

INSPECTION REPORT

SHIRLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Croydon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101825

Headteacher: J G Harker

Reporting inspector: Brian Evans
1049

Dates of inspection: 15 - 18 January 2001

Inspection number: 189283

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shirley Church Road Croydon
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Mrs M Horden MBE
Date of previous inspection:	16-20 September 1996

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8390	Richard Andersen	Team inspector	English Drama	
30563	Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Religious studies	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Music	
4677	Valerie Banks	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Business studies	
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2112	Bob Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11 - 12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13 - 14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14 - 16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17 - 18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18 - 19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19 - 20
HEARING RESOURCE CENTRE	20 - 21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23 - 25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26 - 43

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shirley High is a mixed comprehensive school with Foundation status situated in a pleasant residential area near to Croydon town centre. Most pupils travel into the school from outside the Shirley area. There are 916 pupils aged from 11 to 16 years on roll, which is close to the average size for secondary schools. Attainment on entry is average for comprehensive schools. Fifteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly at the national average. Nearly one in four pupils are from ethnic minority groups, broadly average for Outer London. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is low. Nearly 90 per cent of pupils either transfer into sixth form courses or to colleges of further education when they reach the age of 16. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average, and the number with statements is broadly average. The local education authority's Secondary Hearing Impaired Centre for profoundly deaf pupils is based in the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school achieves average standards in GCSE and pupils achieve well when compared to similar schools. It is an improving school. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and just under two-thirds of teaching is good or better. The school curriculum provides opportunities which benefit all pupils. There are good care and guidance arrangements. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and is responding well to the challenges and issues it faces in continuing to raise pupils' levels of achievement. It is well led and managed so that measures are achieved in a cost-effective way, providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- GCSE results are well above those for similar schools.
- Teaching is good or better in two-thirds of lessons.
- Good management leading to improved standards.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and, in particular, provision for pupils with hearing impairment is very good.
- The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good.
- Provision for careers and work-related experience is very good.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress, targets and results.
- Though teaching is good overall, the proportion of very good or excellent lessons is comparatively low.
- Standards in art throughout the school.
- Reporting of pupils' progress.

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 a satisfactory response to the issues identified in the last inspection [September 1996]. Significant progress has been made in implementing a teaching and learning policy. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. New developments in the provision for pupils with special educational needs enable them to make consistently good progress across the school. Science standards are rising. The school now complies with statutory requirements on collective worship. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has been remodelled to accommodate design and technology. However, statutory requirements are not met in modern languages because a small number of pupils do not study a foreign language. Standards in art throughout the school are unsatisfactory. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16-year-olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

By the age of 14, pupils achieve results in national tests that are above the national average in English and close to the average in mathematics and science. In English, results are well above the average for similar schools and above average for mathematics and science. By the age of 16, pupils achieve results in GCSE that are close to the national average and well above the average for schools with similar pupils. The school consistently meets its challenging GCSE targets. Over the past three years, the rise in average point score has been above the national trend, though it fell slightly last year. Inspection evidence indicates that GCSE grades in the current Year 11 will revert to the 1996 to 1999 pattern.

Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. All groups of pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in both key stages. Overall, pupils are confident and fluent, and have satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' achievement in art is unsatisfactory. Information technology skills are above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are happy to come to school and concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils are courteous and trustworthy.
Personal development and relationships	Good: there is a good personal and social education programme which supports pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance is in line with the national average; unauthorised absence is below the national average; punctuality is good.

Most pupils are eager to come to school. Attendance procedures are good. Relationships are good. Pupils show maturity in carrying out a range of responsibilities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Teaching was good in 50 per cent of lessons, very good in 12 per cent and excellent in a further one per cent. Teaching was satisfactory in 35 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in two per cent. There were no poor lessons observed. Good teaching occurs throughout the school and enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress and achieve high standards. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The considerable emphasis on improving the range of teaching styles since the last inspection has borne fruit. Teaching is good in science, information technology, geography, music and physical education. It is good in Years 10 and 11 in English and

good in Years 7, 8 and 9 in design and technology and history. It is satisfactory overall in art but the quality of teaching varies widely between very good and unsatisfactory. To a lesser extent, there is a similar variation in a number of other subjects. In Year 7, teachers do not always build on the knowledge and understanding that pupils bring with them from primary school. Overall, the teaching of literacy and information technology skills is good; it is satisfactory for numeracy skills. Pupils' learning skills are generally good. They make good progress in acquiring skills. However, pupils' achievement is lower in lessons where the work is either too easy or too hard or where the lesson does not build on previous work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: strengths include its provision for careers and work experience. Weaknesses include allocation of curriculum time in science and mathematics and the lack of vocational courses. The curriculum is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Provision for pupils with hearing impairment is very good. Pupils are well supported in lessons and in the Resource Centre. They make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: pupils with English as an additional language are given good individual support and have good access to the school curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: pupils' moral development is very good; spiritual and social development is good; cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' development is promoted well through the school's ethos which fosters the pupils' self-image and through the work in many subject departments.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory: procedures for child protection are good; procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good; assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection but not enough use is made of assessment data to match work to pupils' individual needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the headteacher is supported well by his senior management team. Standards have improved since the last inspection because senior staff have supported teachers in implementing the school's teaching and learning policy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: the governing body operates well and provides strong support for the school. Governors bring a wealth of expertise to their role, for example from the world of business, and they combine this with a sensible 'critical friend' approach to the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the school is implementing a sound performance management policy in line with statutory requirements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: the school applies the principles of best value well and makes efficient use of its financial resources. Resources are used effectively and have a good impact on pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils make good progress.• Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best.• School helps pupils to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework.• Keeping parents well-informed of how well their child is getting on.

Inspectors agree with the positive elements. Inspection evidence indicates that homework is set regularly and monitored by pastoral staff through scrutiny of pupils' record books. However, inspectors agree that, whilst reporting procedures meet statutory requirements, the format of reports needs to be reviewed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' attainment, as measured by their results in standardised tests and in national tests in Year 6, on entry is average for comprehensive schools. By the age of 16 pupils, are achieving standards that are average overall and well above average compared to similar schools.
2. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades at the age of 16 in 2000 was close to the national average and in line with that of pupils from similar schools. The number achieving five or more GCSE A* to G grades was well above the national average and very high compared to similar schools. Between 1996 to 1999, the rise in GCSE average point score was above the national trend although it dipped slightly in 2000. Inspection evidence indicates that GCSE grades in the current Year 11 will revert to the 1996 to 1999 pattern. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in all years. Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school.
3. In the 2000 national tests at the age of 14, overall attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was at the national average. Standards were well above average compared to similar schools. The trend in the school's average points score per pupil over the past five years is broadly in line with the national trend. In English, all groups of pupils achieve well by the end of Years 9 and 11 and inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently above the national average. In mathematics and science, the average points score per pupil is in line with the national average; it is above that for similar schools for mathematics and close to the average in science. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in both these subjects are average.
4. The proportion of GCSE A* to C grades in English language in 2000 fell below the national average for the first time since 1998. The proportion of GCSE A* to G grades was above the national average. Girls out-performed boys by a greater margin than the national pattern. This is also true of mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows that the school's strategies for addressing the difference in boys' and girls' attainment has reduced the gap considerably in all three core subjects. In English, inspection evidence indicates that standards in Years 10 and 11 are above the national average.
5. In mathematics, the proportion of girls attaining five GCSE grades A* to C was close to the national average but the boys' performance was well below, bringing the overall average to below the national average in 2000. However, the proportion of pupils attaining GCSE grade A* to G was in line with the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now close to the average overall because the department has addressed weaknesses in boys' attitudes in mathematics. For example, it has introduced specific boy-friendly topics to generate interest and adapted teaching styles to suit individual needs.
6. Pupils' GCSE results in science are lower than in English and mathematics. However, the proportion of GCSE grades A* to C, though below average, has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Regular tests, new schemes of work and good subject leadership are helping to raise standards. Inspection evidence indicates that current Year 11 standards are higher than in 2000 and close to the average.
7. Standards in design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education are broadly in line with the national average in all years. In information technology and in business studies, standards are above the national average. In history, pupils achieve average standards by the age of 14 but GCSE standards are below average. Standards in French are above average and in German are average. Pupils achieve above average standards in drama. Standards in art are below the national average in all years.
8. The school's targets are realistic and challenging and based on a sound analysis of the attainment of pupils on entry to the school.

9. There is an effective policy on literacy and pupils' skills are satisfactory. Teachers in all subject areas emphasise key words and many subjects use writing-frames, pupil-friendly texts and vocabulary lists. Generally, there is a consistent approach to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils listen well and their oral skills develop well. Reading and writing skills are mostly satisfactory and sufficient to enable them to cope with work in different subjects. Pupils with English as an additional language have access to the whole curriculum.
10. Pupils' application of mathematical knowledge and skills is satisfactory. Most pupils have a reasonable knowledge of number. However, the school is aware that many pupils lack confidence when dealing with percentages, fractions and decimals. It has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy into the mathematics programme of work in Year 7. There is a need for more emphasis on mental arithmetic skills in Years 10 and 11. Graphical interpretation is used well in science and in the analysis of data in geography.
11. Achievements of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and obtain examination passes. They make good progress in a range of contexts. These include subject lessons where pupils with special educational needs are usually taught in smaller groups, sometimes with additional support, or where they are supported individually and in small groups. Pupils show good progress in basic skills and that they become more confident when given extra help.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. In general, the pupils are eager to learn. This is shown by their good attitudes in lessons and compares well with the standards reported on at the previous inspection. Most pupils are enthusiastic about what the school offers them. They persevere in overcoming their difficulties by good sustained concentration and effort.
13. The majority of pupils generally behave well both in classes and around the school and this aspect also compares well with the previous inspection report. Any disruptive elements within lessons are usually ignored by the remainder of the class, who just get on with their tasks. Most pupils are very polite and courteous. There is little or no graffiti or vandalism in the school. The number of exclusions is falling.
14. The school's policy on bullying, sexism and racism is implemented rigorously. Incidents are dealt with swiftly. All groups of pupils generally get on very well together.
15. Most pupils demonstrate good aspects of personal development and relationships with others. Many pupils are mature in their discussions with visitors. They respond well to opportunities for team work as, for example, in the school orchestra or in one of the many extra-curricular sports teams. The school has a good system of prefects and a school council. Both involve very sought after positions and are also democratically run. The school council has its own budget and uses it well. Recently they have made a decision that girls will be allowed to wear trousers to school. Most pupils appreciate and like their teachers and other adults in the school. The older pupils are keen to arrange their own work experience positions and, via the school's careers department, most pupils take full advantage of the guidance offered.
16. Attendance is satisfactory and close to the national average. Unauthorised absence is in line with national average. The majority of pupils come to school and into classes on time and most lessons commence promptly. The school does not have any unexplained, long-term absence trends.
17. Overall, the good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils contribute well towards their learning.
18. Pupils with special educational needs develop their confidence and self-esteem. They try very hard, concentrate well and benefit from the help that is offered to them. They show pleasure in their own progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching was good in 50 per cent of lessons, very good in 12 per cent and excellent in a further one per cent. Teaching was satisfactory in 35 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in two per cent. There were no poor lessons observed. Good teaching occurs in all subjects. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
20. The considerable emphasis on improving the range of teaching styles since the last inspection has borne fruit. Teaching is good in science, information technology, geography, music and physical education. It is good in Years 10 and 11 for English and mathematics and good in Years 7, 8 and 9 in design and technology and history. It is satisfactory overall in art but the quality of teaching varies widely between very good and unsatisfactory. To a lesser extent, there is a similar variation in a number of other subjects including geography and religious education. Teaching in Year 7 is predominantly only satisfactory rather than good because teachers do not build sufficiently on the knowledge and understanding that pupils bring with them from primary school.
21. A higher proportion of the very good lessons occurred in Years 9 and 11 than in other years. In an excellent mathematics Year 11 lesson pupils used information technology to determine exterior and interior angles in polygons. The success of the lesson was based on three main elements. Firstly, the teacher had high expectations of the pupils, which led to pupils striving hard to achieve their best work. The teacher's subject knowledge and lesson plan built on these high expectations. Secondly, the high standards were based on very good teaching of the basic skills including literacy, numeracy and using computer software. These skills encouraged pupils to be independent, with sensitive support when necessary from the teacher to help them reach their individual targets. Thirdly, the teacher's assessment of how well the pupils were learning meant that the work matched pupils' individual needs. In consequence, pupils were well-motivated and made very good progress.
22. A major contributory factor to the improvement in teaching since the last inspection has been the focus by senior managers on supporting strategies for improving standards. This has included: lesson observation; extending the range of teaching styles including group work; raising awareness of the need to improve boys' performance; and monitoring the progress of all pupils. Teachers have good classroom management skills. There is a positive learning environment in most lessons and pupils concentrate well and are eager to learn. However, the overall quality of teaching, both within departments and between year groups, is still inconsistent and there is a need to continue to build on the good practice already in the school. The major priority is for teachers to pitch tasks that are neither too hard nor too easy for individual pupils. In order to achieve this objective, teachers need to use the available school and subject assessment data more effectively in planning their lessons and in setting targets for pupils.
23. The very small number of unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by low teacher expectations, lack of subject expertise, and work being too easy for pupils. Pupils lost interest in their work and made little progress, although this rarely led to disruptive behaviour by more than one or two pupils. In the satisfactory lessons, pupils made satisfactory gains in understanding, but nevertheless, on most occasions at least one of the weaknesses described above was apparent.
24. Homework is well designed and supports learning very effectively. A range of tasks is set, including some that encourage pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding for themselves. A few pupils take advantage of open-ended assignments to produce work of a very high standard.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Where pupils are withdrawn for extra help, care is taken to explain diagnostic test results and to emphasise the pupils' strengths as well as working on their difficulties; as a result, they gain in confidence. Activities are well planned and motivating and pupils acquire new skills and have opportunities to reinforce them. Subject teachers include pupils with differing needs effectively into their classes. For example, one pupil who finds working in large groups difficult was included in a drama lesson and treated the same as everyone else. He has a personal support assistant but she stood back as she was not needed and so did not create unnecessary dependency on her. In some subjects, teachers do not pitch work at the right level for individual pupils within an ability group as, for example, in mathematics and history in Years 10 and 11. A range of support is provided: for example, some pupils are able to use their assistant as a scribe for their writing when a physical

