

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND TECHNOLOGY  
COLLEGE**

London NW2

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100052

Headteacher: Dame Tamsyn Imison

Reporting inspector: Martin Beale  
19385

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> February - 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 188564

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Westbere Road

London

Postcode: NW2 3RT

Telephone number: 020 7794 8133

Fax number: 020 7435 8260

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Geoffrey Berridge

Date of previous inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May 1996

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hampstead School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. There are 1275 pupils on the roll, including 235 in the Sixth Form, making it larger than other comprehensive schools. There are 100 more boys than girls in the school. The school receives funding by virtue of its status as a technology college and participates in the Excellence in Cities initiative. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average overall. The school serves a diverse community with a high proportion of its pupils coming from ethnic minority groups. There are 612 pupils with English as an additional language, including 124 refugee children. There are 440 pupils with special educational needs and 50 pupils have statements of special educational needs, both figures being above average. An above average proportion of the pupils is entitled to free school meals.

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

Hampstead School and Technology College provides a very good quality of education for the diverse community that it serves. The strong leadership and the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all ensures that there is a positive atmosphere in which all pupils can give of their best. The high standards that are achieved and the good progress made by pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4, are largely as a result of the high proportion of good and very good teaching. The school's strengths far outweigh any weaknesses and it provides good value for money.

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

- Enthusiastic and energetic teaching generates an enjoyment of learning.
- Outstanding leadership and management sets a challenge to which both staff and pupils rise.
- The provision, support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
- The value placed upon the contributions of all pupils helps to create a harmonious community in which all can give of their best.
- Pupils use information technology (IT) very effectively as a tool to support their learning.
- The pursuit of excellence within the creative arts enables pupils to develop their talents to the full.

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

- Insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of religious education.
- The interest of pupils is not captured sufficiently in a small number of lessons.
- Pupil groupings do not always enable all pupils to gain access to the curriculum at a level that matches their attainment.

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

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

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in May 1996, not only in dealing with the issues raised but also in continually seeking ways to improve the quality of the education provided. Standards have improved at Key Stage 3 since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics but also in English. The upward trend since 1997 has exceeded the trend nationally. GCSE and A Level results overall are slightly below those at the last inspection. GNVQ results in the Sixth Form have improved.

The length of the school week will be extended from September to support the introduction of changes to the National Curriculum and post-16 examinations. There have been improvements in punctuality through the efforts of the school, but this remains an area of concern, with several pupils, including some in the Sixth Form, being late to school each day. Significant improvements have been made to the way in which the pupils' progress is assessed and the use made of data obtained. Monitoring procedures have been extensively developed. They provide the Governing Body and headteacher with a good understanding of where the school's strengths lie and enable them to take action to eliminate any weaknesses. Some improvement has been made in the provision for spiritual

development. The school has successfully obtained permission for its acts of worship not to be of a broadly Christian nature; however, the school does not provide a daily act of worship for all pupils.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	A
A-Levels/AS-Levels	C	D	D	

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

Results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were above average overall and well above those in similar schools. There were some differences between the three core subjects. Results in science were the best, being well above average and in the top 5% compared with similar schools, having improved considerably since 1998. Results in English declined slightly but were still above average while those in mathematics improved and were close to the national average. Results in English and mathematics were well above those in similar schools.

GCSE results have fallen slightly since 1997. This is partly due to changes in the intake to the school, with an increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group; however, they were still close to the national average in 1999 and well above those in similar schools. Lower-attaining pupils are not doing as well at GCSE as they are nationally. Examination entry levels are lower than nationally as is the proportion of pupils achieving at least 1 grade A\*-G. The proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades was above average in 1999 in most subjects with the exception of design and technology, French and geography. Pupils have achieved consistently better results in art, drama, English and history when compared with those in their other subjects over the last 3 years.

