination results are analysed effectively and the work of the department is reviewed in the light of the outcome. Good in-service training is planned to keep staff abreast of developments in art and design education. The department is well placed to improve standards further in the years ahead.

## HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on geography and history.

### History

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

#### Strengths

- The most recent results in A Level history were well above the national average, with most students showing good achievement in relation to their prior attainment.
- Teachers' depth of knowledge.
- The quality of marking.

#### Areas for improvement

- Increasing students' capacity to become independent learners.
- Attention to higher literacy skills of developing an argument and structuring an essay.

179. Students' performance in A Level examinations over the last four years has fluctuated. For three years the results were below the national average, but in 2001 eight out of nine students obtained the two highest grades. These results were among the best in the school. Good results have also been achieved in the government and politics examination, with a marked improvement in 2001. Those from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve well.
180. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of students' work show that the best are achieving in line with the recent results. Most students have good understanding of the subject matter, writing competent essays about, for instance, modern European politics and the suffragette movement. Attainment varies widely. In each class observed during the inspection about half the students asked questions and made perceptive comments, but half remained silent. These students, including some with English as an additional language, had poor literacy skills. Their comprehension and writing was below expectation. In examining domestic issues at the turn of the twentieth century the best students can follow the argument in a speech by Asquith, and compare it with the views of those who were struggling for recognition of women's rights. In another lesson, when asked about the particular skills possessed by Mussolini, some students could offer well informed insights about his ability to play upon the fears of different groups of influential people. In a politics lesson, students could analyse speeches written by Burke, Disraeli, Macmillan and Thatcher so as to identify the main themes of their political philosophy. Comments were perceptive, but provoked no argument or discussion. Some essays were below national expectation, indicating little research; others were closely in line with recent examination results.
181. All teaching observed was satisfactory. Teachers know the subject well, but make less use of their knowledge than they might in order to throw light on an aspect of the topic, for instance in an examination of Mountbatten's special relationship with Nehru. Some, but not all, teachers mark students' work with extreme diligence, writing long and detailed comments on what is missing, what to include and how to improve. Students respond enthusiastically to this and learn well as a result. There are weaknesses, however. In the lessons observed the teacher did nearly all the talking, appearing to restrict discussion. When students asked questions these were dealt with by the teacher, but not exploited as points that might engage the whole class. Students had no opportunity to articulate their thoughts or learn from each other. Some were assiduous in wider reading, and showed good knowledge through the sorts of questions they asked, but investigation and research were not apparent from the essays seen. The best of these were well written, with a good sense of structure, deploying knowledge effectively. But it was more usual to find only a narration of events, without sufficient analysis. ICT was little used. Many students need guidance in how to compose a satisfactory A Level essay. This was particularly apparent in some of the government and politics essays.

## Geography

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

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good, with an emphasis on independent learning skills.
- Assessment procedures are good, giving students individual guidance.
- Very good student attitudes enhance learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Fieldwork, particularly for physical geography.
- Accommodation, particularly where groups are too large for the rooms and where resources have to be carried across the school.