disability means they become very tired towards the end of the day. Others have support for their learning, which is focussed on their individual needs in lessons. The teaching of hearing impaired pupils is very good.

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

26. The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad overall and meets the needs of most pupils. Access is good because of well-organised support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, and grouping arrangements suit most pupils.
27. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study all the National Curriculum subjects, as well as religious education, drama in Years 7 and 8 and personal and social development. All pupils learn both French and German. Information and communication technology and drama are taught as separate subjects. As a result pupils are equipped with basic language and information technology skills and they learn to express themselves confidently in drama.
28. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils take ten or eleven GCSE subjects. They study a common core of subjects, designed to provide a balanced range of experiences and avoid early specialisation. The core is enriched by options that include technological and creative subjects. Information and communication technology and business studies are popular choices taken by a large number of pupils. Other than in these optional courses, information and communication technology is not well developed in other subjects. There are a few courses for those with a vocational bias. The school is not meeting its obligation for all pupils to study a foreign language, as a few pupils in the support option do not study either French or German. Provision for higher attaining pupils is improving. They are able to take GCSE mathematics in Year 10 and then study GCSE statistics in Year 11. Lower attaining pupils are well catered for in the support option.
29. The programme for personal and social education is currently under review by the senior management team. It supports pupils' social development well. It is comprehensive but the effectiveness of its teaching is dependent mainly on form tutors. During the inspection, it varied from satisfactory to good. Elements of citizenship have been incorporated, ahead of the legal requirements to do so. It includes sex, health and drugs education. Parts of these are also taught in science and religious education. There is growing involvement of people from the community with skills in these areas. For example, an interesting talk was given by a member of 'Quit' and pupils usefully learnt about the impact of smoking on health.
30. The provision for careers and work related experience is very good. The careers service is closely involved with the school in helping pupils to make informed choices about their options and to prepare them for work and further education. The careers library is up to date and well used by pupils seeking information. Pupils appreciate the advice that they are given. Year 10 pupils have a fortnight's work experience. It is carefully planned and organised and great importance is placed on health and safety. Last year, almost every pupil in Year 10 took part and thought that it had been very helpful. They all used their initiative in arranging their own placements. Through the programme, the school has established good links with local firms and the community.
31. The total teaching time is appropriate. However, in art, English, mathematics, physical education and science, the length of taught teaching time is below the national average. In English and mathematics, it limits the amount of time that can be spent on improving literacy and numeracy skills to raise boys' achievement. As a result of timetabling arrangements, some pupils in geography, history and mathematics are taught by two teachers. This slows the rate of progress. In Years 10 and 11, some lessons are too long in some subjects; for example, in history for pupils in lower sets. In these lessons, pupils' concentration falls as lessons proceed.
32. The school is currently reviewing the curriculum and is considering broadening its work-related component. It provides an opportunity to tackle the weaknesses in timetabling.
33. There are satisfactory links with primary and other secondary schools. Liaison with primaries is good at school and pastoral levels. The Numeracy Summer School helped pupils coming from primary schools to prepare for their work in Year 7. Visits and exchanges in English and mathematics improve the quality of information and are helping teachers to prepare for the secondary literacy and numeracy initiatives. Most subjects have yet to establish curriculum links

so that there is a smooth transition from Year 6 to Year 7. This was an issue at the last inspection. Curricular planning, to ensure progress from Year 7 to 11, is good in most subjects and has improved since the last inspection.

34. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. Music, physical education, drama and information technology are particularly strong and are popular with pupils. At least 100 pupils learn an instrument. Pupils who sing or play an instrument take part regularly in musical events and in joint productions with drama, such as the Rock Nativity. In physical education, there is a variety of team sports and recreational activities, as well as skiing and water sports abroad. Some clubs, such as design technology, support classwork well. The Learning Resource Centre, which opens before school to help pupils with their homework, is also well used at lunchtime and after school; the special educational needs rooms and hearing impairment centre are open during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils take part in a good range of cultural visits and foreign exchanges.
35. The school has made good progress in developing its curriculum since the last report. It now meets the requirements for collective worship.
36. A wide range of support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. For example, a few pupils choose a support option in Year 10 and receive help for examination subjects. Some pupils are withdrawn for individual help or in small groups and many pupils have support in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties are frequently taught in sets with smaller numbers and this enables them to learn at their own pace, increase their self confidence and feel that they are succeeding. Pupils with statements have personal support assistants who help in a number of their lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator works with some teachers where there are a number of pupils with learning needs. Individual educational plans are very good and give teachers information about individual pupils based on assessment. Pupils and parents contribute to them and teachers write targets for the pupils in their subjects.
37. The school provides a context in which, although there is some variation, the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's policy provides examples of ways in which subject departments can contribute to the personal development of the pupils. Pupils attend one assembly per week. Assemblies provide a positive medium for the consideration of social and moral issues from a religious perspective; they also include a time of reflection or prayer. A 'thought for the day' is provided for pupils not attending assembly and during the inspection week these followed the theme of 'Who is my neighbour?' looking at views of Jesus, Martin Luther King, Charles Kingsley and Woodrow Wilson. This 'thought for the day' has been introduced since the last inspection so that the requirement to provide a daily act of worship for pupils is now being met.
38. Provision for spiritual development is good. As well as the contribution of assemblies and the 'thought for the day' many departments highlight various areas within their schemes of work where they can provide a particular spiritual contribution. Even where departments have not identified specific areas, they contribute when opportunities arise. The school has a good ethos for fostering pupils' positive self-image. The many wall displays celebrate the success of pupils in a variety of ways. There are good examples in the physical education department and within the hearing impaired unit. In mathematics lessons teachers were seen fostering a sense of wonder whilst studying the theory of Pythagoras and in an art lesson a group of pupils looked for the deeper meaning of intimidation, threat and oppression whilst looking at Goya's picture of Colossus. Within religious education pupils have opportunities to consider their own beliefs and study a range of world religions, although the latter is mainly in a purely factual way. Pupils have opportunities to empathise, for example, in a history lesson where they considered the feelings of soldiers in the trenches of the First World War.
39. The provision for moral development is very good; pupils are expected to behave well and care for others and are given good role models by staff. The effectiveness of the strong moral framework is seen in the good behaviour of pupils around school when unsupervised, and in the respect for property left unattended during lunch-breaks. A sense of fair play is evident in physical education lessons; when playing games pupils respect the decisions of referees and demonstrate a good team spirit. Moral themes are included by a number of departments. In English lessons moral choices and the implication of these choices are considered. In geography the issues of wealth and poverty are considered when looking at real issues; in history, pupils consider the moral implications of the holocaust and the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. In religious education, pupils cover a range of moral issues within lessons and in all years including animal rights,

divorce, environmental conflicts and the conflicts of war and peace are considered. In all cases, pupils are asked to consider differing views, secular and religious, and to begin to formulate their own ideas.

40. Pupils' social development is good. Pupils consider various aspects of social life, such as unemployment in the American depression, social relationships and social class when studying various texts in English and employment structures and their impact on society in geography. There are opportunities within lessons when pupils work together in pairs and in small groups: these involve a range of activities and pupils work very well together. The composition of the groups vary and pupils of all abilities were seen working well together. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, both formal and informal, and these enable pupils of different ages to work together, especially in games and music. The work experience placements are good and make a contribution to pupils' transition to the adult world. There are also opportunities for pupils to gain social experience in other ways such as helping in the Summer Numeracy School, acting as guides at the open evening for new pupils, as members of the school council and as individuals, as seen by the pupil who checks the security cameras. All of these opportunities help in the development of the pupils; over 90 per cent of parents who completed the questionnaire indicated that the school is helping their children to become mature adults.
41. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although cultural development is not included in the school aims. The pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and other Western cultures, but there are not enough opportunities to study the wider aspects of life in a multicultural society. The history department arranges visits to the battlefields of Normandy and the modern language department arranges trips to France and Belgium. In geography lessons, pupils study a wider range of cultures in geographical areas studied. Within the music department, the multicultural aspect is good, including music from Japan, China and India with a group of Indian musicians visiting the school. However, opportunities are missed in subjects such as religious education where cultures are studied in rather a detached way, and in both art and design and technology where the consideration of different cultures is under-developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Overall the school has good procedures for providing a caring and safe environment for its pupils, in which they can successfully pursue their learning. These judgements compare favourably with the previous inspection.
43. The school has designated male and female child protection officers. They have ensured that staff has been made very well aware of their relevant responsibilities. All new teachers receive child protection mentoring as part of their initial induction process. The school has an effective liaison with the local authority social services and the police child protection team. Although the school utilises the local authority Child Protection Manual it also has its own relevant policy. All pertinent documentation is securely locked away.
44. The school has a clear health and safety policy. There are efficient and caring routines for reporting accidents, administration of medicines and helping sick pupils. Six members of staff are currently trained first aiders. However, although the school carries out regular health and safety checks, it does not currently possess an overall risk assessment document.
45. The school makes good use of outside agencies, such as the school nurse and the educational psychologist. The police visit the school regularly to talk about drugs, personal safety and even utilise mock legal court cases. The school supports its more vulnerable pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, very well. There are sensitive and efficient routines for the pupils' transfer from primary school and into further education. All long-term excluded pupils are provided with work at home, to ensure continuity of their learning.
46. The school has effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The school has a detailed written behaviour policy with appropriate rewards and sanctions. All pupils are made very well aware of these from the moment that they join the school. They are also printed in all pupils' record books. The school council can debate these rules at any time. Where bad behaviour persists, senior staff initiate appropriate behaviour plans. The school implements its anti-bullying policy well. Minor incidents are dealt with by the subject

teacher and more serious ones reported to senior staff and parents. All are recorded and monitored with care.