A Level results have shown a slight decline over the last few years. This is due in part to the open access policy adopted by the school. All pupils are encouraged to return to the Sixth Form with the result that the staying on rate is high. At the same time GNVQ results at both intermediate and advanced levels have improved and are well above average. Particularly good A Level results were achieved in art in 1999 when all pupils entered achieved an A grade. Other good results were achieved in French and music. Most subjects with the exception of English, mathematics, economics and geography achieved above average results.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The great majority of pupils throughout the school are motivated and enthused by the good teaching and concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. A minority of pupils finds it difficult to maintain these standards all the time.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between the pupils from the many different cultural backgrounds are very good. The pupils are mature and articulate and respond very well to the opportunities to become involved in school life.

Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Although punctuality has improved since the last inspection, there are still a number of late arrivals at the start of the school day.
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The school works very successfully to encourage all pupils to show respect for each other. The vast majority of pupils respond well, generating a very harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. The number of fixed period exclusions, which had fallen considerably in recent years, rose in 1998/99 but the number of permanent exclusions has fallen.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teachers' enthusiasm and energy create a stimulating environment for learning. Pupils respond well to their teachers' lively expositions, imaginative approaches and brisk pace. Well-planned lessons structure pupils' learning and develop their understanding. Many teachers successfully employ a range of strategies to generate a productive working atmosphere in the classroom and to meet pupils' varied learning needs. There is very good use of IT to support learning across the curriculum. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs. In a few lessons there is a lack of effective control so that unsatisfactory behaviour disrupts learning, and in some cases teachers' low expectations mean there is a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Both literacy and numeracy teaching are good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 93% of lessons seen. It was good in 49% and very good in 21%. Pupils make good progress, often relating previous knowledge to new topics. They learn well and show interest in acquiring new skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The broad, balanced curriculum in Key Stage 3 is maintained through a guided option choice at Key Stage 4, ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to a wide education. The school offers a good range of academic and vocational courses in the Sixth Form.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The very good management of the support given to pupils with special educational needs ensures a coherent approach to meeting their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The support and teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is very effective in enabling them to access the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal development is good. Strengths lie in the wide diversity of cultural and social opportunities with some high achievements in the arts. The school's concern for the integration and care of refugee children is exemplary.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a safe and caring organisation which provides good support to pupils from all backgrounds in both their learning and personal development.

The school has devoted considerable time to planning for the new curriculum that comes into



operation in September 2000. This will remedy the deficiencies in the existing provision by increasing teaching time and improving the arrangements at Key Stage 3 in art, music and design and technology. It is planned to extend pupil choice at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. The provision for religious education has improved but still does not meet statutory requirements.

The mainly mixed ability classes support the school's principles of equality of opportunity, but some groupings do not enable all pupils to gain access to the curriculum at a level that matches their abilities.

Pastoral teams know their year groups very well. The school provides a range of strategies, some of them pioneering, to support pupils and help them achieve their best. Arrangements for child protection and pupil welfare are good, and health and safety procedures are very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides the school with strong leadership and a clear educational direction based upon a commitment to equality of opportunity for all. She is well supported in this by very effective senior management. Departments and other key areas of the school are held accountable to senior staff through effective line management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The considerable expertise that governors bring is used very effectively to support and to scrutinise the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Senior staff and governors have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and have taken vigorous action to eliminate weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Much effort is put into obtaining funding to extend opportunities for pupils. Resources are used well to support school developments.

The school is very well led by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. They have high expectations and are demanding of their staff, who respond well to the challenge. Departments and year teams are managed well. All staff are keen to improve the quality of the education that they provide and constantly search for ways of increasing their expertise. Developments are planned thoughtfully and evaluated carefully. It is a reflective school that recognises the challenges facing it and exploits them to the benefit of its pupils. There is a positive ethos and a strong commitment to school improvement and raising standards. Equality of opportunity underpins all decisions taken. Financial planning is very thorough and the principles of best value are used when allocating resources.

