

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITMORE HIGH SCHOOL

Harrow

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102239

Headteacher: Peter Allan

Reporting inspector: Mrs Eveleen P Gillmon
2774

Dates of inspection: 4 - 8 February 2002

Inspection number: 191487

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	12-16
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Porlock Avenue Harrow Middlesex
Postcode:	HA2 0AD
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Appropriate authority:	Whitmore Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mary Ling
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2774	Eveleen Gillmon	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
5204	Gillian Barnes	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements Provision for and standards achieved by students with English as an additional language
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
8076	Terence Bendall	Team inspector	Design and Technology	
10448	Michael Elson	Team inspector	Religious Education	
24026	Celia Holland	Team inspector	Music	
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History	
8185	Peter Kendall	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
8052	Kenneth McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and Communications Technology	
19528	Roland Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics	
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical Education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitmore High School is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 12-16. It has 1046 students on roll. It serves the London Borough of Harrow and draws some students from neighbouring authorities. The socio-economic profile of the borough is relatively advantaged but includes some wards where there are pockets of significant deprivation; the proportion of students in the school eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The intake covers a rich multi-cultural mix, with the largest group being of Indian heritage. Over one-third of the students come from homes where English is not the first language spoken. Students entering the school represent the full range of abilities, but the percentage of students on the school's register of special educational needs is above the national average. The school is additionally resourced to facilitate the LEA provision for students with physical disabilities. Eighty-five per cent of students generally continue into further education each year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitmore High School is a good school. It is justifiably proud of its inclusive and multicultural ethos within which it achieves high standards for its students and fosters a climate of mutual care. Relationships between management, staff and students are very good and the school is led with commitment and integrity. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- achieves high standards in GCSE examinations
- provides good teaching in all areas of the curriculum
- stimulates students through excellent teaching in expressive arts subjects
- provides well for students who are physically disabled or who have significant learning difficulties

What could be improved

- the way senior managers check on the effectiveness of whole-school curriculum programmes that are not subject based
- the efficiency and effectiveness with which the pastoral programme, including provision for personal, social and health education, is currently co-ordinated
- concern for the quality of the environment beyond the classroom, including toilet facilities
- compliance with statutory requirements regarding religious education and collective worship

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Improvement since then has been generally good, although in some areas the pace has been slower than might have been expected. Governors are now more fully involved in the work of the school; some, but not all, statutory requirements have been met; management systems have been re-organised to ensure that teaching is more systematically monitored; teaching groups have been revised in science and mathematics to meet the needs of different attainment levels; and provision for spiritual development has been audited. The overall impact of these improvements was reflected in the improved quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools*	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
					well above average A
					above average B
					average C

GCSE examinations	A	B	B	A	below average	D
					well below average	E

**comparison is made with schools which have a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals.*

Overall attainment in the school is above the expected standard in many subjects. Students enter the school part way through Key Stage 3 and in relation to their attainment on entry most achieve well. In National Curriculum tests at the age of 14, over the past three years students have achieved average points scores in English, mathematics and science which are broadly in line with national averages. Comparison of the GCSE results for the year 2001 with those from schools which achieved similar Key Stage 3 results in 1999 indicates average progress. The overall average score at GCSE is above the national average and represents improvement above the national trend over the last five years, including the attainment of significant numbers of students identified as having special educational needs. The school sets challenging targets for improvement and these are being met.

Standards of work observed during the inspection reflect the end-of-key-stage tests, teacher assessments and GCSE examination outcomes. Examples of excellent work by students were seen in music, art and drama. Standards of literacy, oracy, numeracy and in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) throughout the school cover a full range. Many students display confidence in oral and written presentation, and are able to integrate developing numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. A significant number of students who speak English as an additional language achieve high standards.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Students respond well to the opportunities provided and enjoy good relationships with each other and with teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. The standard of behaviour in classrooms is good, but noisy and less appropriate behaviour occurs during movement about the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between students and staff are respectful and warm. Students relate well to each other and most are considerate of the needs of others.
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 8 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching observed in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in all other subjects, during the inspection was predominantly good. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in art, music and religious education.

Strengths of the teaching are in classroom management and exposition. Teachers have a conscientious approach to meeting the needs of mixed-attainment groups, but lesson planning does not always match work appropriately to the needs of some very able students and this limits gains in learning and progress made.

There is a developing emphasis on improving literacy skills through the use of oral presentations, key words and writing frames in some subjects. Where observed, this approach was satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy is at an early stage of implementation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum offers satisfactory breadth and balance overall, but is in breach of statutory requirements relating to the provision of religious education and collective worship. Departmental schemes of work are comprehensive. The programme for personal, social and health education is insufficiently co-ordinated. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is available.
Provision for students with special educational needs (SEN)	Very good. High quality support from teachers and teaching assistants enables those with learning difficulties and physical impairment to progress well. Specific provision for higher attaining students is less well developed.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Students who are insufficiently fluent in English receive targeted support and improve quickly. Those with an adequate knowledge of the language achieve well in examinations.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. The quality and content of planned programmes is good. However, to secure appropriate continuity and progression throughout the school, greater co-ordination and more rigorous monitoring of implementation is needed.
How well the school cares for its students	The pastoral care system is well established and a strong tutorial team provides good guidance and support. Individual students are well known to their tutors and teachers, and appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The quality of care shown to disabled students is very high. There is insufficient attention paid to the quality of the toilet facilities.

The school has appropriate systems in place to provide parents with information about the progress made by their children. The majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and attending the meeting with the registered inspector, expressed their satisfaction with the school-home partnership.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher, supported by a senior team and a representative management board, provides effective direction for the school and is committed to its continuing improvement. Middle managers make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body supports the work of the school well, is well informed and takes an active part in development planning. However, there remain some statutory infringements regarding areas of curricular provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The systematic analysis of pupil performance is developing well. Evaluation of the effectiveness of whole school practices, procedures and policies needs further development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes best use of available resources and provides good educational opportunities for its students.

The school has an appropriate complement of teachers and ancillary support staff. The number of posts vacant at the time of the inspection reflected national difficulties in recruitment, but was not found to have had a significant impact on standards. Overall, there is sufficient accommodation to support

curriculum needs but music accommodation is of very poor quality. Learning resources are adequate in most subjects, although lack of sufficient text books in some subjects is evident. The improved ICT resources support teaching and learning needs well, although further investment in the infrastructure is needed.

The school functions as an orderly and effective community, which uses the principles of best value in achieving appropriate resources. A strength of the school lies in its unusually high proportion of long-serving and committed staff. However, over-reliance on historical practice and personal knowledge of individuals is also a potential management weakness. The school needs to develop more systematic procedures to underpin its work, including more rigorous monitoring, evaluation and implementation of strategic and operational planning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the high standards achieved • facilities for students with SEN and those who are physically disabled • the quality and quantity of homework • student behaviour in and out of school • extra-curricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsistency in setting of homework • lack of disability awareness by some students • use of blanket class punishments for individual misdemeanours • insufficient attention to health and hygiene

The inspectors endorse the positive views expressed by the parents. During the inspection, they found no evidence to support concerns about inconsistent setting of homework or lack of disability awareness. The school's behaviour and discipline procedures were considered appropriate. The inspection team supports parents' concerns about the quality of facilities related to health and hygiene.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. The range of attainment of students entering the school in Year 8 is wide. It includes a higher than average proportion of students with special educational needs and an increasing number who achieve well above average scores in the Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) given to that year group by the school in the autumn term. In these tests, students' scores are consistently higher in the non-verbal and quantitative tests than in the verbal test.
2. When judged against the standards expected nationally, overall attainment in the school is above the expected standard in many subjects. When the standards achieved by the school in national tests and examinations in 2001 are compared with those achieved by all maintained schools, the average points score for core subjects (English, mathematics and science) at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. At Key Stage 4 in GCSE, the overall average score is above the national average. These achievements, when compared with schools in similar social contexts (2001 national benchmarks), are well above average. The good standards of achievement reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained at Key Stage 3 and improved steadily at Key Stage 4.

Performance in tests and examinations

3. The results of the national tests for students at the age of 14 (end of Key Stage 3) in 2001 showed a slight improvement on the previous year and were marginally above the national average for those reaching the required standard in English, mathematics and science. The proportion gaining higher levels in English and mathematics exceeded the national average. In this school the performance of girls was better than that of boys in all three subjects.
4. In other subjects, teacher assessments for 2001 showed standards to have improved in most subjects since 2000 and to be above the national average in art, design and technology, history and information technology and well above in geography, modern foreign languages and music. Results in physical education were below the national average in 2001. Girls performed better than boys in all subjects except physical education.
5. The school has experienced a pattern of rising performance in GCSE examinations by students at the age of 16. Since the previous inspection the percentage of students achieving grades A*-C in five or more subjects has risen from 50 per cent (1996) to 58 per cent in 2001. Performance in 2001 showed an improvement on the previous year and was above the average for all maintained schools nationally. The 96 per cent of students in this school, who that year achieved five passes within the grade range A*-G, was also better than the national average. In this school very few students leave without any examination success. In common with the national trend, more girls secure consistently five or more passes in the range A*-C than boys but the difference in this school in 2001 was less than that found nationally.
6. The 2001 GCSE examination performance of students in the core subjects, in the grade range A*-C, was in line with the national average for all maintained schools in science, above that level in mathematics and well above in English. In the range A*-G all students secured a pass in English and a higher than average proportion of students in mathematics and science.
7. In other subjects that year, GCSE examination performance in the grade range A*-C was well above the national average for all maintained schools in English literature, history, information technology, music, sociology and some foreign languages taken by a minority of students. It was above average in art, communication studies, French and geography. It was close to the national average in some aspects of design and technology but below that standard in drama and well below in German, physical education, religious education and other aspects of design and technology. Subject performance comparisons within the school show a high proportion of A* or A grade passes were achieved by students in music, information technology, history, sociology, geography, art and foreign languages other than French or German.

8. In the grade range A*-G, performance was significantly higher than the national average in all subjects except design and technology, French, German, physical education and religious studies. In common with the national trend, girls outperformed boys in several subjects but in contrast to the national trend, in this school, boys performed better than girls in science, geography, music, physical education and religious education.
9. Comparison of the GCSE results for the year 2001 with those from the group of schools which achieved similar Key Stage 3 results in 1999, indicates average progress in the range five or more A*-C grades, above average progress in the range five or more A*-G passes and well above average for the proportion securing at least one A*-G grade.

Standards of achievement observed during the inspection

10. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, the observation of students in lessons, discussions with them and a scrutiny of their work showed the standards they achieve generally reflect the standards attained in national tests, teacher assessments and external examinations. Exceptions are in modern foreign languages and physical education where standards are lower than those recorded by teacher assessment in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3, but above the standard suggested by external examination performance in physical education at Key Stage 4. In lessons observed, the majority of students in all year groups were seen to make some gains in learning and a significant number made good progress. Most students achieve well and acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in most subjects, making good progress in relation to their prior attainment within the key stages and during their time at the school.