47. The school also has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and this ensures a satisfactory level of attendance. Good use is made of the local educational welfare officer to follow up on pupil absence.
48. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. A member of the special educational needs support service team from the local education authority helps pupils to manage their feelings and behaviour. She works with individuals and teachers and enables pupils to get the best from their school experience. There are 'drop-in' sessions for pupils to seek help and support in coming to terms with the range of difficulties that young people face.
49. The school's policy and practice on special educational needs meets statutory requirements. Pupils' needs are identified and appropriate flexible responses are made which are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Diagnostic assessments of pupils' needs are carried out well, (for example in reading and spelling). These are used to plan individuals' work and to inform teachers; results are shared with the pupils and their parents.
50. The arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are assessed much more frequently and attainment in Years 7, 8 and 9 is judged in terms of National Curriculum criteria. After central collation and analysis, the data is passed to form tutors and heads of year so that they can be used in monitoring of pupils' progress. Heads of departments are now rightly required to use this data each term to identify under-performing pupils. Beyond this, the use of assessment data is very uneven across subject departments. Not all of them are using assessments to track pupils' progress over time; this needs to be rectified. However, some subjects are making good use of the data to give a sharper focus to both teaching and learning. In mathematics, for example, the data informs the targets that are set for each class. In science, the target-setting goes further to provide individual pupils with realistic targets to achieve. The school needs to use these good exemplars to spread good practice across the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school's links with its parents are satisfactory overall and contribute well to the children's learning. Comments made at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and on returned questionnaires, show that many parents believe that Shirley High School is a good school and the right one for their children. Parents state that their children like school and make good progress. They believe that the school expects pupils to work and achieve their best whilst at the same time becoming mature and responsible citizens. Three in every ten of parents who responded to the questionnaire were not happy with the school's approach to homework. However, inspection evidence shows that teachers generally set homework in line with the reasonable school policy. Homework is recorded in pupils' record books in which there is space for parental comment.
52. One in every five parents who completed the questionnaire returns is not happy with the school's arrangements for reporting pupils' progress. The procedures meet statutory requirements but are perceived as piecemeal and cumbersome. The school is aware of these views and is considering further consultation on changes to make in reporting. Although all parents receive regular newsletters and other similar communications, the current prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not comply fully with current statutory requirements. The school provides a good range of open evenings and times when parents can talk to staff about their children's progress or problems.
53. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good as is the overall impact of parental involvement on the work of the school. Parents help with computer work, compile manuals, provide equipment and even set up on-line e-mail links to help with pupils' transfer to further education. Other parents help to run sports teams by refereeing football and netball games. Further examples include a trampoline and a badminton coach. Many parents help with visits out of school.
54. There is an energetic parent teachers association which provides food and refreshments at social

functions and contributes considerable sums of money towards pupils' education. With these additional funds, the school has purchased a minibus, a digital camera and a range of equipment for all departments.

55. The learning support department has a good relationship with the parents of pupils with special educational needs; for example, annual review meetings are attended by all parents of pupils with statements. Parents contribute to their children's individual education plans. Informal communication between the school and parents is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Leadership and management are good. Immediately prior to the inspection, the headteacher was admitted to hospital for an operation. The quality of his leadership and the effective management structures in place were illustrated by the effectiveness of the acting headteacher and senior staff in his absence. Standards have improved since the last inspection because senior staff have introduced monitoring and evaluation procedures to support teachers in implementing the school's teaching and learning policy. The headteacher and senior management team generate and maintain a positive atmosphere amongst staff and pupils, which establishes a good learning environment. Governors have approved a school performance management policy after consultation with staff. Objectives for teachers have been set in line with statutory requirements.
57. The development plan is comprehensive, detailed and well structured, with clearly defined targets. Lines of communication within the school are clear, open and effective, which contributes to the unity between teaching and support staff. The school carefully monitors and evaluates its performance, and knows its strengths and weaknesses. Whenever possible, it takes effective action to secure improvements. These aspects of management are good. The comprehensive assessment data in the school is analysed well but it is not always used by teachers in their planning or in setting targets for pupils' performance. The general quality of teaching is good but there is no room for complacency. In a significant minority of lessons, teachers set work that does not enable individual pupils to achieve as well as they could, either because it is too easy or, less often, too hard.
58. Members of the senior management team visit lessons regularly and know where the strengths in teaching and pupils' learning are located. Most heads of department monitor teaching and standards in their subjects, though these procedures could be strengthened. The management of the art department is weak and this has an adverse impact on pupils' attainment.
59. The governing body operates well and provides good support for the school. Governors adopt a sensible 'critical friend' approach to the development of the school. They are successful in securing additional funding so that pupils can receive as much individual attention as possible. They are sensitive to the range of pupils' cultural and social backgrounds, and work hard to involve parents and the local community.
60. The learning support department is managed well, with clear educational direction. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs and finds creative ways to ensure that it is not cumbersome or unworkable. The local education authority teachers and the school staff work well together. There is good support and communication with personal support assistants every week from special needs teachers. The department has good support from, and management by, the senior management team. There is also good liaison with heads of year and heads of department. There are link teachers for pupils with special educational needs in each department and this is a useful source of communication and development. For example, the learning support department has worked with middle managers to set subject targets for individual education plans. However, further work is needed to ensure that, in lessons, teachers develop strategies to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
61. Staff responsible for administration, community liaison and the maintenance of the site and buildings contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school.
62. Effective induction and mentoring are provided for newly qualified and newly appointed teachers, and are supplemented by a very comprehensive handbook. The programme for staff development is good and is integrated into the school's performance management policy. Numerous training opportunities are available each year for individual teachers and the whole staff. The school has a

good programme for long-term professional development.

63. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is good in mathematics, science and history, but unsatisfactory in music. Inadequate ventilation and the lack of a hood over the brazing area in the design and technology workshops are potential health hazards. The library is pleasant and well furnished and a good resource for pupils' learning, but is small for the size of school. The school buildings are generally maintained in a satisfactory condition, but much exterior woodwork to the rear of the main block is decayed.
64. Resources are satisfactory overall, and are good in physical education. They are just adequate in modern languages and in religious education. In design and technology, obsolete tools and equipment are adversely affecting the quality of pupils' work. The music department has too few computers and keyboards. Some modern computers are available in the library, but not enough machines have access to the Internet.
65. Financial planning is good. The governors' finance committee meets regularly and is well informed. An annual planning cycle for the school development plan is implemented by the senior management team. Subject development plans and those of other budget holders, such as the special educational needs co-ordinator, are linked to the school plan and monitored by senior staff. The budget is managed well. It includes an appropriate sum which has been accumulated to improve facilities for the performing arts in the school. Financial control is good. The finance manager is very efficient in administering the budget and keeping track of spending. Routine management and administration are efficient and good records of all the ancillary accounts are kept. The very recent audit was satisfactory and included only a few minor recommendations that have since been fully implemented.
66. Resources, including grants by central government and the local education authority, are used effectively and have a good impact on pupils' learning. For example, pupils' performance in national tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations are well above the average when compared with similar schools. All funds for pupils with special educational needs are used correctly and efficiently. The school applies the principle of best value well in its use of resources.
67. Pupils' attainment on entry is near to the average for comprehensive schools and attendance is average. By the end of Year 11, attainment is at the national average and pupils' achievement is well above average compared to similar schools. The deployment of staff makes effective use of their expertise and a high percentage of teaching is good. These factors, considered in relation to very high costs per pupil, indicate that the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) make more effective use of assessment and performance data by:
 - using it to guide teachers in lesson planning;
 - responding to variations between subjects and groups of pupils and identifying specific targets in these areas;
- [Paragraphs 22, 50, 60, 85, 97, 107, 118, 149, 155, 192, 196]

- (2) improve teaching in the small proportion of lessons in which pupils do not make as much progress as they could, by:
- monitoring and supporting classroom teaching by the senior management team and heads of department;
 - greater sharing of good practice between departments and teachers.
- [Paragraphs 22, 23, 29, 97, 107, 118, 143, 177, 197]
- (3) improve standards in art by:
- increasing the range of teaching methods and sharing good practice in the department;
 - planning lessons that extend pupils' abilities;
 - improving management procedures.
- [Paragraphs 108 – 118]
- (4) improve the way that the school reports on pupils' progress by:
- consulting with all parents on how communications between the school and home can be made more effective – a model for this already exists in the occasional questionnaires completed by pupils.
- [Paragraph 52]

The following matters are identified as weaknesses which should be considered by the school:

- review time allocation for some subjects;
[Paragraphs 31, 32, 96, 186]
- provision for modern foreign languages for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
[Paragraphs 28, 170]
- improve accommodation in music when opportunity and resources are available.
[Paragraphs 64, 179]

HEARING RESOURCE CENTRE

69. The Hearing Resource Centre (HRC) for Croydon is based at the school. It is for pupils with severe or profound hearing loss. The 'Natural Aural' approach" to communication is used, which encourages pupils to use their residual hearing as much as possible and to lip-read. The high standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. This is a good reflection on the two part-time teachers who have been managing the service in the absence of a teacher in charge for the last year and to the good team work.
70. Achievements of pupils with hearing impairment are at least as good as those of other pupils and some achieve above expectations, succeeding well in examinations. The progress they make, using the 'Natural Aural' approach, considering the severity of their hearing loss, is very good. Their progress is maximised by their very good attitudes to school and the mature way in which they approach all their work and difficulties. They work very hard, concentrate well and ask questions to deepen their understanding. They remain positive about school and maintain the additional effort needed to keep up with their work. They take responsibility for giving their Radio Aid transmitter to others to maximise their residual hearing. They are all confident to seek help from the HRC staff when they need it.
71. The teaching provided by the HRC support staff is very good. The hearing impaired teachers and specialist support assistants (SSAs) have very good knowledge of how to assist hearing impaired pupils using the 'Natural Aural' approach. They have high expectations of pupils' abilities and attitudes and their very good assessment ensures that each individual's needs are provided for in a structured and, if necessary, flexible way. In lessons, support includes discussion to back up teachers' explanations, definitions of words used, repeating instructions, asking and answering questions: these help pupils to clarify and deepen their understanding and maximise their learning. For example, in a French lesson, the support teacher repeated points made by the teacher, using a good French accent. Withdrawal tutorial support is also very good and includes support for subject lessons. For example, subject specific vocabulary such as solidity in science is linked to changing state from a gas to a liquid to a solid to help the pupil understand the concept fully.