## 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>• Their children like going to school.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and are making good progress.</li> <li>• They find staff approachable.</li> <li>• Parents feel that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• They believe that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They judge that the teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents agree that the behaviour is good in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework set.</li> <li>• Some parents do not feel that the school works closely with them.</li> </ul>

Parents are generally pleased with the school and the education that it provides. The inspection team supports this view. Parents have concerns that there is some inconsistency in homework, largely because there is no timetable. This produces not only difficulties for some pupils in organising their workload but also opportunities for others to avoid completing the work. The inspection team could not support the view of a minority of parents that the school does not work closely with them. The school consults carefully with parents. School staff carefully monitor pupils' progress and keep parents regularly informed through reports and parents' meetings.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Enthusiastic and energetic teaching generates an enjoyment of learning**

1. A major reason for the success of the school is the high quality of much of the teaching. Pupils are keen to learn, make good progress and achieve standards that compare favourably with similar schools. The work seen in lessons reflects these standards.
2. Lessons and learning are made enjoyable by enthusiastic and lively teaching as in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, teaching the pupils about rates of change and introducing quadratic functions. The teacher used questioning very well to draw out thoughts and ideas which, coupled with brisk and interesting teaching, retained the attention of the class well for long periods. Pupils thought carefully about these new ideas and worked effectively in pairs when discussing the problems that they were set. This lesson was very well planned, as was a Year 13 politics lesson where the class was researching into Fascism. The students were skilfully guided by the teacher, who allowed them to be creative yet exploited opportunities to emphasise important points and directed the discussion, relating issues raised to those in other areas of their studies.
3. High expectations and challenge are a feature of many lessons. The crisp and clear explanations, the effective use of resources and the overhead projector and a well-structured worksheet presented a challenge to a Year 11 English class, developing essay writing techniques in such a way that the pupils gained confidence in their work. The pupils were attentive and responded well to the teacher, working well and productively in groups. Good use was also made of resources in a Year 13 A Level physics lesson. The questioning challenged the students to think carefully about the principle of the conservation of momentum and encouraged them to use their understanding of other concepts. They applied themselves well to the tasks presented and worked at a considerable pace. Good pace was also generated in a Year 9 geography lesson considering the features of world trade that impact upon a country such as Uganda. An introductory quiz followed by pupils working in small groups representing particular interested parties such as growers or shippers of coffee kept the attention of the pupils. The higher-attaining pupils in this mixed ability group played a prominent role when reporting back to the whole class. They did this clearly and with much thought, representing the views of their group well.
4. The high quality of much of the teaching leads to considerable examination success. Results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were above average overall, and well above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The upward trend in these results over the last three years exceeds that seen nationally. There were some differences between results in the three core subjects in 1999 and there have been some fluctuations in results over the last three years. Results in English improved considerably in 1998 while those in mathematics and science fell, only for results in English to fall in 1999 but rise in the other two subjects. The science results in 1999 were better than in English or mathematics, being well above average and in the top 5% compared with similar schools. In spite of the fall in English results in 1999 they remained above average and well above results in similar schools. The improvement in mathematics results has brought them close to the national average and well above similar schools. Higher-attaining pupils did particularly well in science when compared with the national picture.

5. The results achieved by pupils at GCSE reached a high point in 1997 from which they have declined slightly. This is partly due to a change in the characteristics of each cohort, with an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs in particular. In spite of this the proportion of pupils achieving at least 5 grades at A\*-C was close to the national average in 1999 and well above results achieved in similar schools. One reason for this decline was the significant fall in girls' results over this period while boys' results rose slightly. The target for GCSE results in 1999 was not achieved and that for the summer 2000 examinations has been revised. This target is now at a more realistic level and still represents an improvement over 1999. Lower-attaining pupils are not doing as well at GCSE as they are nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving at least 1 GCSE A\*-G grade is well below average and a comparatively large proportion is not entered for examinations in each subject.
6. The school operates an open policy for its admission to A Level courses in the Sixth Form and attracts many pupils from other schools. This inclusive policy is part of the reason for a slight decline in A Level results in recent years. In contrast to this, GNVQ results at both intermediate and advanced levels have shown considerable improvement and are well above average. The decline in the average point score per pupil at A Level does not give a true reflection of the success that pupils achieve in individual subjects. Several pupils, particularly those taking art with the intention of continuing their studies post-18, are encouraged to take just two A Level subjects. This strategy is particularly successful in enabling these pupils to achieve high grades. In 1999 all candidates achieved an A grade in art. When considering the performance of pupils in other subjects, results are usually above the national average. The exceptions to this in recent years have been English and mathematics, the two subjects with the largest number of candidates.