Students with special educational needs

11. The majority of students identified as having learning difficulties and the many for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and attain standards that are appropriate for their identified abilities. In Years 10 and 11, standards are often higher than might have been anticipated as, despite their difficulties, all are entered for GCSE examinations and many achieve high grades. This performance represents very good progress in relation to prior attainment and in relation to the consequences arising from some of their difficulties. In Key Stage 3 also, the attention they receive from teachers and support staff enables most to make good progress in lessons and over time. Lower standards and poorer progress arise when the pace of learning is inappropriate and when work is not matched to their individual needs. Those with statements of special educational need make particularly good progress in relation to set targets in classes where they have access to teaching assistants. All students identified as having learning difficulties are very well integrated into lesson activities particularly those with physical impairment.
12. The needs of higher attaining students are recognised informally but not yet planned for systematically in many lessons. The challenges with which they are presented in mathematics, music and physical education, and the opportunities for extended writing in history and geography enable them to progress very well in these lessons. These students generally achieve appropriate standards in all subjects except modern foreign languages.
13. A recent analysis conducted by the school, of student performance by ethnic origin in the 2001 national tests and examinations, showed that at Key Stage 3 overall performance was lower for those of Pakistani and Black African heritage. In the GCSE examinations that year, Key Stage 4 students of Black Caribbean and African heritage performed less well than other groups but the performance of those of Pakistani heritage was among the highest achieved. The school is addressing these issues. Many of the students, for whom English is an additional language, secure notable examination success and show particular aptitude in many subjects particularly art, music, drama and physical education.

Literacy, numeracy and ICT

14. There is a focus on literacy in English lessons, and other departments, such as history and mathematics, have begun to plan an approach to literacy teaching, but the monitoring of literacy practice across the school has not yet started. However, students' use of language is encouraged across the curriculum and developed by opportunities for extended talk and the display of key words in some subjects. Technical vocabulary is used with confidence by students, many of whom display good standards of competence in oral presentations. They research enthusiastically using a variety of sources, read texts and write adequately in many subjects. Displays around the school are rich in literacy content and are of a good standard.

15. Standards of numeracy are sufficient for all students to access the curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to impact on the work of the mathematics department where a co-ordinator is steering the development of skills and a cross-curricular audit is planned. The effective application of these skills by students supports their learning in many subjects. They competently draw graphs, charts and diagrams in science, use spreadsheets as a calculating and graph drawing aid in discrete ICT lessons, and employ data handling and analysis techniques in geography. A whole school policy to develop consistency across the curriculum should enable all subjects to support the further development of students' numerical skills.
16. Attainment in ICT at age 14 is in line with national expectations and very high examination results at age 16 indicate that good progress has been made by many students. Available resources are used well but are insufficient to enable all departments to have adequate access in order to ensure that ICT is used effectively to enhance teaching and learning throughout the curriculum. The application of resources available in the learning resource centre and at home features in the work of many students.
17. The school has a conscientious approach to the provision of high quality, comparative statistical data on attainment of individual students on entry to the school and at strategic points in a student's passage through the school. This information could empower management at all levels to set individual, departmental and whole school targets and is available to assist teachers in their planning. With increased understanding and application it has the capacity to optimise student progress and secure maximum potential. The school sets appropriately challenging whole school targets, based on students' prior attainment and national comparative data, and is usually successful in securing these.
18. The generally above average standards of attainment and good progress in this school are influenced by good teaching, students' positive attitudes, teachers' understanding of their students, regular assessment, strategies to raise boys' attainment, and in a minority of classes, the provision of tasks appropriately matched to students' differing and developing abilities. These positive features support the school's ethos for learning and its commitment to inclusive education.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Relationships among students and between students and staff are very good and their personal development is satisfactory. It is the combination of these factors that creates a harmonious atmosphere in the school and a positive learning experience for its students. Students with special educational needs respond well to the support they receive.
20. Most students enjoy school. They are well motivated, interested in their lessons and willingly apply themselves to the tasks they are set. In lessons where the content and structure are not matched to students' needs a small number are less interested. They are talkative and do not always sustain their concentration.
21. The behaviour of students in lessons observed during the inspection was usually good. This has a positive impact on their standards of work and the quality of learning. Most students respond well to the school's high expectations of good behaviour when in class. They settle quickly and work well independently, in small groups and pairs. They co-operate and collaborate with teachers and support staff. In contrast, behaviour in corridors and around the school observed during the inspection was frequently disappointing. When not closely supervised, a significant minority of students did not always show the same high standards of behaviour as they did in class. They often ignored the school's 'keep left' rule as they crowded through the narrow corridors, were loud and boisterous and not sufficiently aware of the needs of others around them, including those students in wheelchairs. A considerable amount of litter both inside and outside the building was discarded by students.
22. Despite the generally good behaviour observed in lessons during the inspection, it was evident from the school's records and the high number of exclusions that incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour occur both in lessons and around the school. During the last academic year there were

11 permanent exclusions and 98 fixed term exclusions. This is a high number, although a slight decrease since the previous inspection. The school has clear and effective procedures for dealing with errant behaviour, including the use of brief 'cooling off' periods, and these are well understood by students and staff. One-day exclusion is used as part of the progressive system of sanctions when other strategies have not improved matters.

23. Relationships throughout the school are good and create a supportive and caring atmosphere in which students feel secure. The school has an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour, and students reported a virtual absence of any form of bullying within the school. Where such incidents occurred, students were fully aware of the procedures in place to deal with them. In lessons, students were observed to be sensitive to, and respectful of, each other's views, feelings and beliefs. They were willing to help and support each other, especially those with special needs and with physical disabilities. Boys and girls, and those from different social and ethnic groups, all mix easily and harmoniously together. Extensive support provided by the school for students known to have significant emotional and behavioural needs enables these students to participate in mainstream classes where they usually display positive attitudes and appropriate behaviour. A strength of the school is the positive and supportive attitude shown in lessons by many students to their peers known to have emotional and physical difficulties.
24. Levels of attendance are broadly in line with the national average. They have generally remained stable since the previous inspection but a slight decline during the current year is evident from data supplied. There are no significant differences between groups of students. Punctuality is a recurring problem with some students arriving late for school, including several who are persistently late.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

25. The quality of teaching is good overall. Of the 159 lessons observed, 157 were judged to be satisfactory or better. This is a significant increase since the previous inspection. The good and very good teaching observed in 106 lessons was in all subjects, and both key stages, with a higher proportion in Key Stage 4. Five examples of excellent teaching were also observed. These were in art, music and religious education.
26. Most teachers have very good knowledge of their specialist subjects and of the relevant programmes of study in the National Curriculum. Classroom management skills are generally good throughout the school and most teachers have very good relationships with their students, who respond well to the school's code of discipline.
27. Examples of very good teaching, promoting high standards of student attainment, progress and behaviour were observed in 16 per cent of lessons, most consistently in history, ICT and music in Years 8 and 9, and in art, ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11. Teachers in these lessons demonstrated a range of effective teaching strategies for the management of student learning and stimulated students' interest. Learning objectives were shared with the students and lessons were conducted with appropriate pace and variety of activity.
28. In the best lessons, the approach, strategies used and high expectations ensured a fast pace with appropriate stimulus and challenge for students of all abilities and resulted in significant learning gains by all students. For example, in a Year 9 music lesson on the rhythm of the Samba, a fast moving variety of tasks, of progressively different levels of difficulty, caught the attention of the students and resulted in hard work, high commitment and excellent progress. Higher attaining students were challenged to play more complex cross rhythms in the excellent ensemble performance with which the lesson culminated. It was clear that the students thoroughly enjoyed their work and were committed to high achievement, adding varied dynamics to the final performance to improve it further. Similarly, in a Year 11 religious education lesson with a focus on Hinduism, the teacher used technical terms precisely, sharing ideas and meaning with the students while consciously developing their listening and speaking skills through paired and grouped work. The variety of activities and pace throughout the lesson motivated all students and not a moment was wasted. High quality resources, prepared by the teacher, were used to support the range of attainment levels, including those of students for whom

English is not the first language, and attainment overall was observed to be above the national average.

29. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed, in which instances of inadequate planning, inappropriate activities and materials to cater for the wide range of student needs, and poor classroom management were the main weaknesses.
30. The teaching observed in English and mathematics was always satisfactory and often good. In science it was generally satisfactory. In all other subject areas, teaching was generally never less than satisfactory, and the quality of student learning reflected this.
31. The teaching for students with learning difficulties, physical impairment and special language needs is very effective. It is strongly influenced by the information provided by the learning development department on individual students' difficulties, and by that department's indication of appropriate strategies. The specialist, and bilingual teaching for students with limited knowledge of English addresses individual needs, secures rapid progress, promotes good relationships and enables active participation in mainstream classes.
32. Many lessons benefit from additional in-class support from experienced, and exceptionally versatile, teaching assistants but as they are frequently not involved in the planning and evaluation of mainstream lessons the potential value of their support, expertise and enthusiasm is not fully realised. In a Year 10 'study support' option lesson observed, a planned partnership teaching strategy was used very successfully to include all students with diverse needs fully in the lesson.
33. The inclusive classroom practice promoted by the school presents demanding circumstances for teachers. They are assisted in this task by guidelines for mixed attainment teaching, produced by the curriculum and assessment group, which are used by all departments in the planning of schemes of work and by most teachers in their planning for the majority of students in the class. The gifted, talented and higher attaining students are appropriately challenged through the use of extension work in some subjects. However, there is need for greater consistency in the use of pre-planned written and other extension and enrichment tasks of differing difficulty to provide for the development of students' higher order skills and learning.
34. Homework forms part of students' learning and is generally used well throughout the school. Some parents commented that students receive clear guidance with regard to quantity and time to be spent, but others were concerned that not all teachers were consistent in their application of the guidelines, resulting in occasional uneven workloads for students, particularly in Key Stage 4. During the period of the inspection, teachers in all subjects were observed to set homework appropriately.
35. The use of ICT resources to support subject teaching is limited. Good practice during lessons was observed in music and design and technology; in some other subjects students are encouraged to use the Internet for research purposes within homework tasks. Many teachers are aware of the developing skills of the students and the increasing ICT resource base, but not all of them take advantage of these to motivate students and stimulate their interest. Lack of regular access to equipment and knowledge of appropriate software was cited by several departments as a constraint on developing this area.
36. Most teachers maintain extensive assessment records and have access to the school's central databank. However, the use of such data to inform planning for day-to-day lessons, or for individual student needs, is as yet underdeveloped in most departments. Target setting and monitoring have yet to become embedded within departmental teaching, and the good practice seen in design and technology, geography, and ICT needs to be replicated throughout the school. Marking of work is conscientious, but few teachers provide adequate feedback which informs students precisely what they need to do to improve their work, particularly in relation to aspects of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
37. Students respond well to the good teaching they receive and the quality of learning observed during the inspection matched this.