72. Most subject teachers ensure their teaching approach in lessons is appropriate for the pupils with hearing loss. They are conscientious about wearing transmitters and ensure that pupils wear radio aids. Where the approach is particularly successful, teachers use diagrams, expressive and dramatic presentation, humour, objects and their hands to demonstrate concepts and links new ideas to everyday situations. For example, in a science lesson a teacher showed that movement is caused by unbalanced forces by pushing her hands against each other and this simple demonstration was built on by the support teacher. However, on some occasions, teachers turn away from the class or look down, forgetting that hearing impaired pupils need to lip-read.
73. Most hearing impaired pupils study one language instead of two and the time gained is spent in tutorials in the HRC. This includes support and preparation for mainstream lessons carefully focussed on the individual's needs as well as additional language and grammar work. Written commentaries are provided of class videos and work that is missed. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are advised to take the supported option which means they undertake one less examination course and have extra time. There is appropriate flexibility about which subjects pupils need to study and the amount of support they receive. Very good assessment of pupils' language, grammar and basic skills informs the way that support is provided. In this way the HRC achieves a good balance between supporting pupils to be included in the main school and providing for their individual needs. Individual education plans are good and the Code of Practice for special educational needs is fully met. The HRC and the local education authority's hearing support service need to decide who should initiate the updating of statements. There are good procedures to ensure that Radio Aids are worn by pupils and teachers wear transmitters in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility themselves for these and their hearing aids.
74. The department is well managed by two part-time teachers from the local education authority's Hearing Resource Service. There are good communication systems, both formal and informal, and relationships are positive between staff and with pupils. A supportive but not over protective atmosphere has been created. There are clear channels of communication and management with the school and from the Hearing Resource Service. The HRC is aware that it is necessary to appoint a full-time teacher and additional steps have been taken to achieve this.
75. The HRC works with teachers and pupils to encourage awareness of the needs of pupils with hearing loss. For example, deaf awareness has been studied in personal and social education lessons in Year 7. There is a further need to ensure that the good practice of some teachers is consistently carried out across the school. Teachers also need to be encouraged to take responsibility for the way in which SSAs work with hearing impaired pupils in their lessons. For example, they need to negotiate where pupils and support staff should sit to ensure that hearing impaired pupils have the best opportunity to be socially part of the group whilst also being helped with their learning in the best way possible. The accommodation for the HRC is satisfactory. It is small and overheated but very well organised and used efficiently. The staffing is good overall. Very good expertise is provided by the hearing impaired teachers and SSAs use their initiative and extend their roles. Flexibility to provide additional staff is arranged through the HRS. Resources are good. There are sufficient radio aids and transmitters, computers, video recorders, tape recorders and textbooks to back up class work are all available. There are good links with parents.
76. The pupils with hearing impairment provide a positive role model to other pupils. The inclusion of these pupils is achieved in a calm and uncomplicated way, backed by the HRC in the background. It is an asset to the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	171
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
1	12	50	35	2	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
Number of pupils on the school's roll	916
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	136

Special educational needs	Y7-Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	185

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	90

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	46

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8.0	School data	0.3
National comparative data	7.9	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
	2000	93	84	177

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	64	53
	Girls	69	58	52
	Total	130	122	105
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (83)	68 (70)	59 (57)
	National	63 (64)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (35)	41 (38)	19 (23)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	66	63	50
	Girls	74	61	58
	Total	140	124	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (81)	70 (71)	61 (61)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	56 (36)	38 (42)	34 (27)
	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

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	88	79	167

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	32	84	87
	Girls	44	78	79
	Total	76	162	166
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	43.9 (44.7)	97.0 (96.2)	99.4 (98.7)
	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	39.7 (38.5)
	National	38.7 (38.0)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	64
Black – African heritage	29
Black – other	32
Indian	41
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	5
White	708
Any other minority ethnic group	25

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	1
Black – African heritage	2	0
Black – other	6	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	37	4
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	56.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	366

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.5
Key Stage 4	21.3

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2,443,542
Total expenditure	2,415,624
Expenditure per pupil	2,676
Balance brought forward from previous year	120,263
Balance carried forward to next year	148,181

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	916
Number of questionnaires returned	120

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	52	8	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	50	8	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	56	10	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	48	24	6	0
The teaching is good.	23	62	6	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	45	14	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	43	6	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	42	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	46	18	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	30	52	7	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	57	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	56	4	2	12

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

ENGLISH

77. Pupils' average points scores at level 5 and higher and level 6 and higher in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were well above the national average and broadly in line with those of 1999. Girls outperformed boys by a margin smaller than that found nationally. English results were also well above average in comparison with similar schools. During 1998 to 2000 English test results were above national averages. The trend in results since 1997 is rising at a rate faster than that nationally.
78. The proportion of GCSE grades A* to C in English language in 2000 fell below the national average for the first time since 1998. The proportion of A* to C grades gained in English literature was well above the average. Literature results have improved steadily since 1998. The percentage of GCSE A* to G results in both subjects was above national comparisons. In both subjects girls outperformed boys in 2000 by margins much greater than that nationally. Pupils entered for English language in 2000 performed better than in mathematics and science but below the average of all their other GCSEs, while their results in English literature were significantly better. This reverses the pattern of the 1999 English results of both boys and girls. The trend over time is thus inconsistent.
79. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are above the national average overall in both key stages. At the end of Year 9, pupils speak confidently and relevantly, contribute well to group work and usually listen carefully. Answers to teachers' questions tend to be brief, but pupils develop confidence in using subject-specific terminology through the year groups. Reading aloud is clear and careful, and pupils tackle unfamiliar language competently. Several find difficulty in retrieving information from texts, though their comprehension is satisfactory. Written work is usually carefully presented and most pupils try to write legibly. Lower-attaining pupils' work is frequently brief, closely resembles speech and lacks variation in style and sentence structure. Most pupils' work demonstrates basic grammatical competence and satisfactory standards of spelling and punctuation. Many pupils mistakenly assume that word-processing obviates the need for proof-reading. The best writing is fluent, well sustained, and varies in style to suit its subject and audience.
80. At the end of Year 11, inspection evidence shows that standards are above average and are better than previous GCSE results indicate. Pupils can generate good quality discussion, which indicates a sound understanding of ideas and a readiness to listen to peers and teachers. Reading comprehension is generally good, though significant numbers find difficulty with inference and deduction. Reading aloud is accurate and sometimes expressive. Confidence and fluency sometimes improves within a single lesson. Written work is broadly in line with expectations. The best work is intelligent, written in a mature style; it sometimes contains perceptive comments, or is lively and imaginative. Most pupils write with care. Some can use evidence and quotation to support their views, but much writing lacks detail and steady focus. Pupils usually match their style to suit their purpose. Girls' writing is generally better than that of boys.
81. Rates of progress are good overall. Progress is less marked in Year 7, where pupils lack the specialist teaching of language skills. Progress over time, as seen in writing, is satisfactory in all years, with girls generally making greater gains than boys. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, which improves when they are taught in small groups, or provided with well targeted in-class support. Those with English as an additional language also progress satisfactorily across the years. Gifted and talented pupils progress well, particularly beyond Year 7.
82. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in all years. They are almost always well motivated and keen to learn. Relationships with peers and teachers are very constructive. Pupils behave well overall in lessons and sometimes enjoy their work. They occasionally lack confidence as learners, but usually concentrate well. The great majority takes care over the presentation of classwork and homework.
83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.

Standards of learning are good in all years. Teaching is good in four out of every ten lessons, and satisfactory in the remainder in Years 7, 8 and 9. For Years 10 and 11 the figures are nearly nine out of every ten that are good and satisfactory in the remainder. A very good lesson on poetry in Year 11 exemplifies many strengths seen elsewhere: pupils worked well in groups and had a good grasp of the outline of the topic. The teacher's excellent relationships and skilful management ensured that all these lively pupils remained on task. Pupils were resourceful learners who built on their earlier knowledge and knew where to seek help. Assured teacher-knowledge was buttressed by systematic planning which provided variation in activities to sustain the momentum of learning, and provided opportunities for reflection. There was much good work also in a Year 9 lesson on "Macbeth", where the teacher conducted some lively oral activities as a prelude to writing. Major strengths in English teaching are the management of, and relationships with, pupils. Lessons provide a supportive learning environment.

84. Marking of work is regular and accurate: comments are sometimes extensive and set pupils targets for development. Teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently high, so that consistent challenge is lacking, for example, in lessons in Year 7 and Year 9, and some teachers do not sufficiently match work to the range of pupils' attainment within setted groups. Teachers' use of learning objectives in the classroom is inconsistent. Some good learning is evident in all years. For example, pupils gained noticeably in confidence during a Year 8 lesson on a 19th century poem and learned something of the power of individual words to create moods and 'pictures'. Year 10 pupils in two different lessons on "Macbeth" were actively involved in their own learning and worked productively. In most lessons, pupils are clear about the nature of their tasks.
85. Leadership and management in English are satisfactory. Team ethos and levels of communication within the team are good. Steps have been taken to resolve the main issues in the previous inspection report: policy and strategies are in place to improve spelling, and are proving effective; opportunities for independent reading have been improved and monitoring instituted; pupils' oral skills have progressed. The use of learning objectives is still being developed. Individual teachers determine their curriculum plans within a broad overall framework of the scheme of work. This sometimes makes an evaluation of teachers' overall coverage of the curriculum difficult to assess. Information on the assessment information that pupils bring with them from primary school is not used to provide baseline assessment for individual target setting and tracking of progress. Teachers need to engage in shared, detailed curriculum planning; for example, in agreeing a strategy for teaching specific language skills in Year 7. In addition, better use needs to be made of assessment data for individual target setting and tracking through the further development of an assessment and record-keeping policy. This will help to raise standards by enabling teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs.

Drama

86. Drama is taught as a discrete subject in Years 7 and 8, and Years 10 and 11. In Year 7, the teaching is shared with an English teacher. With a small number of pupils entered, the proportion of GCSE grades A* to C gained in 2000 was close to national averages, continuing the trend of steady improvement since 1998. Girls outperformed boys by a margin much greater than that nationally.
87. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' standards of attainment are rising and are at least average by the end of both key stages. In Years 7 and 8 pupils use basic drama techniques of dialogue and stance to create brief roles in pair work, and can also generate controlled tension very effectively. Year 10 and 11 pupils write well in journals and evaluations. Irrespective of their academic attainment levels, all participate well in discussion and practical work, and can sustain roles well by use of space, improvised dialogue, movement and facial expression. Many make sensitive and positive evaluations of peers' work. They work together well to solve problems of interpreting and representing situations.
88. Pupils' attitudes are good in Years 7 and 8 and excellent Years 10 and 11. In all years they find drama interesting and enjoyable. In Years 7 and 8 their work becomes more effective as it gathers pace and concentration. One or two individuals find difficulty in keeping their attention focused. In Years 10 and 11 pupils take their work seriously and develop good group responsibility.

89. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages. Teachers plan and manage their lessons extremely well. They work with enthusiasm and energy and demonstrate their knowledge of various dramatic techniques. A very good Year 11 lesson on role play showed how the teacher's high expectation of work and behaviour were fully justified. Careful and thoughtful teacher-led evaluations at regular stages of the work deepened pupils' understanding and appreciation, and the teacher used questions skilfully. Good pacing and a sequence of varied activities sustained pupils' concentration. Pupils worked very hard to create brief scenes and to analyse some of the techniques used by other groups.
90. Drama is led by a skilled and enthusiastic teacher. The handbook is useful and is being augmented with practical documents. There is much extra-curricular drama. Small-scale presentations to a school and parental audiences are frequent, in addition to annual whole-school drama and music productions. Pupils are now required to complete small written assignments in Years 7 and 8 as good preparation for GCSE; this work is marked very thoroughly and consistently. Pupils and the school would benefit from having drama included in the Year 9 curriculum.