**Outstanding leadership and management sets a challenge to which both staff and pupils rise**

7. A major reason for the success of the school is the strong leadership provided by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. They recognise the challenges facing the school and provide a clear educational direction based on a commitment both to raising standards and equality of opportunity for all. This leadership has helped to generate an atmosphere in which staff reflect on all that they do and strive to improve the quality of the education that they provide. Senior staff work very effectively as a team. They have high expectations of the staff in the school, and through the line management of department and year teams ensure that school policies are consistently implemented. Middle managers are held accountable for the work of their teams and are provided with good support to help them achieve targets set.
8. The Governing Body has a significant influence over the work and development of the school. Individual governors bring considerable expertise which they use very effectively for the benefit of the school. The committee structure and the close links forged with subject departments ensure that governors have a very good understanding of the school and current educational issues. They are rigorous in their scrutiny of the work of the school and supportive of the senior management. They play a significant part in planning school development.
9. The processes by which senior management monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided and the standards achieved have expanded considerably since the last inspection. The careful analysis of a wide range of data on examination performance, attendance patterns and changes to the intake is used to set targets for

departments, identify areas for improvement and plan developments. The systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching has been instrumental in helping to identify good practice and areas of weakness. The headteacher and senior management have a very good understanding of the quality of their teaching staff.

10. A considerable emphasis is placed on developing the expertise of staff. The school is based upon the principle that life-long learning should be a goal for staff and pupils alike. To this end many staff undertake higher education qualifications, with several recently completing a school-based masters' degree. The expertise that this brings to the school is valuable in itself and also in the atmosphere of learning that it engenders.
11. The continual search for improvement is expressed through the school's improvement plan. The clear priorities are underpinned by challenging targets that enable the school to identify opportunities and plan developments. A particular feature is the long-term consideration given to the development of areas of the school site to fulfil curriculum needs. The expertise that governors bring to this process supports the headteacher and senior management in generating their vision for the future of the school. This is a forward thinking school that seeks to exploit all opportunities available for the benefit of its pupils.
12. Thorough and careful financial planning supports the strategy for school improvement. Were it not for the extra funding that the school is successful in obtaining, the comparatively tight budget would be harder still to manage. The school has become particularly adept at bidding for extra funding. The hard work and effort put into this process by senior staff benefits pupils considerably. Technology College funding and grants from the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative are being used to particularly good effect. Care is taken to ensure that these extra resources are used effectively and their impact evaluated. Value for money is sought by comparing the school's performance and spending patterns with similar schools, considering a range of alternatives when allocating resources, seeking competitive tenders and evaluating the impact of spending decisions. Governors are involved in this process directly through the finance committee and indirectly through the close links and careful evaluation of the work of all areas of the school.
13. The strong and effective leadership, and the reflective atmosphere supported by careful planning for improvement, place the school in a very good position to raise standards further and continue the progress made over the past few years.

**The provision, support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress**

14. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils is expressed through the quality of the provision for those pupils with special educational needs. The assessment of need, the clear targets for pupils and the quality of teaching and support ensure that these pupils are given every opportunity to achieve success and make good progress. The curriculum support team is very well led and managed. The organisation and administrative systems that are in place are good. Statutory requirements are being very well met.
15. The curriculum support team has a central role in the identification of the needs of pupils when they enter the school, particularly at the start of Year 7. Good use is made of assessment information to support this process. Teaching staff have copies of all pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). These provide valuable information for staff,

outlining not only the pupils' needs but also possible teaching methods. Teachers use them when planning lessons and to note progress or any points for further development. Support staff know the pupils who they work with well. They provide effective support, linked closely to each pupil's IEP. Good working relationships have been established between support staff and class teachers. The regular training undertaken by curriculum support teachers and the guidance that they provide for subject teachers is effective in ensuring that all pupils' needs can be met.