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

38. Since the time of the last inspection, the allocation of time for individual subjects has improved and now meets the recommended minimum requirements in most subjects. However, time for music is below the recommended minimum at Key Stage 3, and in both physical education and religious education in Key Stage 4.
39. Provision in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory as a broad and balanced curriculum provides all the National Curriculum subjects and an additional weekly tutorial time during which students receive a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Subject schemes of work are generally good. In religious education and modern languages, where Gujarati is also offered, they are very good. The PSHE programme includes sex and drugs education but a lack of overall monitoring and evaluation of how well this course is developed, structured and taught to students results in inconsistency in provision between different tutor groups. The needs of all students within the mixed attainment teaching groups generally receive attention. For example, in English, a curriculum review has focused on ways to improve the learning of boys. In mathematics and art individual schemes meet the needs of all students, but in other subjects, such as geography, more focus is needed on meeting the needs of students of different levels of ability. Mixed attainment grouping is at the heart of the school's educational philosophy but there is insufficient overall monitoring of how subject departments fulfil the requirement to provide appropriate levels of work to suit students of different levels of ability.
40. Discrete provision for ICT is good, but opportunities for students to learn the use of ICT in other subjects are variable. For example, there is a weakness in science as measuring equipment is unsuitable, but in music, art and geography opportunities are good.
41. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum provides satisfactory breadth and balance. All students take the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also physical education. All other National Curriculum subjects, plus additional languages and other courses, are available within a range of options. Subjects mainly provide full GCSE courses, with some short GCSE courses also available in response to students' needs. There is also a GNVQ course in ICT. Students who do not take an examination course in ICT receive their ICT education within other subjects, mainly in English, mathematics and science, but this provision is not properly monitored to ensure that appropriate levels and content are provided. The school introduced a GNVQ Intermediate course in ICT in September in the belief that it will cater for a broader range of abilities, allowing some students to follow the foundation option if this proves to be more appropriate. There are no definite plans to introduce additional vocational courses in the near future until the ICT course has been thoroughly evaluated. A small number of students in year 11 are following an appropriate 'link course' which includes extended work experience for two days each week.
42. During tutorial lessons upper school students follow a 'Society and the Individual' course which includes modules on health education, careers guidance, religion and belief, records of achievement, vocational guidance and preparation for further education and careers applications. The content of the course is good, but as in the lower school, this programme lacks overall monitoring to ensure proper continuity and consistent quality. The religious education component is insufficient to fulfil the statutory requirements for this subject.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education*
43. Provision for spiritual development is generally satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. An audit of the curriculum identified where opportunities exist to foster this aspect of personal development. Teachers are now more aware but this aspect is strong only in music, drama and religious education. Assemblies occur once a week and are valued by students as important occasions. Sensitivity, skill in presentation and the use of music enhance their value but as the school is still required to arrange a daily act of collective worship the legal requirements remain unmet. The opportunity to emphasise the shared and deepest aspects of human life, as expressed in the religious and spiritual dimensions, remain areas for further improvement.

44. Provision for students' moral development is very good. In assembly there are opportunities to learn the principles that distinguish right from wrong and teachers are alert to the need to respond as circumstances arise. In mathematics students have to practise honesty as they mark their own work and in art, moral questions are part of the curriculum. Moral decisions feature frequently in competitive sport. Religious education lessons offer many opportunities to consider moral issues, despite the shortage of time in Years 10 and 11.
45. Provision for social development is good. Teachers and students relate well to each other; this promotes mature behaviour and self-discipline. The school fosters a sense of community and practises equality of opportunity. There is respect for differences and commitment to civilised values. The presence of students with disabilities is a unique and special opportunity that enhances the life and learning of the school. In many lessons students work in pairs or groups and develop the skills of teamwork. The school council is an active and effective example of the representative process. The promotion of social skills in tutorial time is variable as occasionally the form tutor does too little to create a sense of purpose. There is also inconsistency in the enforcement of some school rules, particularly in relation to the wearing of school uniform.
46. Provision for cultural development is also very good. Art, music and drama make a powerful contribution to students' personal enjoyment and enrichment. English offers a thoughtful and carefully planned study of human life as represented in literature and in the media. The school is aware of its own cultural diversity and this is celebrated in assemblies and in the visual displays around the school. The European dimension is strong in the teaching of modern foreign languages and in visits to France and Germany. Other community languages are available as options in Years 10 and 11. Religious education in Key Stage 3 offers very good understanding of Christianity and other major religions of the world and the school prepares students very well for the ethnic and cultural diversity of life in contemporary Britain. The school is preparing for the introduction of citizenship and plans to teach the programme of study through other subjects. The introduction of this dimension presents the school with an opportunity to review its tutorial and pastoral programme, meet the statutory requirements and improve the curriculum. The school's approach to all of the above aspects of the curriculum has a significant impact on the students, as reflected by their pleasant attitudes and generally good behaviour.

Provision for students with special educational needs

47. A strength of the provision for students with special educational needs is the school's commitment to an inclusive education and its emphasis on inclusive curricula. This is clearly visible in its treatment of students with physical impairments (who are fully supported in their movement around the school) and the large number of students with special learning or language needs who are fully integrated into most lessons. Learning support has a most positive focus within the curriculum and the various sources of support are well co-ordinated. All subjects make sound provision for individual learning strategies to enable the many students identified with special needs to succeed within the classroom environment. The targets set for individual education plans are monitored well and generally provide an effective and supportive process for student development which enables the vast majority to take the GCSE examinations in a full range of subjects. Procedures for those whose needs are formally stated are particularly thorough. For students with a limited knowledge of English, the use of specialist support is planned well, regular and effective in helping them to learn well.

Provision for gifted and talented students

48. Provision for students identified as gifted and talented is now benefiting from the direction of two recently appointed and committed co-ordinators. Students are identified from their performance in tests and by staff recommendation and categories have been devised which reflect specifically the nature of the school population and context. Currently, specific provision centres on activities in clubs and groups and relies on voluntary participation. The extent to which the needs of these students are met in classrooms is variable. Some teachers provide specific tasks to challenge and extend their understanding, develop higher order thinking skills and promote independent learning but this is inconsistent and not systematically addressed. A policy is formed which deals with these issues but it has yet to be implemented and its success will depend upon appropriate resources of funds and time.

Extra-curricular opportunities

49. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities for students in all year groups. These include sports and team activities (competing within school and with other schools); European residential study visits; trips to theatres and art galleries; work experience and an artist in residence. Lunchtime and after school activities include sessions to explore languages, art, drama, history, ICT, mathematics, music, design and technology, careers and a chess club for gifted and talented students. Supported study and homework sessions and library access before and after school are particularly good features.
50. Good links exist with colleges in the area that provide post 16 education but links with the main feeder middle schools are less well developed. A good range of contributions from the community, including police community officers and language translators, completes a very full picture of extra-curricular provision.

Careers Education and guidance

51. Provision for careers education and guidance is good as this area of the curriculum is well led and coordinated. It is taught through the pastoral system by a combination of form tutors, careers advisers and representatives from the wider community. The groundwork begins in Year 8, and in Year 9 parents and careers advisers become involved. The Year 10 programme includes detailed preparation for work experience and this is well supported with contributions from careers advisers. Preparation for college or work begins in Year 11 and involves careers advisers, visits from college staff and students and a conference. There are good, effective links with local employers, public sector organisations and the local Education Business Partnership. The careers library is well stocked and well organised but although the computers in the careers area have appropriate software and an Internet connection it is not yet possible to access careers software over the school network. This prevents larger groups from taking part in computer-based careers activities.

Equality of opportunity

52. The school is committed to equal opportunities for all students and places inclusion at the centre of its work. The curriculum meets the needs of students equally well and all students follow a full curriculum. The good support for all students, including those with disabilities, helps them to make good progress. The school recognises barriers to learning and has put in place strategies to overcome these barriers. The school environment reflects the multicultural nature of the student population and values all cultural heritages. There is good integration of all students into all aspects of school life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

53. The school has maintained a good level of pastoral support and care that meets the variety of personal and educational needs of the students. Year 8 students settle well as a result of appropriate links with the feeder middle schools and well-organised induction procedures.
54. Satisfactory arrangements exist to ensure students' welfare and appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The school policy clearly sets out procedures for staff to follow in the event of any concerns. Good use is made of external agencies to support students' welfare and learning. The provision for day-to-day first aid and medical care is good. Frequent checks of the site and premises are carried out and equipment is subject to annual checks. All health and safety issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed, but the condition of the toilets is now of concern. Insufficient attention has been paid to the quality of toilet facilities provided for students and staff. Many of the existing unhygienic and unpleasant toilets, with poor washing facilities, pose potential risks to health and safety.
55. The school's policy and procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of students are well documented and provide a constructive aid to raising achievement. Their application in practice is generally good, but stronger in some subject areas than in others. Improvements in the assessment of National Curriculum levels in Years 8 and 9 are needed in modern languages and mathematics, and assessment procedures in religious education have yet to be introduced. In art, design and technology, English, geography, ICT, and science there is evidence of thorough assessment, regular testing and monitoring, detailed analysis of progress leading to clear target setting for individuals, and further analysis to inform planning. Refinements to the school's pastoral tracking of students, currently being developed, will enable the production of complete student profiles from entry data to final examination performance.

Assessment of students with special educational needs

56. Previous performance in the middle school, results of routine testing, the professional judgement of teachers and the experience of the SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) are effective indicators in the identification of students' needs. Additionally, specialist diagnostic testing by external agencies is organised for students about whom the school is particularly concerned. Individual educational plans and statements of special educational need are reviewed and amended appropriately according to a student's progress against identified targets.
57. Criteria for inclusion on the published register of special needs are thorough but the school should also ensure that the needs of those identified only as having personal and behavioural needs

cannot be met and monitored elsewhere by the other extensive pastoral support systems operating in the school. These systems are under the direction of several senior and middle managers, able to provide effective behavioural support intervention and also to supervise the pastoral support programmes devised for these students. Currently some of these less acute cases are in receipt of the scarce resources of the learning support department.

58. Form tutors play a central role in the pastoral structure under the management of year heads, and assistant year heads. Tutors move up through the school with their forms. They know their students well and have a genuine concern for their progress and personal well being. Regular meetings, informal liaison between staff, and the daily 'shout' meeting enable the circulation of information about students. A programme of tutorial guidance sessions, including a PSHE programme, is led by individual year co-ordinators, although overall co-ordination throughout the school is poor. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance and systems are in place to follow up unexplained absences and persistent lateness.
59. A high level of care is demonstrated by the school in its inclusive approach to meeting the needs of students identified within a wide range of learning, emotional and behavioural needs. It is also particularly sensitive to the more complex area of physical impairment. The exceptionally high level of care provided for these students enables them to have full access to all the opportunities in the school. There is an increasing awareness of the specific needs of the more able. The support for learning provided by the school is enhanced by additional assistance from the specialist external support agencies with whom there is frequent and effective contact. Good support is offered to recent arrivals into this country, many of whom have traumatic pasts and little knowledge of English. The school is conscious that some of these students can have difficulty in adjusting. The part-time attendance at the school of a designated Somali link officer is effective in enabling home-school communication and helping students with a Somali background to integrate at academic and social levels.
60. Opportunities for the personal development of students are good, and they respond well. Some students act as guides during parents' evenings and other school events. A number of students in Year 11 have volunteered to become 'buddies' attached to tutor groups, helping the new Year 8 students settle into school. Representatives from each tutor group are elected to serve on the School Council. Enthusiastic participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available also contributes to the personal development of many students.
61. The school provides exceptional standards of care for its students with physical disabilities. Accommodation has been adapted to ensure that all parts of the school are accessible, including the installation of lifts, ramps, additional lighting and a therapy room. Teaching assistants provide full-time support for some students, attending to personal needs, assisting with feeding and helping when in the library. In addition, they provide 'stretching' and physiotherapy support as necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. The parents who returned the questionnaire, and the small number who attended the parents' meeting were generally supportive of the school and what it offers their children. Most parents are confident that the school is well led and managed. They consider their children make good progress, are encouraged to work hard to achieve their best and helped to become mature and responsible. They find staff approachable, consider teaching good and agree their children like school. The great majority of those who responded expressed satisfaction with the behaviour of the students and the range of activities the school provides outside lessons. They considered that the school works closely with them and provides adequate information about the progress of their sons and daughters.
63. The school has established positive links with parents and carers. Induction procedures enable new parents and carers to meet with key staff. Students in Year 8 reported easy transition from their middle schools as a result of these arrangements. Senior members of staff are regularly available to discuss any concerns or matters of importance, and each week, the headteacher holds an informal 'drop in' surgery. Parents and carers are regularly invited to a variety of curriculum information evenings and presentation evenings, such as the annual students' art

exhibition, drama productions and musical evenings. A few help in the school, and a supportive parents' association holds social and fundraising events. Most years an international evening is held to which parents of different cultures are invited to contribute. Links with the Somali community have been effectively established through the work of the LEA Somali link officer. Communication, however, is less developed between the school and other parents whose home language is not English. Interpreters and written communication between the school and the many parents for whom English is an additional language have not previously been routinely available. Homework diaries provide a useful means of contact between home and school. Parents are expected to sign and check these but not all do so.