Literacy

91. Literacy develops satisfactorily across the school. A draft school policy is in place, staff have received training, and strategies are being implemented effectively in most departments. Some lessons observed in geography, business education and design technology contained an emphasis on literacy. Teachers of modern foreign languages promote reading in the target language and are achieving improvements in pupils' presentation of work. All subject areas emphasise key words and many use writing-frames. Science staff are adopting pupil-friendly texts, and most others make use of spelling or vocabulary lists. Marking sometimes shows a consistent approach to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' oral skills develop well, for they can speak clearly and confidently (though rarely are they required to do so at any length) and use subject terminology satisfactorily. They listen well. Their reading skills are mostly sufficient to meet curricular demands and levels of comprehension are satisfactory. Writing is also broadly satisfactory: most are able to make notes, and subjects that require extended writing encourage pupils to plan and redraft their work. In English, some pupils in all years produce lively, imaginative writing. Pupils with English as an additional language have good access to the whole curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

92. The overall attainment of the Year 7 entrants to the school has improved over recent years and is now broadly average. National test results at the end of Year 9 have steadily improved and the most recent results of 2000 for both boys and girls are in line with the national average for all schools. When the national test results for 1999 are compared with those of similar schools, Shirley High emerges very favourably. At the end of Year 11, the school enters an above-average proportion of the Year 11 cohort in the GCSE mathematics examinations yet, to its credit, the percentage of pupils gaining grades A* to G also compares favourably with the national average. In the GCSE results of 2000, the proportion of girls gaining the higher grades A* to C is close to the national average but boys' performance is well below bringing the overall percentage below average. Nevertheless, this represents satisfactory progress across Years 10 and 11 for boys as well as girls because the attainment differential existed in that cohort at the end of Year 9. The overall proportion gaining the grades A* to C in 2000 differs little from that at the time of the previous inspection and is below the results in all the intervening years. The school attributes this disappointing performance to an exceptional group of poorly motivated pupils in the 2000 cohort; it brought the mathematics results below the aggregated results across other subjects.
93. Currently, pupils' attainment is broadly at the national average in all year groups. In particular, Year 11 pupils are on track to achieve better results at GCSE than those of 2000 and are achieving satisfactorily. By the end of Year 9, all pupils can interpret a simple travel graph and have met the idea of probability while the abler pupils are starting to use trigonometry to solve problems. By the end of Year 11, all pupils can enlarge shapes by a given scale factor. Higher attaining pupils have reasonably secure algebraic skills enabling them, for example, to solve equations using either algebraic or graphical methods. Pupils' investigative skills are appropriately developed to meet the requirements of GCSE coursework.

94. Pupils' attitudes to learning were at least satisfactory in almost all the lessons and in three-quarters they were good or very good; this is an unusually high proportion. Attitudes were unsatisfactory in only one lesson in every ten and even in these cases it was only a small minority of pupils who were not sufficiently motivated to use lesson time productively. The pupils' positive commitment owes much to the high quality of relationships with their teachers which encourages them to give of their best. This was exemplified in a lesson where Year 11 pupils were using computers to refresh their knowledge of the angle properties of polygons; their enthusiastic and fruitful participation in the lesson stemmed directly from the teacher's careful preparation and the cordiality of classroom relationships.
95. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons observed and in nearly half it was good or occasionally very good or excellent with the best teaching occurring in Years 10 and 11. Although no lessons were unsatisfactory, overall there were some with specific shortcomings. These occurred when teachers' rapid speech detracted from the clarity of their teaching and also when lesson planning had not been sufficiently ambitious to make fully productive use of lesson time. The most effective teaching reflected careful preparation and good communication skills enabling teachers to project the subject with interest and to foster pupils' thinking. Homework is set regularly. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and carefully, often including additional helpful comments. The consistency with which teachers use this medium to communicate their interest in and concern for individual pupils represents a strength of the teaching in mathematics.
96. The pupils were learning satisfactorily in about half the lessons seen while in the other half learning was good or very good. The most effective learning occurs at Years 10 and 11. Unsatisfactory progress did not occur in lessons although, for the lower attaining pupils, progress over time is constrained by poor retention of earlier learning. The pupils with special educational needs generally maintain progress with their peers particularly when additional support is available in the classroom. In the case of pupils with learning needs in mathematics there is inadequate identification of their individual learning requirements and consequently classroom support does not always focus on crucially important topics. Teachers are careful to place a strong emphasis on the specialist vocabulary of mathematics especially when some pupils in the class are meeting English as a second language. The time allocated to mathematics in Years 7, 8 and 9 is below national average. This constrains the proper use of information technology to enhance learning in mathematics and is also impeding the introduction of the National Numeracy Project. Another unhelpful factor adversely affecting attainment is the current necessity for the teaching of some classes to be split between two teachers.
97. A relatively new head of department is giving strong leadership in mathematics. With a clear focus towards improving pupils' attainment, schemes of work have been revised and good use is now being made of assessments to monitor pupils' progress. Complementing the school's own arrangements, the mathematics department has its own scheme to check poor effort and under-performance. The teaching has improved overall. Standards have risen at the end of Year 9 and, although advance has been inconsistent at GCSE, standards are now set to improve here too. Thus, mainly satisfactory progress has been made in tackling the issues that arose from the previous inspection report.

Numeracy

98. Most pupils have reasonable knowledge of number exemplified by a familiarity with percentages. However, a majority are insecure in the flexible application of this knowledge and consequently it is mostly the higher attaining pupils who are comfortable with the equivalents between percentages, fractions and decimals and can use confidently their skills of mental arithmetic. The school is well aware of weaknesses in numeracy and accordingly mathematics teachers are introducing the National Numeracy Project into the programme of work for the younger classes. As so many of the older pupils also have weaknesses in mental arithmetic there is a need to give greater emphasis to these skills in Years 10 and 11. Numeracy is used beyond mathematics lessons to support learning in a range of other subjects. For example, graphs are used well to assist the interpretation of experimental results in science while in geography they are often deployed to assist the comparison of data. Overall, the application of mathematical knowledge and skills across the curriculum is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

99. By the end of Year 9, attainment is close to the national average. There has been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection. In 1995 attainment in national tests was well below the national average but in 1999 and 2000 attainment was average. For several years, boys' and girls' relative performances have been similar and show a trend that is in line with that seen nationally. Science results in the 2000 national tests were below those in English and mathematics; pupils did not perform as well at the higher levels. Attainment in science is also average when compared to similar schools. Present standards are in line with national averages. Investigative skills develop satisfactorily but there is scope for more opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves in all aspects of science. Pupils make predictions and plan a fair test of a hypothesis. Year 7 pupils correctly calculate the upthrust in water on various objects during a lesson on floating and sinking. Most pupils remain on task during lessons and complete the work set. Year 9 pupils understand the differences between exothermic and endothermic reactions.
100. By the end of Year 11, standards are close to the national average but below those in mathematics and English. However, GCSE results are showing an upward trend since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C GCSE grades improved significantly in 2000 and the proportion achieving A* to G grades is above the national average. This improvement has been the result of determined efforts by the headteacher and senior staff to raise standards in the subject. Boys achieved similar results to girls.
101. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 shows that standards are average across all aspects of science. Many Year 11 pupils can discuss homeostasis with confidence and Year 10 pupils can answer questions about the effects of catalysts on rates of reactions. A Year 11 group correctly displayed data gathered from a biology experiment on variation in characteristics by histograms and line graphs. Another Year 11 group completed a set of calculations involving electricity without problems. During the inspection, little difference was seen in the standards of pupils between physics, chemistry or biology.
102. Teachers make a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A high emphasis is placed on technical vocabulary and teachers try hard to ensure that pupils have grasped new words and their spelling. Plenty of opportunity is given for pupils to read aloud and frequent use is made of cloze tests. Experimental reports are neat and tidy with few spelling mistakes, despite the use of some difficult scientific vocabulary. Handwriting, punctuation and grammar are good. Diagrams are neatly drawn and labelled and tables of results from experiments are carefully produced.
103. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Progress is better in Years 9 and 11 as pupils prepare for the national tests and GCSE examinations. There is little significant difference in attainment of boys and girls. Mixed gender seating and practical work groups are encouraged. Text books have been introduced which include topics that encourage all groups of pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding.
104. Behaviour is generally good. However, teachers do vary in their effectiveness in encouraging pupils to express their own ideas and to extend their understanding by individual research. Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and work together supportively in groups or in paired work when required.
105. Teaching is at least satisfactory at both key stages. Strengths include good subject knowledge and well-planned lessons. In a Year 11 lesson, planning met the needs of individual pupils effectively when examining the effects of drug-taking on water control in the body. Pupils were motivated and made good progress in their knowledge and understanding. A variety of teaching strategies is used and objectives are clearly defined so that pupils know at the beginning of the lesson what they are going to do. Good clear explanations and instructions are given and reinforced where necessary. Lesson reviews are well focused and effectively pull the lesson together. Weaknesses include expectations that are not high enough to get the best out of pupils, inconsistency between teachers in classroom management and a lack of application of information technology skills. Improving these elements, together with extending the range of teaching styles, are important factors in continuing to raise standards.

106. The school homework policy is strictly adhered to, and teachers ensure that it is recorded in pupils' work record books. Marking is regular, encouraging praise and includes constructive criticism where necessary. Regular assessment tests are helping to raise standards. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are diagnosed and targets are set, although these targets could be pitched at a higher level for many pupils. Records of pupil achievement are kept centrally and access is readily available to all staff. Pupils know what level they are working at. New schemes of work introduced since the last inspection have made a difference and are helping to motivate pupils, as are new textbooks. An increase in the amount of practical work in all years has raised the profile of science positively for most pupils. Extra-curricular revision lessons contribute to rising standards.
107. The head of department provides good and increasingly effective leadership and the subject is managed well. Technicians provide good support in the preparation and maintenance of equipment. Monitoring of teaching takes place on a regular basis and subsequent support for teachers is contributing to a rise in the quality of learning. The attainment during the inspection indicates that the targets set by the department for 2001 are achievable. However, improvements described above need to be sustained if the subject is to achieve parity of standards with English and mathematics.

ART

108. Attainment in art is below the national average at the end of both key stages. Many pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils do not have the level of drawing skills, knowledge and understanding of art expected for their age and ability.
109. By the age of 16, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE A* to C and A* to G grades is well below the national average. These results reflect a very significant drop in standards since the last inspection.
110. The use of sketch books for collecting information is developing well in some classes but their use for recording ideas and investigations is not well established from Year 7 onwards. Observational drawing is not central to the work of the department in developing skills of analysis. However, it is used successfully in a few lessons. A Year 7 class, studying the works of Matisse, link previous techniques to build on their understanding and skills of drawing with particular reference to shape, space and line. The work of pupils in Year 9 is below national expectations; especially their understanding of the basic elements of colour, composition and perspective.
111. While there is some emphasis on drawing from observation in Years 10 and 11, a large number of these pupils are copying illustrations from books and magazines. Critical studies do not occupy a large enough place in the curriculum. Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to study in depth the art of other cultures and a broad range of European artists. Skills of modelling in clay are weak and drawing skills are under-developed.
112. Much of the work is unchallenging. There are insufficient opportunities for all pupils, including the gifted and talented, to develop their ability. Those pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the caring nature of the teacher and make satisfactory progress.
113. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in the department are generally good. They generally respect their teachers and the fabric of the department. They are good listeners, even when the lessons are unsatisfactory. They appreciate and respond well to advice, enjoy their art, especially when they are interested and doing something well. However, they are reluctant to use their initiative or to accept responsibility for their work.
114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory generally but it varies considerably from very good to unsatisfactory. A key feature of the very good teaching is the teacher's subject knowledge and the broad range of teaching styles used. The very good lessons positively promote pupils' interest and a good pace of work. Pupils are provided with a clear focus for learning. Expectations are high and the standards of work are monitored and supported by clear advice. Quality resources are used selectively to promote learning and understanding of styles and techniques. High standards of creative effort and behaviour are clear, and the teacher's

enthusiasm and genuine feel for the subject generate co-operation and a good learning atmosphere.