16. Parents are fully involved in the review process and are also regularly informed about their children's achievements as well as any areas of concern. Some pupils with special educational needs have achieved notable examination success, including some with statements moving into the Sixth Form to continue with their studies.

**The value placed upon the contributions of all pupils helps to create a harmonious community in which all can give of their best**

17. The school places great importance on the development of a climate in which all of its pupils can thrive and achieve success. This further underpins the commitment to equality of opportunity for all. Careful planning also ensures that there are clear routes for all pupils into Sixth Form courses and beyond. As a consequence there is a very high staying on rate, and pupils are attracted to the Sixth Form from other schools.
18. The contribution that each pupil can make to the school is valued. An ethos that recognises the importance of learning has been successfully established and is one to which most pupils respond positively. There is a harmonious atmosphere free of tension. The school is generally calm and orderly, with pupils behaving well and mixing happily. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are firmly based on the principle of mutual respect. Pupils undertake responsibilities, such as participating in the school council, maturely and sensibly.
19. The care, support and guidance provided through the pastoral system of heads of year and form tutors is very effective. The personal and academic development of all pupils is carefully monitored, and support is provided when necessary. Heads of year know their pupils well and are involved in tracking their academic progress as well as their social development. In spite of this, the school is not successful with all of its pupils. A few do become disaffected and have high levels of absence; these pupils contribute significantly to the number of non-entries each year at GCSE.
20. Refugee children from various parts of the world form almost 10% of the school population. Much success has been achieved with these pupils. Their achievements are valued and celebrated through published poetry, and the school has started the charity 'The Children of the Storm' for their support. The school has worked hard to help these pupils to settle into unfamiliar routines, supporting them at a difficult time in their young lives and recognising the traumatic circumstances which have brought them to their present position.
21. A particularly strong feature is the celebration of the cultural diversity within the school. This is actively exploited to broaden the range of pupils' learning experiences. Pupils develop a good understanding of the role they can play in our multi-cultural society. Good use is made of trips and visits to extend pupils' understanding of their cultural heritage in its broadest sense. This has often stimulated spontaneous work by individuals, such as some very moving poetry written by a Year 10 pupil following a visit to the battlefields of the Somme.

## **Pupils use information technology very effectively as a tool to support their learning**

22. The development of information technology (IT) skills takes place through a wide range of other subjects rather than through discrete IT lessons. Great care has been taken to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum for IT. This has been achieved by carefully mapping the IT programmes of study across other subjects of the curriculum. Where a subject has the responsibility to equip pupils with a particular skill, careful monitoring ensures that all pupils receive similar opportunities. Co-ordination of the subject is very good, with effective support provided for teachers, ensuring that lessons can be completed smoothly.
23. The level of resources available to the school is good, with plans for further expansion. Funding to provide these resources has been generated by exploiting external sources successfully. Pupils have regular access to computers to support their learning in lessons. They are also encouraged to use the IT facilities at other times for personal research or to assist with the completion of their homework. The vast majority of pupils are competent and independent users of IT, from the youngest in Year 7 to pupils studying in the Sixth Form. They work with much interest whenever given the opportunity to use computers.
24. Good examples of pupils using IT were observed in all year groups. Year 7 pupils learnt quickly how to use a spreadsheet in a mathematics lesson to help to plan the requirements and costs for a party. A very well-taught Year 8 geography lesson, as part of a well-planned sequence of lessons, developed the pupils' use of a spreadsheet. An analysis of data on population growth in India was analysed and the results presented in a variety of graphical forms. Other Year 8 pupils were observed researching the history of the orchestra in a music lesson, using CD ROMs and the Internet as sources of their information. Pupils have the opportunity to control by programming the movements of objects in design and technology. Good use was made of IT in a Year 9 art lesson, where the pupils experimented to show how different colours could affect mood. Pupils in a Year 9 French lesson were able to choose the software they would use to produce a leaflet about a club. Most were able to merge text and illustrations effectively. Skills in the use and application of IT develop well at Key Stage 4 from word-processing a curriculum vitae in a Year 10 careers lesson, to using a spreadsheet to analyse the data obtained in a science experiment on electrical circuits, to exploring the effects of changes in environment in a Year 11 science lesson on inheritance and genetics. IT is also used regularly in the Sixth Form by students studying for GNVQ, and in many other subjects.