64. Parents and carers of students identified as having special educational needs are invited and encouraged to be involved in the provision of support and the regular review of their progress.
65. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus contains basic information about the school and its routines, and this is supplemented by an induction booklet. Information on the curriculum is provided through the detailed, well-presented curriculum guides issued at the beginning of the year and via information evenings that enable parents to experience the teaching and learning process. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not currently include all that is required, and the school is aware of this. Newsletters every two weeks provide regular information about school matters, forthcoming events and key dates. Parents are kept informed of their sons' and daughters' progress through an interim report and a full written report on individual subjects. These generally set brief targets but vary in quality and the amount of detail provided about progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills of the subject. In addition, each year group holds at least one consultation meeting where parents can meet individual subject teachers to discuss progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The headteacher leads the school well, with commitment and integrity, and is respected by students, parents and staff. The published aims and identifiable values are reflected in the prevailing ethos of the school, which is one of inter-cultural and inter-racial respect and harmony, within a purposeful and supportive learning environment. He provides effective direction for the school and is assisted in the day-to-day administration of the school by a senior management team and in development planning by a school management board comprising, in addition, members of the governing body and elected staff representatives. The board's function is to act both as a filter for ideas and an information conduit to the governing body. Middle managers make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
67. The governing body provides good support for the headteacher. New working practices have been introduced since the previous inspection, and the governing body now plays an active role in the life of the school. The linking of governors to priority areas of the school development plan has resulted in their being much better informed than was previously the situation. The committee structure has been revised to ensure that key strategic areas of planning are systematically reviewed and there is a strong commitment by governors to school improvement.
68. Development planning is providing an effective management tool and has had a significant impact on school improvement. Departmental planning is well integrated with this and periodic department reviews, together with annual reports by heads of department, provide a focus for closer scrutiny by governors. Working parties to examine new initiatives also provide a significant input to strategic planning at this level.
69. At subject department level, a planned cycle of monitoring and reporting is linked to development planning, the introduction of which has had a notable impact on the quality of teaching and learning observed during this inspection. Further development in the skills of evaluating outcomes of monitoring is now needed for middle managers. There is less rigour evident in the monitoring and evaluation of whole school provision, particularly in relation to curriculum provision and the pastoral programme. Senior managers have an insufficiently systematic approach to managing their delegated strategic responsibilities, with over-reliance on long-term knowledge of individuals or historic practice within the school. Diverse lines of accountability exist for discrete elements of the school's academic and pastoral curriculum and these need to be more effectively co-

ordinated. In particular, there is a need to secure appropriate reporting mechanisms to enable monitoring and rigorous evaluation of the quality of agreed practice concerning whole-school curriculum dimensions such as ICT, spiritual development, pastoral programmes and the plans currently being developed to introduce citizenship from September 2002.

70. The management of special needs is well developed with an acting head of learning development organising specialised provision for those with learning difficulties, two advisers encouraging provision for more able students and an appropriately qualified governor providing strong support. Versatile and talented teaching support staff are deployed efficiently in response to prioritised needs but a lack of joint planning time reduces the impact of their contribution in mainstream lessons. Time constraints also have impeded implementation of the plans by senior staff to monitor the various departments' provision for all those with special needs and to ascertain the overall experience to which individual students are exposed. Priorities for improving the effectiveness of the school's provision include the learning development department accepting responsibility for the organisation of the provision of language support, for students for whom English is an additional language, now that the school is employing its own specialist. The school respects the requirements of the new Code of Practice, publishes appropriate information and makes excellent use of the resources it receives to provide for the exceptionally wide range of special educational needs welcomed in this school.
71. The school has benefited from a relatively low turnover of staff in the past and a high number of teaching staff have given the school in excess of 20 years' service. This has meant stability and continuity for students and their families, and is reflected in the quality of the pastoral care. The headteacher has provided many younger and less experienced staff with professional development opportunities through assigned responsibility for elements of the school's curriculum, eg citizenship, 'gifted and talented' students, etc. This, together with a strong commitment to action research, demonstrated by staff involvement with programmes such as the HOLS (Higher Order Learning Skills) project and many other LEA initiatives, ensures that the school continues to attract and retain staff of a high calibre. As elsewhere in London schools, existing vacancies are proving difficult to fill at the present time.
72. The number of staff assigned management or co-ordination roles within the pastoral system is significantly higher than in many schools. The availability of this expertise should ensure more efficient co-ordination, clearer progression, and greater consistency in the programmes delivered within the pastoral teams than is currently present.
73. The administrative, technical and learning support staff are well managed. They demonstrate efficiency and a strong loyalty to the school and its students, contributing significantly to its positive and harmonious ethos. The school is currently at an early stage in the development of electronic management information systems. Some other internal communication systems are not as efficient or effective as might be desired. More formalised systems for the exchange of information concerning building repairs would be beneficial within such a widespread site, and a more systematic approach to verification of data and drafted documentation would prevent the recurrence of inaccuracies in published information identified during the current inspection.
74. Overall, resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum but some areas need attention, particularly ICT. Although the quantity and quality of ICT resources have improved since the last inspection, the number of computers in the school is insufficient to meet the overall needs of the curriculum. ICT resources for measuring and recording in science are inadequate. Resources are good in music although the number of computers available limits work with larger classes in Years 8 and 9. In design and technology, new ICT resources are having a positive impact on teaching and learning but some basic hand tools are in short supply. The number of textbooks is satisfactory in most departments. Several subjects, for example modern foreign languages and mathematics, rely heavily upon producing their own resources for teaching some aspects of their work. The learning resource centre is efficiently managed by an enthusiastic librarian. It has a good book stock and has recently been equipped with 16 new networked computers with Internet access. It is used well during lessons, before school, at lunchtime and after school, and makes a good contribution to students' learning.
75. There is sufficient accommodation for most subjects but the quality of some aspects of the school buildings is unsatisfactory. There has been insufficient improvement in accommodation for

the music department since the last inspection and it remains unsatisfactory. A number of large departments, eg English and languages, do not have adequate preparation space. There are two gymnasias, which provide reasonable accommodation, and the school has access to a sports centre but no access to playing fields. Most departments have adequate suites of rooms and all science lessons now take place in laboratories. The nature of the site frequently requires students to cover considerable distances between lessons resulting in some loss of teaching time.

76. Maintenance in some parts of the building needs to be improved. The girls' toilets are in urgent need of refurbishment. At the time of the inspection, leaks in the roof of an ICT room prevented several machines from being used when it rained and the lack of blinds in the same room frequently prevents the effective use of projection facilities. A number of the external steel framed doors do not close properly resulting in draughty corridors.
77. The total expenditure per student is in the average range for schools of similar type and within the LEA. In view of the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the students, the school therefore provides good value for money. The significant carry-forward amount projected for the current year has been appropriately earmarked within the school's development planning priorities. Despite historical under-investment in the fabric of the school buildings and campus, governors have prioritised expenditure against school objectives with considerable skill and secured good quality learning environments in most parts of the school. Additional funding received to support the needs of students with special needs is used to very good effect. Contracts are negotiated by the school's business manager who works closely with the chair of the finance and resources sub-committee to ensure that all budgets are scrutinised carefully and that the principles of best value are applied to purchasing.
78. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained at Key Stage 3 and improved at Key Stage 4 and the quality of teaching has greatly improved. Most issues raised by the previous inspection have been addressed although several aspects require further improvement and the implementation of a collective act of worship has not yet been secured. Within the governing body and staff there is a high level of commitment to improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. In order to continue the trend in improvement, and to raise levels of attainment and the quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff should:
- ensure that there is effective management oversight of arrangements to secure students' entitlement to all cross-curricular dimensions of the curriculum, by monitoring and evaluating the implementation and outcomes; (Paragraphs 39, 42, 48, 55, 69)
 - secure effective co-ordination, continuity, progression and consistency within the pastoral programme, particularly the PHSE element; (Paragraphs 39, 42, 72)
 - comply with statutory curriculum requirements, including the provision of religious education and collective worship; (Paragraphs 38, 42, 176, 179)
 - ensure that toilet facilities throughout the school meet at least minimum standards of health and hygiene and provide an acceptable environment. (Paragraphs 54, 76)

Other areas of relative weakness noted by the inspection team should also be addressed:

- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current monitoring arrangements by incorporating strategies for rigorous evaluation in order to better inform the process of whole-school and departmental improvement and planning; (Paragraphs 39, 41, 42, 57, 58, 96, 154)
- upgrade the facilities for the teaching of music; (Paragraphs 75, 161)

- extend the range of differentiation strategies employed within classrooms, particularly with regard to addressing the needs of higher attaining students; (Paragraphs 29, 33, 36, 84, 106, 107, 128, 152, 174)
- introduce more formalised systems to improve the efficiency of internal communication and to ensure greater accuracy in published information; (Paragraph 73)
- continue to increase departmental access to ICT resources in order to facilitate appropriate use within the delivery of the National Curriculum; (Paragraphs 96, 108, 115, 122, 142, 153, 166)
- improve the overall condition of the building, both internally and externally; (Paragraphs 76, 77)
- reduce the unacceptable level of noise arising from boisterous and inconsiderate behaviour in corridors and circulation spaces; (Paragraph 21)
- take a more consistent approach to the enforcement of school rules on the wearing of uniform; (Paragraph 45)
- revise the format of the school's prospectus and governors' reports to parents to include all required information. (Paragraph 65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	159
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	26	80	46	2	0	0
Percentage	3.14	16.35	50.31	28.93	1.26	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y8 - 11
Number of students on the school's roll	1046
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	162

Special educational needs	Y8 - 11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	48
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	248

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	492

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	131	128	259

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	75	81	84
	Girls	96	95	91
	Total	171	176	175
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (72)	68 (68)	67 (56)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	37 (25)	48 (41)	27 (21)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	72	88	68
	Girls	101	106	87
	Total	173	194	155
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (74)	75 (77)	60 (66)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (38)	43 (42)	26 (31)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	126	123	249