115. In a very good Year 9 lesson, 'Giants and Ogres', the teacher used the work of previous pupils to demonstrate the standard she expected and other artists' work to explain the context, materials and media. Through careful questioning she ensured pupils understood the meaning portrayed in Goya's painting of the Colossus to enable them to interpret the feelings of intimidation in their figure drawing. As a result, pupils were so interested they looked for deeper meanings and linked their thinking to the works of other artists. In unsatisfactory lessons, techniques are not fully explained and teaching styles are too narrow to motivate and sustain learning. The content is too easy and there is a lack of stimulating resources to promote interest and extend pupils' knowledge. Teaching expertise with the subject material and knowledge of the pupils is limited. Expectations are low and pupils are working well below their ability. In a Year 7 lesson, on aboriginal art, pupils copied notes from worksheets. Very little time is used to extend their learning and to explore the unique qualities, styles and techniques used to inform their own work.
116. In a particularly effective Year 10 lesson the teacher encourages pupils to work independently and responsibly by allocating specific tasks, linked to artists, with guidance and comprehensive, supportive points with particular reference to 'contrasts'. She is well aware of individual needs. Using praise selectively, she questions pupils in turn to extend their learning and understanding. In a less effective lesson, work is not matched successfully to the abilities in the group. Resources are not readily available to support independent learning and the teaching styles used do not sufficiently engage, motivate and challenge all the pupils to learn. Too many pupils are drawing from pictures, the pace of work is slow and expectations are low and some pupils have low self-esteem.
117. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a range of opportunities for pupils to work in painting and drawing, ceramics, collage and sculpture. Time allocation is below the national average in Years 7, 8 and 9. The use of information technology is not integrated into the curriculum. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with textiles. The documentation does not represent the best practices seen in the department and the main documentation has not been updated since the last inspection to rectify the issues reported. Progression and the opportunities for independent learning are not clearly identified. Links with the wider community and places of interest have not been developed to extend pupils' experiences in art.
118. Management and leadership of the subject is not rigorous enough. While there are good procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour, the procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent and unsatisfactory.

BUSINESS STUDIES

119. Business studies continues to be a popular GCSE option in Years 10 and 11. By the age of 16, the majority of girls and boys taking GCSE attain consistently above the national average for grades A* to C. The proportion of GCSE A* to C in office applications in 2000 was below the national norms for boys and girls, but achievement was good considering ability levels on entry. Since the last inspection, results for lower-attaining boys have improved as teachers have introduced more interesting activities to improve their motivation and break down coursework projects into manageable tasks.
120. Most GCSE pupils can use information and communication technology very effectively to search for information from the Internet. They produce accurate word-processed reports about local businesses, incorporating graphs and charts. Pupils model business problems well using break-even charts and cash flow spreadsheets. In lessons seen during the inspection, Year 10 pupils gave clear examples of primary and tertiary industries and Year 11 pupils showed a good ability to apply cash flow forecasting techniques in a case study of a local leisure centre for their GCSE coursework. Pupils were less certain about the differences between small and large companies when dealing with cash flow problems.
121. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including pupils with special educational needs, apply business concepts soundly in class exercises and research projects involving visits to local businesses. More able pupils' ability to interpret and critically analyse complex textual material in depth is

generally good, showing good standards of literacy. Overall, in lessons and work samples observed, and over time, attainment is generally in line with ability on entry and above average for two-thirds of pupils.

122. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well, co-operating with each other and their teachers. In lessons most pupils enjoy their work. They listen attentively and concentrate fully on their tasks. The relatively small class sizes make it easier for pupils to work in groups to develop communication skills. Continuous access to computers with Internet links helps pupils develop good independent study skills. Although pupils tend to rely on their teachers to decide which text books they should use and how to study, pupils have plenty of opportunities to do their own research for GCSE coursework projects. Generally, both boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, are very well motivated to succeed.
123. The quality of teaching in business studies lessons is good, resulting in good progress by pupils. Building on the good standards seen in the last inspection, teachers combine a very good knowledge of current industry practice with topical case studies to help pupils improve knowledge and skills. Teachers have high expectations and, through focused question and answer techniques, improve pupils' skills of critical thinking. Close teacher support for individuals of all abilities, including special educational needs, means pupils always know how to improve their GCSE coursework and learn effectively from their mistakes.
124. Pupils' learning is helped by regular opportunities to practise key skills of communication by working in teams to solve business problems. Boys' learning is improved because they are encouraged to focus on key points of theory if they find extended essay writing difficult. All lessons seen are very well planned and move at a brisk pace, as teachers manage classes well and support pupils' progress by providing regular written individual targets. Teachers are aware of targets set for pupils with special educational needs. Homework is set and marked regularly in a constructive way, although pupils do not always correct their mistakes.
125. Business studies is well managed, in close association with information technology teachers. Teaching rooms are big enough for classes, and layout helps both group work and practice of information technology skills. The development plan is realistic, and reviewed regularly. Teachers make exceptionally good use of local business and industrial links for visits and speakers. Staff have created an ethos that encourages pupils to enjoy their learning and achieve very good results. Improvement since the last inspection has been consistently good and the department shows a capacity for further development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Teacher assessments show that in 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 5 and above in design and technology by the age of 14 was close to the national average. The percentage gaining GCSE A* to C grades in 2000 was below the national average, and below the 1999 percentage. However, the results in electronics in 2000 were above average and well above in 1999. In food, the 2000 results were well below the results achieved in 1999. Results in 2000 in child development were close to the national average and in textiles they were well below. Results in resistant materials in 2000, although below national average, improved considerably over the 1999 results. The graphic products 2000 results were poor and well below those achieved in 1999.
127. Overall attainment, by the ages of 14 and 16, is at the national average. It is above in electronics and below in graphics products. The best work is seen in food, textiles and electronics, where pupils demonstrate effective project management and some pupils' work confirms good planning and much capability in researching, including the use of the Internet, developing ideas and manufacturing, particularly in electronics. Pupils' making skills are stronger than their designing skills particularly in resistant materials, where far too much colouring-in of drawings is evident. Whilst many pupils' understanding of the design process is good, pupils' evaluations are not always sufficiently related to the design specification and some pupils in all year groups are unable to explain what is meant by the specification stage. Overall, pupils' technical graphics are under-developed, especially in Years 10 and 11, and their design drawings require more attention in order to show technical and functional detail. Use of information technology is developing strongly and pupils are experiencing and making good use of the computer-aided design and

manufacturing facilities within the department. Pupils use a range of sources effectively and some make good use of computers to enhance the presentation of their work. The lack of opportunities for pupils to experience use of pneumatics is a weakness. Many pupils use technical vocabulary in an appropriate way and are able to identify the tools and materials used, although in-depth analysis is under-developed.

128. Some of the folder work presented for instance in food, confirms that pupils are very committed. Quality production is being emphasised and this is evident in the work on display. Checklist procedures that ensure that all pupils cover all the relevant stages of the design process are good in textiles, but, are a weakness in resistant materials. Child development folders show that pupils are challenging the syllabus in a positive manner and some write extended contributions to a project. Pupils' opportunities to the applications of electronics in all years are very good.
129. Pupils' progress and achievement is often good at Years 7, 8 and 9, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. When pupils use practical, problem solving skills and make decisions about the nature and direction of their work, progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs cope very well with the making aspects of their products. Pupils are prepared to persevere in the organising, planning and making of their products in most material areas, and they work competently to given instructions and their productivity is usually good. In Years 10 and 11 graphic products some pupils' physical and creative effort is lacking. Most pupils select tools and equipment independently. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' evaluation of their own capabilities and reasoning skills are weak, and this slows their progress.
130. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all years. In one in every six lessons it is very good with the best teaching observed in food, textiles and electronics. Resource provision and management is often a very positive feature. Practical skills are carefully taught and in the best lessons the lesson objectives are posted on the board, and in some classes, time targets are set, questioning and mental tests are used well to challenge pupils and to consolidate learning. Teachers often manage a wide range of practical activities effectively and are supporting the development of pupils literacy skills through, for example, references to technical vocabulary and good displays of key words. This could be strengthened further by a more consistent approach to marking pupils' work and regular, ongoing assessment during the course of a project; more constructive comments would be of value in helping pupils to improve. Overall, teachers are well qualified in their subject areas and management of pupils is good.
131. Teachers' expectations in Years 10 and 11 are low in graphic products and resistant materials and pupils are not involved enough in target setting. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teachers do not regularly identify National Curriculum levels. Tracking progress in resistant materials and graphic products in Years 10 and 11 is a weakness.
132. Pupils' attitudes towards design and technology are good. Pupils work well together and show good levels of concentrations. Very many work with a clear sense of commitment. They have a good understanding of the need to behave correctly and to handle tools with care. Pupils demonstrate enjoyment when making artefacts and take pride in their work.
133. The subject leader sets a good example, and, in electronics, clearly demonstrates how pupils' learning and achievement can be improved. Subject documentation is very good. Schemes of work are being revised to meet the new National Curriculum Orders and pupils receive a broad and balanced technology experience. Computer-aided design and manufacture are gradually being integrated into design projects. Monitoring of teaching performance and pupils' attainment and learning is not being given sufficient attention particularly to raise standards in resistant materials and graphic products. Approximately two-thirds of pupils in Years 10 and 11 take design and technology courses. Staff work hard to produce support material to aid pupils' learning. However, there is a need for staff to share material particularly to aid pupils' design

skills learning. The accommodation, which includes the newly built resistant materials workrooms, is good. Technician support is available in both the food and resistant material areas.

134. The 'technology day', organised by the head of department for primary feeder school pupils, and the link with the further education college, which allows Year 10 and 11 pupils attending GCSE food courses to enhance their experiences, confirms staff commitment and interest in pupils' learning.

135. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection and the department has the capacity to resolve the issues raised and to make further improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

136. Standards in lessons and in the work seen at the end of Year 9 are at the national average. This is reflected in the Year 9 teacher-assessed tests. Most pupils have competent information-handling skills, the direct result of the department's increased emphasis on enquiry work. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, can suggest questions for testing and follow them through. Most have sound understanding of patterns, processes and environmental concerns. They show growing understanding of how living in different places can affect people's lives, for example, when comparing the effects of earthquake damage in more and less economically developed countries. Lower-attaining pupils are not so good at explaining ideas and find it difficult to remember what they have learnt previously. Most write competently, using technical terms correctly, because teachers give good attention to improving vocabulary and organising ideas.
137. In 2000 pupils' attainment in GCSE was close to the national average. All pupils gain at least a GCSE A* to G grade. Boys perform better than girls. Pupils perform better in geography than they do on average in most other subjects. The results have improved considerably since the last inspection when they were well below average. For the last three years they have been at or near the national average. Standards in lessons and in the work seen at the end of Year 11 are at the national average. Pupils' practical skills have improved and they are more confident in designing questions to research. They use a sound range of techniques in fieldwork and know more about places. When writing at length about 'The Quality of Life in Croydon', average and lower-attaining pupils show good understanding of land use patterns and link their research well to theory. Lower-attaining pupils are still not good at remembering information and show gaps in their understanding, for example, of employment structures. In all years, pupils' numerical skills help them to represent and interpret data.
138. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in geography. By the end of Year 9, boys, girls and different ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily. The best progress is the result of lively informed teaching which involves the pupils and helps them to learn for themselves. Inconsistencies arise because of timetabling arrangements. Split classes, taught by two teachers, one of who may not have geography as his/her main subject, results in slower progress. Lessons are not always pitched at the right level. By the end of Year 11, pupils make good progress and are benefiting from demanding teaching. Teachers build well on what pupils have learnt earlier. Pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Throughout the school pupils are beginning to benefit from improved work plans containing more creative and investigative work.
139. Grouping arrangements benefit most pupils. Higher-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged in top sets. Pupils with special educational needs benefit by being taught in smaller groups. They make satisfactory progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Teachers are aware of pupils' individual education plans and are beginning to set personal subject targets.
140. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard in lessons and the majority do their homework conscientiously. Most enjoy taking some responsibility and participate enthusiastically in lessons where the teaching is stimulating. Their enthusiasm is less apparent when the presentation is dry or when the teacher talks for too long.
141. The quality of teaching is good overall but there is some unevenness in teaching in Years 7 to 11. It is very good in a third of all lessons where teachers use their expertise well to extend pupils' understanding and to provide good feedback at the end of lessons. It is unsatisfactory when the teacher lacks the subject knowledge to plan the work at the right level. Teachers are well organised and give clear guidance so that pupils settle to work quickly, behave well and lessons proceed briskly. They use resources well to give pupils a variety of experiences. Satisfactory lessons where teachers rely too much on a textbook do not always challenge pupils sufficiently. Some time is wasted when pupils are not kept fully on task. In good or very good lessons, there is a high level of involvement and pupils are set challenging but achievable tasks. Teachers teach

with enthusiasm. These characteristics were demonstrated in a Year 9 lesson when pupils were asked to investigate the reasons for the population distribution of Brazil. The teacher equipped them with suitable resources and clearly stated the brief so that they knew exactly what they have to do. A personal rating depending on the amount of help given gave further zest to the task. As a result pupils responded well to the challenge and most worked independently. Thus, the teacher helped them to think for themselves, to develop research skills. By evaluating their own work, the teacher helped them to develop useful study skills.