## **The pursuit of excellence within the creative arts enables pupils to develop their talents to the full**

25. The standards achieved by pupils in the creative arts subjects of art, drama and music are a significant strength of the school. Many pupils have particular talents in these areas and the school is successful in enabling them to make the best use of their gifts. Results at GCSE and at A Level have regularly been good, even if in some cases from a comparatively small cohort of pupils.
26. The high quality of the teaching and of the creative opportunities provided, particularly but not exclusively at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form, capture the pupils' imaginations and contribute much to the standards achieved. A good demonstration of drawing and printing processes in a Year 11 art lesson was watched intently by the class. The task that they were given was tackled seriously, although many found it

challenging. The individual help provided encouraged the development of the skills well. Year 12 pupils were seen to be totally absorbed in a drawing exercise and wire model construction of a body from a 'life-model'.

27. Teachers capture the interest of their classes through the variety of well-planned and stimulating activities. Good subject knowledge, coupled with very good acting and directing skills were used to stimulate small group improvisations on skills of persuasion in a Year 13 theatre studies class. Pupils were questioned and challenged to think more carefully about the rationale behind their actions. They responded well. These students have developed a good repertoire of drama skills and have an awareness of how they can be used to improve their performance. A Year 11 music class compared two pieces of music from different periods, listening carefully and being called on to use past learning and to evaluate their own areas of weakness. Many demonstrated a good command of music terminology. Pupils in a Year 8 class extended their knowledge and understanding of the elements of music through the good subject knowledge of the teacher.

28. A further feature is the high quality of some of the musical and dramatic performances put on by the school. It has a high reputation in this field. Pupils have performed both in the United Kingdom and abroad. Very good use is also made of trips and visits to places of interest and cultural centres to broaden the pupils' experiences and stimulate their creativity. High quality presentations and exhibitions of pupils' art work enrich the life of the school and encourage the celebration of pupils' achievements.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of religious education**

29. At present the length of the school teaching week is well below both that recommended nationally and the time taught in most schools. There are plans both to increase teaching time to 25 hours per week from September 2000 and to make other adjustments to the curriculum offered throughout the school. One consequence of the short teaching time is that there is insufficient time allocated to the teaching of religious education and the school does not fulfil all of the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The teaching of religious education takes place as a unit within the school's personal and social education programme, entitled 'Self and Society'. Teaching is at least satisfactory and, at times, good. The organisation of the course and the commitment of the staff who teach it are both very good; however, there is no religious education specialist in the school at present to advise staff or provide the expertise required to teach to sufficient depth. The school has the opportunity as part of its current curriculum review and its planned increase in teaching time to tackle these weaknesses.

### **The interest of pupils is not captured sufficiently in a small number of lessons**

30. A small proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory and some, although satisfactory overall, does not have the style needed to interest all pupils sufficiently. In these lessons some pupils appear to be uninterested in the work, lack any enthusiasm or involvement in their learning and can at times behave badly. The quality of their work suffers and they only make slow progress. The same pupils are often to be seen enthused and interested in other subjects where the teacher has succeeded in capturing their imagination and has demonstrated high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour.