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	69	119	123
	Girls	77	119	123
	Total	146	238	247
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	58 (56)	96 (95)	99 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	43.6 (42.6)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	40
Black – African heritage	58
Black – other	13
Indian	264
Pakistani	41
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	6
White	411
Any other minority ethnic group	207

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	12	2
Black – African heritage	8	1
Black – other	1	0
Indian	3	0
Pakistani	2	0
Bangladeshi	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	45	6
Other minority ethnic groups	26	2

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 - 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	65.35
Number of students per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y8 - Y11

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	693.1

Deployment of teachers: Y8 - Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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Average teaching group size: Y8 - Y11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	24
Key Stage 4	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	3,664,819
Total expenditure	3,633,824
Expenditure per student	3,112
Balance brought forward from previous year	148,104
Balance carried forward to next year	179,099

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	23
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	18

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

1046

Number of questionnaires returned

252 (24%)

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	54	4	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	41	53	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	50	10	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	53	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	26	62	4	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	51	11	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	43	4	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	42	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	57	10	3	6
The school is well led and managed.	38	51	2	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	56	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	42	7	4	15

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teachers' high expectations and secure subject knowledge
- A collaborative approach arising from good leadership and management
- The quality of the experience offered to students through drama

Areas for improvement

- The identification of, and systematic and rigorous provision for, high attaining students
- Differentiated planning to ensure that work is matched to students' learning needs
- Consistent use of plenary sessions in lessons

80. In the 2001 Key Stage 3 national tests, the proportion of students reaching at least the expected Level 5 was just above the national average. The proportion of those at Level 6 or above was above the national average. Girls outperformed boys at both levels. When these results are compared with schools in similar social contexts performance was clearly above the average for that group of schools. Standards of achievement at the end of Year 9 are good. They reflect the fact that attainment in English is steadily rising on entry and that teaching is effectively focused on giving students the skills they need to succeed in National Curriculum tests.
81. Results at Key Stage 4 in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well above the national average with girls continuing to outperform boys in English language but there is no significant gender difference in English literature. Standards in the GCSE examination for drama fell in 2001 having been above average prior to this.
82. In Years 8 and 9, students of all levels of attainment are confident speakers. They are prepared to read aloud and make articulate responses to questioning about texts, which are often complex and challenging. Most students are able to use a technical vocabulary to describe language. Teachers work hard to ensure that students with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, take a full part in all activities. This focus ensures that all students achieve well and make good progress. In Years 10 and 11 students routinely use presentations and role-play to explore texts and deepen their understanding. The impact of effective drama teaching is evident in students' confidence and their repertoire of skills.
83. The department's focus on literacy has made a positive contribution to the standards that students achieve in reading and writing. Students are given effective strategies to organise and interrogate information. The use of grids and other writing frames enables students to clarify their thinking and understanding. This detailed preparation leads to good standards of writing for students at all levels of attainment and enables them to become increasingly independent learners. Schemes of work are planned to increase students' confidence and competence in the use of ICT which they use for research, desktop publishing and word-processing.
84. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Teachers have a clear sense of pride in their department and an enjoyment of the subject. This enthusiasm is conveyed to students whose response is very good in the majority of lessons. The department is committed to the organisation of teaching groups by mixed attainment and works with consistent determination to ensure that this approach raises standards for all students. Seating plans are used to group students according to their learning needs and teachers consistently move students into different working groups, often ensuring a gender and ethnic mix. Students respond with maturity and enthusiasm and group work is never less than positive. The provision of resources to support different learning needs is inconsistent and within these mixed groups there is limited challenge for some students. The department has prioritised differentiated planning as a key area for development. An effective start has been made but there is still a need to ensure that resources and texts are differentiated adequately to meet the wide range of learning needs, which the students present.

85. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported effectively and achieve well. Students who join the school with limited knowledge of English progress well and by the end of Year 11 almost every student achieves a pass grade in the GCSE examination. The needs of high attaining students are recognised informally, but there is a need to ensure that these students are systematically identified and planned for. As there are significantly more boys in Years 8, 9 and 11 the department has planned effectively to ensure that there are strategies in place, such as the choice of texts, to support motivation and high achievement for all boys.
86. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and use a wide variety of approaches in lessons. A well-judged blend of challenge and support leads to students deepening their response and understanding. Expectations are uniformly high and result in good pace in lessons and good progress for all year groups. Learning objectives are clear but are frequently not revisited at the end of lessons. The department has rightly identified these plenary sessions as an area for development. Marking is not totally consistent. At its best it offers both encouragement and challenge but when work is not linked to National Curriculum levels, students do not have a clear idea of their attainment measured against national expectations. Planning is detailed and ensures that all elements of the Key Stage 3 Strategy are covered.
87. The leadership and management of the department are good. Departmental documentation provides a vision for the place of English in the curriculum and the thinking that informs and shapes the department's work is clear. Strong leadership has led to high expectations and a unified approach across the team. Monitoring of practice takes place and informs the identification of departmental priorities. Professional development is a strong feature and has contributed to a climate of innovation and reflection. The department is outward looking, recognising that English has a central role in raising standards across the school.
88. The English department has taken the lead in developing literacy across the curriculum in line with the Key Stage 3 strategy and within the department there is an intense focus on literacy which informs teaching at all levels. Monitoring of literacy practice across the school has not yet started and there is need for a robust whole-school approach to ensure that students receive appropriate literacy support in every lesson.
89. The department has made good progress since the last inspection with evidence of a more systematic use of data to inform planning. A detailed analysis of student performance in different exam papers has led to a greater focus on revision materials for students in Year 9 and focused preparation for a broader range of exam questions. The department has also introduced preparations for the exams earlier in the GCSE course. The department has placed an emphasis on consistency of approach, which is delivered through common schemes of work. In a further response to the previous inspection, the department now ensures that the skills of critical analysis skills are taught to younger year groups.

Drama

90. Drama is rightly regarded as a strength of the school, providing many students with a rich experience both in lessons and through extra-curricular activities. Very good teaching for students in every year is equipping them with a range of skills that support their learning across the curriculum. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed was good or better. Planning is thoughtful and provides opportunities for students to address many sensitive issues. Students are able to use drama conventions successfully and refine and present their ideas with confidence and concentration. They respond very well in their drama lessons and demonstrate maturity and thoughtfulness in their work. The leadership and management of drama are good and have led to a department that sets and achieves high standards in every aspect of its work. Drama makes a significant contribution to the cultural, moral and spiritual life of the school.

MATHEMATICS

The overall provision for mathematics in the school is **good**.

Strengths

- A positive working environment that encourages all students to work hard
- A well planned programme for students in Years 8 and 9 catering for individual needs

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT in lessons to further support and enhance learning
- Monitoring and evaluating progress through Years 8 and 9
- The consistency of marking and constructive feedback to students

91. When compared to all schools, the standards attained by students at the age of 14 in the national tests in 2001 were slightly above average but when compared to similar schools they were well above the average. The level of attainment of these students when they entered the school was slightly below what could be expected and therefore they made good progress during this time. The attainment of girls was greater than that of boys, and the difference was greater than the national difference. There is an upward trend in performance but there has been some variation in recent years. Work seen in lessons reinforces these standards as students in Year 9 confidently solve equations and calculate angles in polygons and higher attaining students answer questions involving area of circles and calculate lengths and angles in right-angled triangles. This work is from Levels 7 and 8 of the National Curriculum and is above national expectations.
92. The results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were above the national averages for both boys and girls with no significant gender difference. When compared to their performance at the age of 14, these results show that good progress was made although there were relatively few students who achieved the A* grade. Work seen in students' exercise books confirms the above average standards of a majority of students. Students in Year 11 were undertaking a coursework task that required them to investigate the gradients of curved graphs. The work involved extended the higher attaining students to a level that is above the National Curriculum level of exceptional performance. Average and lower attaining students were investigating a task that involved good levels of algebra to generalise, and then simplify, expressions derived from number sequences.
93. The main factor in achieving these high results is good teaching. All lessons seen were judged satisfactory or better with just over half the lessons seen being good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to prepare lessons well. In some lessons, the numeracy starters were not prepared with sufficient care and this confused some students. Good lessons contained material that was relevant and was presented in a way that developed understanding of mathematics through application of the skills being learnt. Lessons observed were usually conducted at a brisk pace that sustained motivation and concentration. On several occasions teachers were seen to challenge students who were not making sufficient effort. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 was judged better than that in Years 8 and 9. The reason for this is that the individualised scheme does not give teachers opportunities to demonstrate all their teaching skills. Lessons were presented well and students worked at a brisk pace. The material was challenging but within the reach of all students. During the inspection students in Years 10 and 11 were working on a coursework task for their GCSE examination. All students were given good information about what was required to obtain good results and when asked understood their level of working and their potential grades. Appropriate homework is set and in Years 8 and 9 usually comprises a core section and extension, thus catering for the whole ability range.
94. The good response from the students reflected the quality of teaching. All students were well behaved and polite and lessons were enhanced by the mutual respect that exists between teachers and students. Students arrive at lessons promptly and are ready to work hard. They co-operate well with each other and are mutually supportive. This was very evident in Years 10 and 11 as all students discuss their task with each other and their teacher. They can offer reasons for the methods they use to solve a problem and are prepared to listen to the point of view of others. In Years 8 and 9 students mark their own classwork and in all instances that this was observed it was honestly and fairly done. These positive attitudes meant that students learnt their mathematics well. In Years 8 and 9 there is considerable movement around the classroom but the behaviour and attitude of students ensured that disturbance is kept to a minimum and all students work well. Students' confidence was demonstrated by some of them working solutions on the board for the rest of the class and giving reasons for their solution. In Year 10 students could recall facts and data that they had used in Year 9 with confidence especially when using algebra.
95. The curriculum for Years 8 and 9 is based upon a scheme developed in school that caters for the range of abilities in each class. The teachers have a good knowledge of the scheme, are very

committed to it and this ensures that it works well. The individualised scheme enables material to be closely matched to the ability of each student in the class. It also enables lower attaining students to encounter some work at a higher level than they would if they were grouped by ability. The scheme is well planned to ensure continuity and progression and as results indicate good progress is made by all students. Good record keeping ensures progression but closer monitoring of progress through the programme could enhance the scheme and give teachers a better indication of the achievement of each student. The use of computers to enhance learning is in the scheme of work but there are limitations on access to facilities.