142. Homework is set regularly and supports classwork. Marking for younger pupils is not used enough to modify planning or to help pupils to make progress. Marking, for older pupils, is informative and helpful although incomplete work is not always followed up.
143. The head of department has effectively re-focused the direction of the department. As this is a recent appointment, it has been difficult to carry out all monitoring duties effectively. Most teachers in the department have whole school responsibilities making it difficult to delegate. Most of the issues in the previous inspection have been addressed well and have contributed to improving standards. Further development is needed so that good practice is shared, enabling all pupils to enjoy a variety of experiences, and assessment information is used more precisely to help pupils make progress. Information technology is not used enough to develop pupils' research skills.

HISTORY

144. Standards in history in 1999 and in 2000, based on assessments made by teachers, were in line with what is achieved nationally by 14-year-olds. In the GCSE examinations in 1999 and in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A* to C grades was well below the national average. Boys' results are particularly low in 1999 and in 2000.
145. In lessons and in work seen, most pupils aged 14 achieve standards that are in line with national expectations. This is because the department has begun to focus more systematically on providing pupils with more structured opportunities to develop their skills in selecting relevant historical information and then communicating the results. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils have basic knowledge and understanding of an appropriate range of historical facts, situations and characters. They understand that historical situations have both causes and effects. They use sources of historical evidence to reach and support conclusions about events such as the Gunpowder Plot or the First World War.
146. Boys and girls throughout the ability range make good progress in the development of relevant historical skills, knowledge and understanding from Years 7 to 9. At all levels of attainment, pupils build up their knowledge and understanding of the topics studied, for example, the causes of the First World War. Higher-attaining pupils develop their abilities to evaluate evidence in order to support conclusions about, for example, why image was important to Tudor monarchs or who was really behind the Gunpowder Plot. Lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs develop their understanding of topics at a steady rate and, with support, continue to improve how they express their answers. This was evident, for example, in a Year 8 lower set where pupils remembered some of the characteristics of James I.
147. In lessons and in work seen, most pupils aged 16 achieve standards in GCSE courses that are below average. Pupils make good progress in the development of knowledge and understanding from Year 10 to Year 11. At all levels of attainment, pupils build up their knowledge and understanding of topics studied, for example the effects of the American Depression. Pupils' higher-level skills in using historical information to analyse and evaluate develop at a slower rate and are satisfactory rather than good.
148. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive overall. However, in the long double lessons in Years 10 and 11 lower-attaining pupils find it difficult to maintain good levels of concentration throughout the whole period. Attitudes and levels of concentration are better in Years 7, 8 and 9 where pupils are provided with better opportunities to learn in active ways. In these lessons, which are all single periods, pupils have a keenly developed sense of historical curiosity, evident for example, in Year 8 where pupils became deeply involved in deciding who 'framed' Guy Fawkes. There is a sufficiently wide range of teaching strategies used in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils therefore become

more confident as they are develop their own skills. Teachers have had some success in developing tasks and strategies which enable boys to improve their achievement.

149. Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. The balance between imparting historical information to pupils and enabling them to develop their own skills has improved in Years 7, 8 and 9 since the last inspection. This is having a positive impact on both pupils' attitudes and the quality of their learning. The needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well met through the provision of effective tasks and high teacher expectations. In Key Stage 4, however, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to work together, research, reach conclusions and write or talk about their own findings. This affects particularly average and lower attaining pupils who do not get sufficient practice in making use of some of the higher-level skills in history. There is a more limited range of teaching strategies used in GCSE classes than in Years 7 to 9. However, teachers in Years 10 and 11 focus well on enabling pupils to increase the range and depth of their historical knowledge and understanding.
150. Teachers are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subject. They are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards in the department. Explanations to pupils are clear and lessons are well planned. Although assessment procedures have improved significantly since the last inspection, there are too few subject-specific comments in exercise books which show pupils exactly what they need to do in order to improve their work. Teachers are focussing more effectively on raising standards in literacy, although there is scope to do this more systematically through, for example, the use of writing frames. Homework is given systematically and is used effectively.
151. The subject is competently managed with a commitment to raising standards, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers work well as a team, sharing good practice and support. There is some use of information technology work in history. Schemes of work are currently being revised in a more effective format. Specialist accommodation is good and effective use is made of display of pupils' work and other materials in order to provide a positive classroom ethos.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

152. Overall standards in information technology are above average in all years. GCSE results are well above the national average and pupils achieve higher in this subject than in their other school subjects. In 2000, nearly three-quarters of all girls and boys entered achieved GCSE grades A* to C. All pupils achieved at least a GCSE A* to G grade. In 1999 and 2000, girls' results were well above the national and school averages. Results in the GCSE option in office applications were below the national average in 2000, but the majority of pupils achieved well and often better than expected based on pupils' relatively low attainment levels on entry to the course.
153. By the end of Year 9, the standard of work seen is generally above nationally expected levels and confirms teacher assessments. In 2000, these accurately show that nearly three quarters of boys and girls are at or above expected National Curriculum levels. Since the last inspection, pupils' standards have improved considerably, and attainments in some strands such as spreadsheets are well above national expectations. Evidence from work seen suggests pupils' achievements are good in control technology, modelling mathematical problems, and communicating and handling information. There was evidence of research on the Internet, but less relating to the effects and limitations of information technology in society.
154. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 show good keyboard skills and understood technical terms such as formulae. Pupils used the theory learned to load programs and files and produce finished projects such as designing systems to calculate the costs and profits of a disco. The strongest work features extended use of formulae for 'what if?' exploration. Some pupils whose at the highest levels do not always provide descriptions or evaluations of their work to make it clear to which audience the report is aimed; pupils with English as an additional language generally express themselves fluently. The lack of sustained technical support to ensure all equipment works effectively affects the pace of pupils' learning; the entire cluster of machines in the science block cannot be networked at present.
155. In work seen in Years 10 and 11 pupils attain above national expectations, particularly pupils of above-average ability. Improving standards in all Years 10 and 11 lessons reflect the benefits,

since the last inspection, of better co-ordination and monitoring, consistently good teaching and increased networked computer provision. Pupils produce well-displayed questionnaires to business owners to research current problems. They design effective databases for estate agents and staff records for a small building business. They compile spreadsheets of costs and profits, and administrative systems and documents for a local hospital. Pupils test and evaluate their systems particularly well.

156. In GCSE subjects in Years 10 and 11 other than in discrete information technology, attainment in information technology statutory National Curriculum requirements is broadly in line with national expectations. The standards seen represent an improvement from the last inspection, although in some subjects such as science pupils still have insufficient planned opportunities to develop their information technology competence in lessons. Improved access for pupils to computers during lessons and externally-funded staff training is beginning to improve pupils competence in handling data, measurement and control and modelling; they develop numeracy skills by using spreadsheets well to solve problems in mathematics and design and technology.
157. In several subjects such as geography, science, art, technology and religious education pupils make good use of the Internet to research information. Most pupils use word processing for essays and reports on their home computers. The majority of pupils in all years, including pupils with special educational needs, achieve well over time. In Year 11 careers lessons pupils prepare well-presented curriculum vitae and personal statements for their records of achievement. The record of achievement incorporates certificates gained by pupils of all abilities to show the information technology levels they reach before leaving school.
158. Overall, the teaching observed in all years is good, leading to a good pace of learning. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, manage them well, and encourage positive attitudes to learning through their own enthusiasm. Teachers plan lessons well, set clear objectives, and continually review and reinforce previous work. Their very good subject knowledge enables them to explain topics clearly and effectively support individual pupils with a variety of needs, including able pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers help lower-attaining pupils (mostly boys) to improve coursework projects by breaking assignments into smaller tasks. Teachers provide good templates for business letters and, in all lessons, focus on key terms and drafting definitions to improve pupils' literacy skills. Sometimes display and paragraphing errors are allowed to go uncorrected.
159. Teachers encourage pair and group work to develop team-working skills and help pupils explore challenging computer programs. Teachers generally expect high standards but the pace of learning sometimes lessens when pupils share computers. In a less effective Year 10 lesson seen, too much time was taken up with general discussion and not all pupils took part. Teachers generally set homework regularly for research, design and theory work, although topical material to encourage critical debate on the uses and limitations of information technology was not seen during the inspection. Teachers' systems for assessing attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and there is a move towards setting rigorous targets for improvement for individual pupils.
160. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in nearly all lessons seen during the inspection were very good in Years 7, 8, and 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. The majority of pupils concentrate well when they work alone or have to share computers. They enjoy lessons, stick to their tasks, co-operate well with each other and their teachers, and mostly show a mature attitude to their work. Pupils are fully aware of the tasks they have to do and the progress they are making. Over time, pupils of all abilities make good progress in developing capability for independent learning in a variety of computer applications, mostly in the timetabled information technology lessons.
161. Courses are very well planned to meet National Curriculum programmes of study, using the school's own manuals which have clear instructions to help pupils meet the highest possible levels for their ability. However, in Years 10 and 11 there is insufficient planned information technology in other subjects for the minority of pupils not taking the GCSE or business studies option. However, teachers in some other subjects are becoming better at extending pupils' information technology capability, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teachers supervise popular computer clubs at lunchtimes.
162. Overall improvement of information technology since the last inspection has been good, reflecting continued good teaching, mostly by subject specialists, greatly improved networked computer

equipment with better access, and very good co-ordination of pupil opportunities and progress across curriculum subjects. An experienced specialist teacher leads the subject well and creates a positive, co-operative working environment. Accommodation is good overall, well-maintained, safe and secure. The number of computers available to pupils in several subject bases and the learning resource centre, is above the national average, but the pace of learning is often affected in classes because of technical problems. Good software is available, including supervised Internet access. Through its effective strategic planning and use of external funds, the information technology department is well-placed to support further improvements.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