31. There is also a small minority in each year group who do not have a positive attitude either to school or to learning. These pupils often have lower rates of attendance and may be unsuccessful in, or not entered for, GCSE examinations. In a minority of lessons the disruption caused by some pupils affects the progress not only of themselves but also of others in the class. In some instances, the teacher lacks the skills necessary to maintain sufficient order in the class for all to progress. Again, these pupils were often to be seen controlled effectively by other more skilled teachers.

**Pupil groupings do not always enable all pupils to gain access to the curriculum at a level that matches their attainment**

32. Pupils are taught mainly in mixed ability groups for all subjects throughout the school. The exception to this is that pupils are set by ability in mathematics and modern foreign languages from Year 9, and are taught in ability bands for science at Key Stage 4. Furthermore, a group of higher-attaining Year 10 pupils has been identified for early GCSE entry in mathematics. The current arrangements for teaching groups are effective when the skilled teacher plans activities, directs questions carefully, and provides challenge and support for all of the pupils in the class. Many lessons like this take place throughout the school, enabling the pupils to make good progress. These arrangements are less successful in some subjects where the teachers do not always use methods or choose tasks and activities that meet the needs of all of the pupils in the class. This results, in some cases, in higher-attaining pupils not being sufficiently challenged or lower-attaining pupils not having the necessary levels of skill to access new work. Learning is then slow and lessons can be less productive.

33. The school is involved in a project to identify and extend the talented and gifted through the 'Excellence in Cities' project. This and the current review of the curriculum, the extension of the teaching week and the change to the length of each teaching period offer an opportunity for consideration of the suitability of teaching groups in all subjects. The school should now explore other flexible forms of pupil groupings to ensure that the higher-attaining pupils are challenged and lower-attaining pupils follow suitable courses, without compromising its commitment to equality of opportunity.

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

To build on its many strengths and to support its continual drive for improvement, the school should:

- provide sufficient time throughout all phases of the school for the teaching of a religious education programme that fulfils the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and is supported by the expertise of a specialist in the subject;
- use the high quality of teaching throughout the school as a model for the less successful teachers to improve their management of pupils and to ensure that they engage the interest of those who are less motivated;
- use the current review of the curriculum as a structure for applying greater flexibility to pupil groupings, enabling the school to meet its aims as well as the needs of all pupils, in particular the lower and higher attainers.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	49	23	7	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1040	235
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	412	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	50	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	440	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	612

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	43

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	122	89	211

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	79	82	77
	Girls	69	56	53
	Total	148	138	130
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	70 (74)	65 (60)	62 (58)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	22 (48)	37 (34)	35 (31)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	85	81	86
	Girls	71	63	63
	Total	156	144	149
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	75 (72)	69 (68)	71 (71)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (30)	42 (42)	40 (46)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15-year-olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	119	85	204

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* - C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	54	104	107
	Girls	41	69	76
	Total	95	173	183
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	47 (47.8)	85 (90.0)	90 (93)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (36.1)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

### **Attainment at the end of the Sixth Form**

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-Level or AS-Level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	41	43	84

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	14.0	14.6	14.3	5.3	4	5
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	31	93.5
	National		72.9

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	120
Black – African heritage	115
Black – other	92
Indian	73
Pakistani	71
Bangladeshi	41
Chinese	21
White	670
Any other minority ethnic group	72

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	
Black – African heritage	7	
Black – other	3	
Indian	1	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi	1	
Chinese		
White	25	2
Other minority ethnic groups	9	1

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	80.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	16.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	457

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.6
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11**

Key Stage 3	19.8
Key Stage 4	20.2

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	4201421
Total expenditure	4276427
Expenditure per pupil	3295
Balance brought forward from previous year	266068
Balance carried forward to next year	191062

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1275
Number of questionnaires returned	369

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	41	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	50	4	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	61	8	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	45	19	6	3
The teaching is good.	36	55	3	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	49	14	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	39	8	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	5	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	47	18	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	45	44	4	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	48	5	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	43	9	1	9