96. An experienced and effective teacher leads a department of mutually supportive and appropriately qualified teachers. There is adequate documentation to support the work of the department although greater depth in some of the policies and plans would be beneficial in planning the way forward. The department analyses results of all examinations and discusses ways to raise standards. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning but it is recognised that more development is needed in this area. The reports to parents could be improved by more specific information on what students know, understand and can do. There is a specific evening held for the parents of Year 8 students to give information on mathematics and the evidence shows that this is well received and very beneficial. There are adequate resources to support the teaching and the use of support staff is very effective in helping all students, particularly those who are physically disabled. There are no computers for use within the classrooms. The corridors and classrooms have attractive displays of students' work which, together with commercial posters displaying information and puzzles, help to sustain the ethos of the area in which mathematics is taught.
97. Since the last inspection there have been several improvements. Teaching has improved, results have risen to above national averages and standards of numeracy, especially in Years 8 and 9, have also risen. The use of ICT within the classroom has not received the necessary input of equipment into the department to make a significant impact.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Improvement in Key Stage 3 results, particularly in 2001
- Good systems for assessment and monitoring of student progress
- The high percentage of students entered for double award science

Areas for improvement

- Continue to improve standards in Key Stage 3
- The provision for ICT
- The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning and teaching

98. In the 2001 national tests for fourteen-year-olds, the proportion of students who reached the average level for their age improved significantly. The results are in line with the average for all schools and for schools with a similar intake of students. The average grade has also improved. At Key Stage 3, standards are lower in science than in English and mathematics.
99. When they join the school at age 12, students' standards are average. Standards at age 16 continue to be in line with the national picture. Overall, results in the GCSE examination are above the national picture in the higher grades and the same as the national picture in the lower grades. In 2001, the proportion of students awarded grades A*-C, or grades A*-G were at the national average. Overall, students achieve lower GCSE results in science than they achieve in mathematics and English, although they achieve higher proportion of A* and A grades. The science department enters a higher than average proportion of students for GCSE double award examination.
100. Students achieve well and make progress in almost all classes and in all aspects of science. Where some students had not moved on as well as might have been expected in relation to their prior attainment, this could be traced to earlier staffing difficulties. Students with special

educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress. The support provided by teachers and teaching assistants helps the students to complete their work and to make progress. In Year 8, students could carry out experiments to find out how colour filters work. High attaining students could explain that the filter absorbs all light apart from green light. Year 9 students could identify energy transfers in some everyday equipment; high attaining students could use the correct language to describe energy transfer in a solar panel.

101. By Year 11, all students can make glass and remember some information about transition metals. Higher attaining students can recognise and discuss the structure and properties of glass as a giant molecule and how transition metals are used to alter the structure of the molecule in the process of glass making. By age 16, most students can plan and carry out full investigations. High attaining students can use a number of variables and evaluate their investigations using the correct scientific language, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Students in both key stages improve their practical and investigative skills. Progress is more rapid in GCSE classes than in Key Stage 3, because teachers develop the skills in a more systematic way throughout the GCSE course.
102. In almost all classes, students' attitudes to science were satisfactory and good in almost two thirds. Students' attitudes are better in Years 10 and 11 than Years 8 and 9. Many students enjoy science, particularly the practical work, which motivates them. For example, in Year 11 classes, students had good attitudes because they were interested and enjoyed making glass. Less well motivated students, too, were 'lifted' and willing to listen to the teacher's exposition. The majority of students behave well and make progress. In a minority of lessons, where practical routines have not been established, time is wasted controlling student movement and other students go off task. In most lessons, the students could work in groups and move around the classroom with self-control and independence.
103. Teaching and learning of science are satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons taught by permanent teachers present in the school during the inspection. Teaching was good or very good in just over half of lessons. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson. The school has found it difficult to recruit permanent teachers and this instability is affecting teaching and achievement in some classes, particularly in Key Stage 3.
104. Most of the teachers are confident about teaching science and some are particularly good at providing concrete illustrations to help students learn abstract ideas. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, the teacher demonstrated how a dimmer switch works to help students increase their understanding of the effect of the length of wire on the current, voltage and resistance. Many teachers have good student management skills and good routines, which establish the right conditions for students to learn. Almost all lessons have clear objectives and most teachers make sure that students remember key ideas from previous lessons. In the good lessons, teachers finish by establishing what students have learnt. Teachers use a good range of teaching styles that help the students understand difficult ideas. For example, in a very good Year 11 lesson, the teacher showed the students a model of a transition metal and led a very good discussion. She repeated the questioning until the students' responses indicated that they had understood the underlying theory before moving on to make glass. At the end of the lesson, she drew together the key findings. As a result, the students were stimulated and fully engaged in the work and their learning was very good. In this and other good lessons, teachers use the results of questioning and marking to inform the next stage in learning.
105. In a number of classes, particularly in GCSE classes, the teaching challenged the highest attaining students, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In a high attaining Year 10 class, the teacher challenged and interested the students with a discussion on the factors affecting the size of populations. Once their interest was gained, students could write about the relationship between predator and prey in their own words. In this as in some other lessons, teachers paid attention to literacy. They display key words and help students to discuss, read, and write about science and provide opportunities for extended writing. Teachers make appropriate use of numerical skills by encouraging students to use graphs and calculations. They pay good attention to safety in lessons.

106. Weaknesses in teaching are associated with a narrow range of teaching styles, inappropriate student management skills and minimal planning. This is particularly the case with lower attaining students whose listening and learning skills are not well developed. Less learning takes place when students become bored and go off task and when students become resentful as a result of inappropriate strategies for managing behaviour. Homework is set and marked, although there is some inconsistency in the marking. Not all students know what to do to improve their work and most students do not respond to teachers' comments. Some teachers are using ICT to help students understand difficult ideas in science, but are restricted by shortage of equipment.
107. Leadership is good with clear educational direction. In the short time in post, the head of science has provided leadership in managing change to improve standards in science and has completed a clear action plan for the development of science. Since her appointment she has introduced monitoring of students' achievement and systematic action to take if progress is less than expected. She has firm plans in place to monitor teaching and students' work. She has developed a comprehensive handbook with aims and policies, including safety, and comprehensive schemes of work are being revised in both key stages. In Key Stage 3, the schemes of work do not pay sufficient attention to the needs of students of different abilities and their prior achievement in the middle school. Assessment procedures are good. The students have a good understanding of what they know through tests at the end of each module. Each teacher has very good records of students' progress from Key Stage 2. The science department sets targets for science.
108. The provision of science equipment for experiments is satisfactory. Within the department there are inadequate resources for the use of ICT to support learning. The schemes of work include provision for students' work in ICT but the department has no up-to-date data logging equipment, which prevents delivery of this part of the revised National Curriculum. The provision of textbooks is barely adequate as no student has their own book. The technicians work efficiently and effectively and give good support to teachers.

ART

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and the use of teachers' expertise
- The standards achieved by students of all abilities, particularly in practical skills, and by the most able
- Students' respect for, and enjoyment of, the subject

Areas for improvement

- Development of projects, especially for Years 8 and 9, to provide more opportunities for students' own creative responses and interpretations
- Increasing opportunities to use ICT, particularly to generate and manipulate imagery

109. Attainment by Year 9 is above expectations for the ages of the students. A strength of their good attainment is the thorough development of students' practical skills, so that they can manipulate materials and techniques confidently and successfully. Attention is paid to skills needed for ceramics and sculpture, and students can also handle drawing and painting skills and other two-dimensional processes such as collage. For example, in Year 8, students can paint effective compositions exploring colour mixing and understanding of aspects of colour such as harmonising and contrasting, as well as being able to model and construct with clay to make effective clown portraits, figures in action and dragon heads.
110. In Year 9 students use sketchbooks to develop ideas through experimenting and researching, including finding out about the work of other artists and designers. Some students use the Internet to do this, presenting their work well in written and visual forms. Some students are beginning to develop good understandings about the history of art and design of many cultures through this research, but for the majority of Year 8 and 9 students this aspect of art is a weaker feature of attainment.

111. Achievement by Year 11 is often well above expectations for the GCSE courses followed, especially in three-dimensional work. This is reflected in the good trend of GCSE examination successes in recent years and in students' consistently good achievement. For example, in 2001, the percentage of students who gained GCSE grades A*-C was above the national average. Over 40 per cent of the school's Year 11 students took the examination compared with an average of 30 per cent nationally, which makes the school's achievement even better.
112. An important feature of attainment in Years 10 and 11 is the increasingly individual quality of the work seen. Students are able to respond in creative, expressive ways, bringing their own ideas to the projects set. This results in many examples of powerfully expressive pieces exploring students' own feelings, and frequently involves imagery reflecting the multi-cultural nature of the school's population. Some of the work is ambitious in scale, and some develops over extended stages of research and in-depth investigations. Students use the Internet for research as well as referring to art books in the library. Presentation of written work is generally good, showing a developing understanding about painting, sculpture, ceramics, architecture and design. Much of this work shows students' good word processing skills.
113. Art teaching in Years 8 and 9 is good, and in Years 10 and 11 art teaching is very good with some excellent teaching seen. A strength of art teaching is that all students receive a great deal of individual attention to help them develop their skills and ideas. This attention is very detailed, evaluative and enabling, treating all students as individuals. In the lower school it focuses on providing students with a sound base of practical skill and confidence in a wide range of two and three-dimensional processes, and becomes increasingly focused on individual and expressive development during the GCSE course.
114. Lessons are very well organised and managed to make productive use of time. Teachers are all art specialists providing expert subject leadership. They provide students with challenging work and the means to accomplish tasks successfully, enabling learning to proceed at a good rate for all student groups, including both boys and girls, all cultural and ethnic groups, students with special needs and students of high ability in art. Students in Years 8 and 9 generally work under the close direction of their teachers, but in Years 10 and 11 they begin to develop more independent learning skills, enabling them to make choices and decisions affecting the development of their work. Students enjoy the high quality of art experience they receive in lessons, they respond by working hard, behaving well, and sharing their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject.
115. Under recent new departmental leadership, good beginnings have been made in reviewing all aspects of work to generate development of the art department's practices that have been used over a long period. All of the issues raised in the Ofsted inspection of 1996 have been successfully dealt with, with particular improvement in the time allowed for art, and subsequent raising of attainment. All aspects of art in the National Curriculum are now covered. There is still some work needed to develop the subject's use of ICT. From a very strong position, the department needs to continue to develop its practices, with particular attention to expanding the range of ideas and issues addressed through art, extending more creative and expressive opportunities into Year 8 art projects, and to improving the focus of art assessment objectives in each of the projects set.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision for design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Achievement in some aspects at GCSE level and in Key Stage 3 teacher assessments
- Good teamwork among staff who are well led and managed
- Strategies for monitoring and assessing students' progress particularly in Key Stage 4

Areas for improvement

- The provision of alternative work for students with different abilities
- Increasing investigation and evaluation tasks, and design and make assignments in Years 8 and 9
- Greater use of ICT to support designing and making in Years 8 and 9