163. The department has made sound progress since the last inspection.
164. Standards in 2000, based on assessments made by teachers, were in line with what is achieved nationally by 14-year-olds. In lessons and work samples, attainment is in line with, or slightly above, what might be expected. In Year 7, where pupils are beginning their language learning, they often achieve above national expectations in both French and German. In Years 8 and 9 in higher attaining groups, pupils achieve better standards than might be expected and in lower attaining sets pupils perform well for their overall ability levels.
165. At GCSE the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE A* to C grades is above the national average in French but below in German. A very positive feature is that in both languages all candidates achieved at least a GCSE A* to G grade.
166. Girls' achievement in examinations is higher than that of boys in both languages. However, in lessons there is no evidence of boys achieving less well than girls. In GCSE lessons, higher-attaining pupils are enabled to produce high standards and to use the language for their own purposes. In lower sets, pupils make sound progress and achieve in line with expectations.
167. In all years, pupils with special educational needs (especially those who have hearing impairment) and those with English as an additional language are helped to make progress, in line with their peers. For example, in Year 7, a hearing impaired pupil was helped to understand a tape in French through skilled help from support staff.
168. In all lessons, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers have good personal command of French and German but do not always use the foreign language as the normal means of instruction and so miss an important opportunity to extend the level of challenge for pupils. Lessons are well presented with clear, controlled and precise exposition. Opportunities for pair and group work in lessons and visits abroad promote pupils' social development. The department plans the use of information technology but often teachers have to rely on this being done outside timetabled lessons, because access to computers is limited.
169. In the best lessons, pupils are expected to produce the foreign language, either in speech or in writing, in sentences of a reasonable length and complexity. In a Year 11 higher attaining group, for example, pupils discussed their part-time jobs. Here a hearing impaired pupil took full part in the lesson because of sympathetic yet demanding questioning by the teacher. However, too often pupils' production of language is limited to short, simple utterances, given in response to a teacher's question or model. Writing is often limited to copying work in lessons. More personal extended writing is sometimes set for homework. Generally, pupils do not have many demands placed on them to work independently, away from the teacher's model. They need to have more opportunities to show initiative or to work creatively in the language, as for example, in some of the homework tasks where they are asked to produce cartoons, cards and documents – sometimes using information technology. These tasks add to the range and variety of work given. Pupils use personal tapes to practise the spoken language at home, which helps reinforce learning.
170. In all years, pupils of all abilities display good attitudes towards the languages. Examples are that pupils concentrate well, try hard and sustain their efforts even when they encounter difficulties. In all cases, pupils show interest in and often considerable enthusiasm for their work. Languages are popular in the school. When pupils are engaged in listening to each other there is a high degree of respect evident. Written work is carefully presented in the main, with slightly

better standards from higher attainers who often demonstrate additional effort. The fact that the school offers two languages to all pupils is a particularly strong point of the school's curriculum and is popular with parents. However, the school does not satisfy the legal requirement to ensure that all pupils study a language in Years 10 and 11 and a small number of pupils do no language at all.

171. The department is well led and managed. Staff are appropriately qualified for the languages which they teach and co-operate well together, for example in sharing materials, worksheets and ideas. The department is well supported by two foreign language assistants and other support staff. Class teachers and support staff work very effectively together to benefit pupils' learning. Pupil exchanges take place on an annual basis with link schools in Koblenz, Germany and Charlieu, France.
172. Work on monitoring and evaluation has taken place. Books have been scrutinised, pairs of staff have observed each other's lessons. This work could now usefully be tied in to work on the extension of teaching styles and developing more independent and challenging activities for pupils.

MUSIC

173. Standards in 2000, based on assessments made by teachers, were well below what is achieved nationally by 14-year-olds. This was due to a less musically able cohort than in previous years. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE A* to C grades in 2000 was well above the national average. There has been an improvement in the GCSE grades achieved by pupils in the past four years.
174. Overall attainment in all years is in line with national expectations. There has been an improvement in the attainment of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 since the previous inspection. The achievement of pupils in all years is often good in relation to their age and ability. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the more musically able make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities achieve standards of performance which are in line with those expected for their age. However, a small minority of pupils achieve standards which are considerably higher.
175. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 play keyboards with confidence. They select appropriate registrations and use the recording facilities well. They understand simple notations and show knowledge of basic musical vocabulary. They begin to use information and communication technology to assist in their work. They know about some of the styles used in musical composition. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils learnt about aleatoric, or chance music and the work of John Cage. They used this device to create their own graphic scores of an imaginary journey. They understood that the scores might be interpreted in different ways each time they were performed. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show skill when listening to and composing music. For example, in a Year 11 lesson pupils listened to a short extract from Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition'. They correctly identified the instruments and made accurate comments about the musical style. They used improvisation to continue a given idea and satisfactorily performed these to each other.
176. Pupils in all years have good attitudes towards the subject. They are enthusiastic in their response to extra-curricular activities. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 work co-operatively on composing tasks and are always well-behaved. In Years 10 and 11, pupils concentrate on their own assignment and show a committed approach to work.
177. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their own musical skills well to aid pupils' learning. Good support is given to individual pupils during rehearsals. This enables them to become confident as performers. For example, good teaching resulted in Year 8 pupils successfully performing their own part when playing 'Past Time With Good Company', by Henry VIII. Opportunity is provided for pupils in all years to use information and communication technology to devise and refine their compositions. Satisfactory provision is made for developing pupils' literacy skills. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and these involve over 150 pupils. These activities provide further opportunities for pupils to develop performing skills. There are vocal and instrumental groups and pupils have successfully taken part in concerts. There has been a Millennium concert, a Christmas Rock Nativity and a performance of

The Fame Game.

178. Good leadership is provided by the joint heads of department. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils. The previous inspection stated that there was a need to up-date the schemes of work. Revised schemes are now in place. Assessment procedures have been reviewed in line with the National Curriculum 2000. Instrumental teachers make a valuable contribution to the work of the department. Over 100 pupils receive lessons provided by the Croydon Music Agency and private teachers. Good links have been established with local primary schools, the Brit School and John Ruskin College.
179. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. This was criticised in the previous inspection and has still not been improved. There are only two practice rooms and for the majority of the time, they are used by instrumental teachers. This prevents pupils from having an opportunity to rehearse, other than in the classroom. The resources are good and include keyboards, computers and software and a range of percussion instruments.
180. The subject makes a good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

181. By the age of 14, pupils achieve standards in physical education which are in line with what is expected nationally. Good ball handling and spatial awareness enables 14-year-old boys to particularly have good skills in basketball and football; similarly girls in netball. Curriculum time for physical education is below the national average at all years. This makes it difficult for the department to provide the depth of study for pupils to achieve above average levels of performance. In spite of pupils' good attitudes to learning long double lessons are not always conducive to appropriate use of time. Pupils are unable to stay on task for this length of time and therefore time is used inefficiently.
182. By the age of 16, pupils achieve satisfactory levels of competence in a range of sports. The GCSE results for 2000 were below average. However, the general trend has been that results have been at least in line with national averages and in 1999 were well above this level. Standards of pupils' present Year 11 GCSE work are generally in line with expectations. However, understanding of theoretical issues is below average.
183. Pupils are presently achieving good levels of understanding and performance at Years 7, 8 and 9. This achievement is higher than in Years 10 and 11 where it is satisfactory. There are more examples in Years 7, 8 and 9 where teachers are aware of the appropriate learning outcomes and relate their planning more clearly to pupils' needs. In dance, choreographic skills are enhanced when girls independently develop the technical disciplines of travelling to an eight-part beat to enhance their sequences. They make good progress when using key words to describe and teach their creation to other pupils. Year 8 girls make very good progress in extending their bouncing sequences on the trampoline. They are encouraged to analyse body positions in flight and challenged to achieve control, poise and body tension. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 generally have positive attitudes to participation in activities. In a step aerobics lesson, they maintained good levels of physical involvement and improved their rhythm and range of movement. In some lessons, teacher challenges for pupils are not taken beyond participation and play. Many options need further planning and assessment to ensure all pupils are challenged to their full ability.
184. The standard of teaching is good overall. It is stronger in Years 7, 8 and 9 where good subject knowledge enables teachers to make perceptive observations of performance and to expertly coach pupils to further understanding. Good progress is made when girls adjust flight and angles for basketball lay-up shots and when boys consider the relationship between breathing and buoyancy in swimming. Very good lesson management and teacher-pupil relationships result in a positive department learning ethos. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons, concentrate on what is being taught and independently organise their activities.
185. In Years 10 and 11, schemes of work and assessment criteria are not in place to ensure the pace and content is suitable for all pupils. The department has made sound progress in the use of key words to enable pupils to more fully understand fundamental skills and techniques. Body

positions in swimming, trampolining, basketball and dance show improvement in tension and control as a result of these strategies. A gymnastics, lesson lacked the same emphasis and expectation and performances suffered accordingly. GCSE classes presently lack a sufficient range of literacy strategies to enable pupils to increase their oral and written presentations and to improve their theoretical understanding of performance.

186. Leadership in the department is good. Satisfactory improvement has been maintained since the last inspection because of a good understanding of national issues and successful monitoring and evaluation of department performance. Progress has been made in using assessment procedures to set groups into similar abilities. As a result pupils with special educational needs make good progress and all pupils are included in the activities. Swimming arrangements exemplify this philosophy. Very good individual progress happens as a result of sensitive and informed small group teaching.
187. The department continues to set high expectations for pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes. Achievement is recognised internally and strong community links have been established to enable talented pupils to further their development out of school hours. Extra curriculum clubs and successful local competition results further enhances the ethos for learning in the department. Skiing and water sports school journeys are organised regularly in Europe and North America.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

188. By the ages of 14 and 16, attainment is in line with that expected by the Croydon Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Attainment by the age of 16, as measured by GCSE examination results, is close to the national average. Pupils studying the full and short GCSE courses achieved above average results in 2000. A quarter of the year group who study the course do not take an examination in religious education. The attainment of boys and girls in the examination is similar, but significantly more girls than boys enter for an examination, especially the full course examination.
189. The achievement of pupils Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, they have a good body of knowledge about Christianity and Judaism and some knowledge about other world religions. They are stronger on the factual elements of the course but are beginning to consider wider issues of belief. When given the opportunity they discuss well in small groups respecting each other's views. This was seen especially in the discussion of the treatment of animals from a Judaistic point of view. Progress is seen in lessons and from year to year with the quality of extended writing increasing greatly from Year 7 to Year 9. With this increase in writing a narrower range of methods is seen in recording work. Much of the work is considered in a factual way and so learning about religious education is stronger than the learning from religious education.
190. Achievement by pupils following the full GCSE course is very good, in that they take the examination having had only half the expected allocation of time. Achievement by pupils following the short GCSE course is at the expected level. Pupils following both courses initially study the same areas with those following the full course dealing with the topics in greater depth. Pupils are forming their own ideas on issues and are applying their knowledge to current situations, as seen when pupils were preparing to draw up a list commandments for modern society ensuring that they considered social and religious aspects. They have a good understanding of a range of moral issues and consider the views of different religious groups when considering issues surrounding topics such as divorce, war and peace, and care for the environment. Pupils following the full GCSE course write extensively on the topics being studied but the presentation of the majority of the work as full essays without planning schemes means that the facts are difficult to access for revision purposes.
191. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory in all years and is slightly better at Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7, 8 and 9. Strengths within teaching are the good use of technical terminology and the relationships in the lessons that promote a good learning environment. Weaker areas are the loss of challenge and pace caused by too much copying and drawing, a lack of recognition of work previously covered in the junior schools and a lack of expectation from the higher groups. Dependency on one textbook limits the development of research skills and means that work appropriate to each individual pupil is not available. Pupils respond very well in

lessons and when asked to work in pairs or groups, they stimulate each other to consider issues at a greater depth.

192. The previous inspection report referred to staffing difficulties within the department; up to July 2000 these had been sorted with a specialist stable staff, however since then the school has encountered difficulties. These difficulties have affected the progress of one group in particular who are taught away from the main area by a non-specialist member of staff and they are missing out on the access to resources and expert knowledge. The lack of a permanent head of department has meant that the departmental development plan has not been implemented and monitoring by the senior management team has, of necessity, been more concerned with the provision of a course than in the evaluation and development of the department.
193. Since the last inspection satisfactory progress has been made. The full course GCSE examination results have improved. A short course has been introduced which is far more suitable to the needs of many pupils and the resource base has been increased. The local education authority is currently producing a new Agreed Syllabus and in order to improve further the department needs to tie in departmental developments with a curriculum and assessment policy review. Pupils' learning would benefit from a wider range of teaching styles, the incorporation of visits especially in relation to other world religions and a review of the GCSE entry policy to ensure all pupils are entered for a relevant examination.