182. The provision in geography caters for 10 students at A Level and 22 at A/S Level. Of the A/S Level students, three are from a consortium school and a further three are students who have joined the school for the sixth form.
183. Standards of attainment overall are above national standards. A Level groups have been too small for meaningful statistical comparison with national figures but the percentage gaining A and B grades is improving overall. Of the 10 students who took A/S Level in 2001, two achieved A grades and all but one achieved a pass. The standard of coursework resulting from fieldwork is high, reflecting the very good independent study skills of the students. Almost all students who took A/S Level in 2001 have continued into Year 13. Ethnic background has no apparent effect on results in the subject. One student whose first language is not English has been allowed to study for an additional year at this level and is now achieving satisfactory grades. Girls in the Year 13 group are learning as effectively as the boys.
184. The standard of work seen in lessons and in samples of work is also above average. Students achieve well because teachers' excellent knowledge and understanding and their very high expectations combine to challenge students and hold their interest, for example in a very good Year 13 lesson where the teacher interacted with the Internet to investigate periglacial features of landscapes. Note-taking skills are very good, and in all lessons students were expected to organise information from a variety of sources, which develops their independent learning skills. In one very good Year 13 lesson, enquiring into the development and management of sand dunes, they were preparing information for presentation to the rest of the class with the teacher in the role of a facilitator and adviser. Students' attitudes and their views of the subject are positive; they value the quality of the teaching and the career opportunities that geography presents.
185. Teaching and related learning are very good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. The only weakness in provision is a lack of fieldwork investigation of the physical aspects of the curriculum, such as coastlines and glaciation. Literacy is constantly used through the need to read effectively and take notes. In one Year 12 lesson students were required to skim-read large chunks of information. Numeracy is developed through use of statistics. ICT is used in presenting work and researching on the Internet.
186. Management of the subject suffers from a lack of opportunity to share new ideas and teaching strategies because the commitment of two senior members of staff to other duties restricts the time that they can give to the department. Accommodation is poor and affects learning when, for example, atlases need to be carried across the site and do not arrive in the lesson. Some groups have to be taught in rooms that are too small for the numbers. Schemes of work are being developed to meet new examination requirements. Assessment procedures are good, resulting in individual tutoring and target-setting. This is an improving subject.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection in this area was entirely on English.

### English

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

#### Strengths

- Recent results in the A Level courses have been above average and improving.
- Teaching is usually good or better, and teachers work hard to motivate their students.
- The subject is led and managed well.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students need to develop further their skills of discussion and independent thought.
- Students need to read more extensively beyond the prescribed texts.

187. The provision caters for some 37 pupils. A/S and A Level courses are offered in English Literature, and GCSE English is offered as a re-sit course.
188. Standards achieved are high, with A Level results above national averages over the last three years. Students achieve satisfactorily, making improvements on their above average GCSE results. In the GCSE re-sit class, numbers in the past have been so low as to invalidate any judgement as to levels of progress and attainment.
189. Inspection evidence from the current Year 13 set confirms that written work is above average. Scrutiny of their work at the end of Year 12 showed that students were beginning to use a critical vocabulary competently, and to explore issues in literature and language analytically. All responses contained an element of personal judgements, backed up by references to texts, and one example was seen of very mature insight, with confident perception. Expression was generally accurate, although in some cases there was room for a broadening of vocabulary; however, discussion is very limited, requiring considerable efforts from the teacher to gain a response. Much of what students have to say is not confident and is hesitant. In Year 12, discussion is much livelier and often thoughtful. Expression is, however, often stumbling and unsophisticated. Standards of writing are at an early stage, no more than average, with a lot of narrative rather than analysis, and common technical errors. Nevertheless, texts are well known and awareness of the issues involved is developing. Progress is good, from a fairly naïve base at the beginning of the course. In the GCSE re-sit group standards are below average, but there is careful attention to detail and much focus on examination targets, which should result in success for a good proportion of the class.
190. The achievement of students is satisfactory overall, and when they respond to the good teaching it is often better. They follow teachers' advice carefully and work hard. There is no difference between the achievements of the male and female students (of whom there is a small number). The teaching of English is good. Teachers plan carefully and choose the subject or the treatment of the lesson in attempts to engage students' interest and participation. In a very good Year 12 lesson, students were asked to produce director's notes for a production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Their lack of confidence with this text was understood, and the teacher had rightly passed ownership of their study over to the students, resulting in deeper understanding and good progress. Teachers in Year 13 struggle with non-participation of students, and succeed in making inroads with fast pace and well directed questioning. The work with the GCSE set is very well structured, to give students the maximum support. All teachers know their pupils and their needs well. Marking is thorough, evaluative and developmental.
191. In some situations, students work together well in groups or pairs - better in Year 12 than in Year 13. Responses to literacy issues are considered, but are insufficiently backed by reading beyond the texts under immediate study.

192. The accommodation for English is good in one room, but the other classrooms in the main building and sixth form block are dirty and in a poor state of repair. The library is a pleasant environment for private study and contains a satisfactory collection of critical and extension reading.
193. English is well led and managed. Teaching is shared by all members of a well-qualified and experienced department. All teachers are well aware of the priorities for developing English in the sixth form, and are committed to continuous improvement.