116. In 2001, teacher assessment showed the standard of attainment at the end of Year 9 to be better than the national average. About two-thirds of students attained a Level 5 or above compared to the national average of about half. However, girls attained more highly than boys. About four-fifths of girls attained a Level 5 or above whereas only two-thirds of boys did so. Girls generally were observed to respond more positively to the tasks set and this may account for the difference in attainment.
117. In 2001, overall GCSE examination results were better than the national average by a modest amount. Girls attained slightly better results than boys, but the overall performance of girls was not as good as the national results. Attainment in the various specialist options offered by the department was variable. Good results were obtained in the graphics and food technology courses, in the textiles short course and in the combined business studies and resistant materials course. Results were not as good in the resistant materials full and short courses and the textiles full course. The differences in the standards of attainment are due to the fact that the textiles and resistant materials courses included a significant number of lower attaining students. In 2001, a significant number of students failed to sit the written examination and did not therefore achieve a grade for the subject.
118. In work seen during the course of the inspection, attainment of those students following GCSE courses broadly matched the examination pattern of 2001. The majority of students in Years 10 and 11 were achieving well and producing work of a high standard, especially in food and graphics. Work in textiles represents an improvement on the previous year, but work seen in some resistant materials lessons was often not of a sufficiently high standard.
119. The department and the school have made good progress in dealing with most of the points that needed attention since the last inspection, although some work still needs to be done. Staff have made progress in developing different tasks to suit students of different attainment, but this is not yet sufficiently embedded into the practice of staff to make a significant difference in most lessons. The quality of teaching is generally better and coverage of the programme of study is good. The work in food technology is much improved and is of a high standard. Management of the department is now very effective and there is a good level of technician support, except in textiles. Standards of health and safety are high, although many teaching groups exceed 20 students, which could pose a health and safety risk in rooms which tend to be rather small and which contain a lot of furniture and equipment.
120. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in about half of the lessons seen, and good in the remainder. One lesson contained very good teaching. The features of good teaching were good planning, a mix of teaching styles and work planned to meet the needs of all the students in the group. Some particularly effective teaching was seen in one of the combined business studies and resistant materials lessons. In some lessons the pace of teaching was too slow and failed to challenge many of the students. Teachers regularly assess the work which students produce and the standards of teacher assessment are accurate. These assessments are used to inform future planning. The quality of learning, standards of achievement and progress made were good in about a third of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the remainder. Where learning was good, students responded well to the teaching, they asked perceptive questions and were able to explain with confidence the nature of the work that they were doing. Some students, especially those in Years 10 and 11 are able to work independently and plan their coursework carefully. However the progress of some students with coursework is slow.
121. The progress of students identified as having special educational needs is generally good. The vast majority of these students are able to understand what is required from them and their attainment is in line with their ability. Some students with physical impairments have difficulties with practical work.
122. Students in Years 10 and 11 make extensive use of ICT in their course work folders. Although often of good quality, the majority of this work involves word processing and presentation of text and research using the Internet. Examples of the use of spreadsheets, databases and computer-aided drawing are currently limited. In Years 8 and 9, students experience a module of work involving computer control and this is taught effectively. However the use of generic ICT skills such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases and multi-media software are limited in these

years. The use of computer aided drawing and design is at an early stage of development and currently there is limited use of computer aided manufacturing, apart from some good work in Year 8. A computer controlled sewing machine is used effectively in textiles. The department should plan to make more extensive use of ICT to support the designing and making process in all years.

123. The management of the department is very effective. Staff work well together and share in the responsibilities of running the department. Some particularly useful work is done to monitor the progress of students in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that all students attain the highest possible grade. The schemes of work cover all areas of the programme of study but the type of work set for students in Years 8 and 9 tends to be almost exclusively task focused, with a small design element. Students in these years have little experience of investigating and evaluating existing products or of working on design and make assignments which allow for greater creativity. Whilst the department has rightly emphasised the teaching of skills, consideration needs to be given to allowing for some 'design and make' assignments in Years 8 and 9. The allocation of teaching time in Year 8 is appropriate but is not sufficient in Year 9 to allow an appropriate range of skills to be taught to support GCSE courses.
124. Resources are generally good, although some appear to be under used. The food technology rooms are in good decorative order and are well equipped, although the working space for food preparation is cramped when large groups are in the rooms. The textiles room is adequate for the purpose, but is in urgent need of decoration. Working space for making activities is limited in most of the workshops and the department should consider the balance of space required for designing as compared to that required for making.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Improving attainment at Key Stage 3 which reflects more focused curriculum planning
- Leadership and management which supports the raising of standards very well
- The use of ICT to deepen students' understanding of the subject

Areas for improvement

- Further implementation of strategies to meet the needs of students, particularly those of higher attainment
- Independent learning should be more consistently supported across all age groups

125. At the end of Key Stage 3, results from teacher assessment in 2001 were slightly above the national average and this represented an improvement on the previous year. In the work seen, students have a wide range of attainment on entry to the school, though overall it is around the national average. Students of lower and middle attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress in acquiring geographical skills. In particular, they develop good specialist vocabulary, for example in work on river systems in the UK and elsewhere. There is good quality extended writing from students of middle and higher attainment in topics on place and in thematic studies.
126. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were slightly above the national average in terms of the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades. This represents a marginal decline on the previous two years when the performance of students was above the national average. The attainment of boys is better than that of girls, which is contrary to the national trend. There is a wide range of ethnic groupings studying the subject but there are currently no significant differences in attainment between them at the end of their studies.
127. At Key Stage 4, students make satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment and there are no significant gender or ethnic variations in student performance. ICT skills continue to develop well but numeracy skills are not extended beyond a rudimentary level in fieldwork. Extended writing in course work continues to improve in line with expectation and students of all abilities are able to produce competent pieces using a range of sources. This was witnessed in coursework

dealing with Antarctica. Geography is an increasingly popular option choice for students. Retention at Key Stage 4 is excellent and in recent years virtually all students commencing the course complete it.

128. The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on the learning of students. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives which are shared with students. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Lessons are generally conducted at a satisfactory pace though some higher attaining students complain of lack of pace in some lessons at Key Stage 3 and lesson observation supported this view. Marking is prompt and target setting is well focused but more regular feedback within topics would assist in maintaining appropriate expectation, particularly for higher attaining students.
129. Students are exposed to a wide range of learning activities which enable students to develop rounded views, for example in work on volcanoes and Monserrat. The quality of ongoing assessment is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Attitudes to learning are good. Students generally listen well and are prepared to persist for example in group work dealing with migration. The progress of a minority of students at Key Stage 3 is restricted by instances of persistent or sporadic absence. Behaviour is very good. No oppressive behaviour of any kind was observed or reported. There was good social interaction in lessons observed. This had a positive effect on learning. Groups, well balanced for gender and ethnicity, worked productively on tropical rain forests in Year 9 and industrial decline in Year 11. This ethos was very well supported by inclusive teaching and effective liaison between teachers and teaching assistants.
130. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for the department. The departmental development plan is very well prioritised and has placed an emphasis on raising attainment at Key Stage 3. Teachers evaluate their work in a rigorous way. Schemes of work are frequently revised; are of very good quality and make well-considered cross-curricular links. There is very good planning for the logical progression of ICT skills through appropriate use. This enables students to make good progress - for example, in using increasingly sophisticated desktop publishing in presentations in Year 9.
131. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Results remain marginally above the national average at Key Stage 4 and are now above the national average at Key Stage 3. Students with special educational needs continue to make good progress at each key stage due to good planning and effective use of teaching assistants. There is now more extensive use of ICT. Extra-curricular activities have been strengthened and offer a greater variety of learning to students. Assessment data are regularly analysed and student performance is beginning to be tracked. The department needs to strengthen links between such analyses and curriculum planning and student learning. Monitoring of student progress by gender and ethnic group should be introduced and acted upon where appropriate. Differentiation within lessons should be further developed, especially for higher attaining students. Resources have improved in terms of the number and variety of texts but some practical equipment needs refurbishment and replacement.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The above average standards of attainment and good achievement at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4
- The good quality of teaching, which promotes learning by students
- The successful leadership and management of a strong department

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning
- The marking and correction policy

132. The results of teacher assessment in 2001 showed standards of attainment to be above the national average. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at the age of 14 is also above average. Students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, events and

personalities in the periods they are studying. All including those with special educational needs (SEN), can respond to simple historical questions and select information from a variety of pictorial and written resources. Students appreciate that history is based on evidence and most have a satisfactory understanding of the meaning of bias. The majority of students have at least satisfactory reading, writing and oral skills. Higher attaining students are writing at length in response to the increasingly sophisticated questions presented by their teachers.

133. Following a pattern established over the past decade, in the past three years GCSE examination results in history have been significantly above the national average. In terms of relative performance, the results are consistently among the best in the school. In 2001, students performed well above the national average. Boys did particularly well that year, outperforming the girls in the modern world history examination. The results in this GCSE examination were the "best ever" for the department, with nearly half of the students entered achieving an A* or A grade.
134. By Year 11, attainment is well above the national average. Students are more assured when organising and using historical facts in writing and discussion, and when deploying historical terms. The majority of students show skill in identifying trends and synthesising historical information. They are able to produce well-substantiated arguments and to challenge historical interpretations. Lower attaining students can draw simple conclusions when examining evidence and are able to use sources to support limited narratives. Extension exercises stretch the skills of the more able students.
135. Students respect their teachers and behave well in lessons. When prompted they engage fully in group and class discussions. Most students sustain their concentration during lessons, listen attentively and work with interest. Many become independent learners by Key Stage 4.
136. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language make good progress because of well focused teaching of basic skills and the quality of teacher intervention. The department works in close cooperation with the learning support staff and teachers produce carefully designed teaching materials for students with special needs. Lessons are fully inclusive. Differentiated activities, which are a feature of class and homework, enable weaker students to access and interpret information. For students of all abilities, progress in relation to prior attainment is good. By continuous assessment of student progress, teachers acquire the knowledge which allows them to pitch teaching to match individual requirements.
137. The quality of teaching seen was good. In both key stages, some very good lessons were observed leading to clear gains in learning. Without exception, lessons were very well planned and paced, and student tasks were appropriate and well focused. Lesson objectives were clearly outlined, and at Key Stage 4 linked to examination requirements. Knowledge and skills were systematically consolidated. Substantial effort goes into the reinforcement of literacy skills, specifically by means of language building, for example using writing tasks which may include scaffolding and glossaries. Numeracy skills are also incorporated into history teaching.
138. All teachers are confident in their possession of a high level of subject knowledge. By challenging students appropriately, for example through skilful questioning, they are able to encourage full and meaningful participation in class, together with the development of higher order thinking skills. Much is done to help students to extend their knowledge, and to share different ideas and viewpoints. Effective use is made of plenary sessions to enable students to consolidate their understanding and to confirm progress. Topics of study are carefully chosen to reflect the ethnic diversity of the classroom and to help students to understand their role as citizens in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society. Good staff-student relationships contribute to an excellent level of classroom control. Students have positive attitudes towards history.
139. The head of department provides strong leadership and management. Clear objectives and policies underpin a firm commitment to sustain and raise standards. Levels of cooperation are good as teachers work hard and aim to share good practice. Resources are effectively deployed to stimulate and enhance learning, as was seen in Year 9, where video clips of the recruitment campaign at the outset of World War One were used to help understanding. Teachers produce high quality and varied teaching materials for classroom use. Lessons successfully incorporate a diversity of learning strategies, styles and activities that promote high expectations of achievement. Appropriate schemes of work are in place.

140. There has been an upward trend in performance levels at GCSE and in attainment at Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. Continuous advances are being made in respect of the good quality of teaching, learning and departmental management recorded in the last inspection.
141. Record keeping and assessment practices are clearly defined. Regular homework is set, but opportunities are lost to enhance student attainment as marking, though constructive in tone, is shallow in content. In the same way, more could be done to improve literacy skills through the correction of spelling mistakes, grammar and sentence construction. A positive praise culture is used to advantage. Students take pride in their written work, which is frequently well presented.
142. Displays in the history classrooms are of a high standard, and designed to celebrate student achievement. An interesting programme of external visits serves to enhance the curriculum and increase cultural awareness. With improved access to ICT, further steps could be taken to stimulate learning especially for the less able students. Due to current pressures on a limited number of computers and the lack of dedicated workstations in the history teaching rooms, the subject provides few opportunities to develop ICT skills.
143. The department maintains a high profile in the school and contributes to cultural and social education. Moral issues are also addressed through the history curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Strengths

- Attainment in GCSE examinations in ICT
- Teaching and learning on ICT examination courses
- The provision of ICT lessons for all students in Years 8 and 9

Areas for improvement

- Increase the number of computers to meet the demands of the curriculum
- Continue to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum
- Update obsolete resources for measuring and recording in science

144. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards in the GCSE examination in ICT are very good. In both the full and short GCSE examination courses in 2001, the percentage of A*-C grades was well above the national average. Girls obtained a higher percentage of A*-C grades than boys in both courses. A*-G grades were in line with the national average.
145. The teacher assessments in 2001 showed that standards by age 14 are improving and are above the national and borough averages. Girls' attainment was better than that of boys, and the gap has widened over recent years. In work seen during the inspection, standards are in line with expectations by age 14. All students have a timetabled ICT lesson each week, and generally make good progress during Years 8 and 9, often from a low level of ICT capability at the beginning of Year 8. In a Year 8 lesson students used a number of basic formulae in a spreadsheet, sections of which were copied into a word-processed, correctly set out, business letter to a prospective customer. In examples of work seen and in ICT lessons in Years 10 and 11 attainment was good; some examination coursework was very good. In a Year 11 class, complex and well-presented spreadsheet models were being constructed for specific clients. Some other Year 11 students were working in groups to create a whole class presentation using a range of software. About two-thirds of all students take an examination course in ICT; the remainder rely upon the use of ICT by subject departments. The use of ICT is limited in some subjects, and consequently there are variations in the achievement and in the opportunities to develop ICT skills for this minority in Years 10 and 11.
146. Students' attitudes in ICT lessons were generally good in Years 8 and 9 although in some Year 9 classes some students found it difficult to maintain appropriate levels of concentration throughout lessons. In examination classes, students were attentive and responsive. They were able to discuss their work in detail and the majority were very committed to achieving a high standard in their coursework. Supervised ICT facilities are used well outside lesson times in the morning, at lunchtime and after school, by students in all years but particularly for examination coursework in a range of subjects.
147. The teaching of discrete ICT lessons in Years 8 and 9 was satisfactory overall and some very good teaching was seen. In the majority of lessons a brisk pace was maintained, activities were challenging and students made good progress. Resources produced by teachers were good and activities were set up in advance on the computer network. During the inspection, one instance of inappropriate classroom management, resulting in unsatisfactory teaching and poor learning, was observed. In examination classes in Years 10 and 11, most teaching was very good and students made very good progress, which is reflected in examination results. Planning is very detailed and supported with well-produced materials. Activities are challenging, enabling students to develop higher-level skills, particularly in the use of spreadsheets and databases. Coursework is presented to a high standard, demonstrating good word-processing and desktop publishing skills. Teachers make effective use of the three LCD projectors in the main ICT rooms in all years. In a Year 8 class observed, more able students were encouraged to demonstrate their spreadsheets to the rest of the class and answer questions about the use of formulae which they had used. Students with special needs were well integrated into lessons in all years and received good, effective help from support staff, class teachers and other students. In all years appropriate attention is given to improving literacy and numeracy. The department has a policy, and is working hard in an attempt to narrow the attainment gap between boys and girls in examination courses.

148. The ICT department is managed well and all courses are co-ordinated effectively. Results are analysed in detail and used to inform planning. Intermediate GNVQ ICT has replaced the full GCSE examination course this year. This is the only vocational course offered by the school and it is being monitored very closely. The curriculum has been mapped for ICT use by subject departments but ICT rooms are used for a high proportion of the time for timetabled ICT lessons and consequently there is limited time remaining for cross-curricular work. Despite the mapping, there is significant variation among departments. The music department makes very good use of available ICT but some computers are old with limited capabilities and students often have to share. A number of departments have recently installed clusters of new machines and the learning resource centre is now well equipped and used well. However, the number of computers needs to be brought closer to the average for a school of this size, to enable all subjects and the learning development department, to use ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Obsolete ICT resources for measuring and recording in science need to be replaced. Teachers make effective use of the projection facilities in the main ICT rooms but one of these rooms does not have blinds which results in the sun shining upon computer monitors and sometimes prevents projection facilities from being used. In addition, leaks in the roof of this room prevent the use of several machines when it is raining. Most teachers have recently undergone additional ICT training provided by the "New Opportunities Fund" and are keen to move forward with ICT.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Standards in writing skills, particularly for students at the age of 16
- The quality of teaching particularly for examination classes

Areas for improvement

- Progress of high attainers in Years 8 and 9
- The standard of speaking skills

149. Standards in Years 8 and 9 are below national expectations. The standards of students entering the school in Year 8 are well below expectations but by the time they reach the end of Year 9, they make good progress overall. Progress is good for middle and low attainers, students with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language who are well supported by teachers. However, progress is unsatisfactory for high attainers. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show standards to be above national expectations but this was not reflected in the standards of work seen during the inspection. Of the four main skills students make the best progress in writing. Students learn to write accurately from the beginning of Year 8. In Year 9 they learn to draft and re-draft their written work. The result is that middle and low attainers are able to produce extended writing with few mistakes. High attainers, however, do not develop the mastery of grammar which allows them to use language creatively. They have not developed, for example, the mastery of the three main tenses to the extent that one would expect by this stage of Year 9. Students have good pronunciation but do not get enough practice in speaking to develop oral confidence.

150. Standards at the end of Year 11 are in line with national expectations and all students make good progress in Years 10 and 11. In GCSE examinations, in 2001, results for students gaining A*-C were above national averages in French but well below in German. Results in both languages were broadly in line with national expectations for students gaining A*-G. In general, students' performance in modern foreign languages was not as good as in other subjects in the school. However, the fact that the school enters a higher proportion of its students for GCSE examinations than is the case nationally means that only a small minority of students fail to achieve a qualification in a modern foreign language. Results in French have improved steadily, though not consistently, since the last inspection while results in German have remained at the same level. Girls continue to perform better than boys.

151. Standards of work seen reflect the results of the GCSE examinations. Students continue to develop good writing skills. High attaining students produce coursework that is accurate, use a

good variety of tenses, a good range of vocabulary and suitably complex grammatical structures. Middle and low attainers continue to produce accurate work that contains a suitable range of vocabulary. Listening skills are good but the standard of speaking is below expectations. In speaking exercises students rely too much on written prompts. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection.

152. The quality of teaching is good overall and this represents improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 8 and 9. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the target language well in lessons. This allows students to improve their listening skills. Homework is set regularly and always builds on work done in the lesson, allowing students to practise and develop writing skills. Relationships between teachers and students are good. In many lessons, the supportive attitude of the teacher enables students to make a full contribution to the lesson without fear of failure. In most lessons planning is good. Lessons always begin with the thorough practice of new vocabulary which is always done in a lively way so that students concentrate well. New vocabulary is then used to practise skills. Equal value is given to listening, reading and writing, although speaking needs more emphasis. However, teachers rarely share lesson objectives with students and do not review progress at the end, so that students are often not clear what progress they have made. In the best lessons teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of all students. In German lessons in Year 11, teachers were able to set challenging listening tasks to students of all abilities by a careful choice of texts and the use of good support material. However, in other lessons, particularly in Years 8 and 9, the level of work does not extend high attaining students.
153. Marking of students' work is thorough, follows departmental and school guidelines and often motivates students well. Teachers regularly assess and record students' progress against National Curriculum levels and GCSE examination criteria. However in Years 8 and 9 teachers do not have a consistent understanding of national curriculum levels. Consequently, they are not in a position to help students progress from one level to the next by showing them how to improve the quality of their work. When teachers create a supportive atmosphere in lessons students show great enthusiasm. They invariably have a positive attitude, concentrate well, have good self-discipline and are supportive of each other. They use ICT skills to draft and re-draft written work but the development of these skills is not yet integrated into the work of the department.
154. The department is well led and managed. Teachers share a common vision and show a strong commitment to improve. Departmental documentation is clear and helpful. Schemes of work have recently been revised to emphasise the development of skills but guidance is too general to help the department achieve consistency. They do not indicate clearly how the needs of all students are to be met and common tasks are not identified. These need to be related to National Curriculum levels to ensure continuity and progression. The annual review of teaching and the work of the department by senior managers and the head of department is thorough but no effective monitoring takes place in the interim. Departmental development planning is still not an effective tool for improvement.
155. Curriculum provision in Years 8 and 9 is very good. All students have the opportunity to study both French and German. Gujarati is offered in Year 9. Standards of attainment on entry in Year 8 are well below expectation and this issue needs to be addressed as a priority if standards are to be raised further.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good with some very good features**.

Strengths

- Standards are above average at Key Stage 3 and well above at Key Stage 4. Students' achievement and progress are good at both key stages and numbers opting for music are increasing
- Teachers know their subject very well, have a very good understanding of their students' needs and they create a good learning environment in which all can make progress
- The curriculum focuses on a wide variety of musical styles from around the world, values all cultures equally, promotes understanding and is very well suited to this multi-cultural school. This work is well supported by a wide range of instrumental lessons and extra-curricular groups

Areas for improvement

- The need to address the non-specialist accommodation and limited curriculum time as indicated at the time of the previous inspection

156. Standards at Key Stage 3 are above average and achievement is good. Students perform on keyboards demonstrating some facility and technique in their fingering skills and they can play with both hands. They play melodies and form chords. In class ensembles they can maintain different syncopated cross rhythms in groups, with higher attainers playing individual parts. They also improvise patterns and answering patterns in the appropriate style. Students understand the different characteristics of musical styles and use correct musical terminology to describe them. Students have some limited opportunities to develop skills in using music technology. They can layer in separate musical lines and combine them to play back. Students of all levels of ability make good progress in lessons and across the key stage.
157. Performance in the 2001 GCSE examinations was well above the national average particularly the proportion of students securing high grades. At Key Stage 4 standards are well above average and have risen steadily since the last inspection. All students make good progress. Performance standards are good overall and some very good performances were heard in a variety of styles. In the best compositions students demonstrate very good understanding of their chosen styles and maintain these well throughout the work. They understand structure and varied texture, using them to maintain interest and shape. Use of melody, harmony and rhythm is very good. The work of lower attainers has ideas that are less well developed and shorter structures but knowledge of melody, harmony and rhythm is sound. Students make good use of music technology to realise their compositions and demonstrate skill in their control of the editing functions. Students can analyse music accurately and describe the musical elements correctly. Standards have risen since the last inspection.
158. All teaching observed was good or better and compensated for the relatively poor facilities. Some very good and excellent teaching was seen. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and of their individual students' needs including those with special educational and physical needs. This enables them to set appropriate tasks and challenges for all students and ensures that all make equally good progress. Well-planned lessons with varied tasks that are progressively more difficult are all linked to the area of study encouraging good understanding and maintaining interest throughout lessons. Tasks develop practical skills alongside knowledge and understanding. Clear explanations with good practical demonstrations ensure students understand their tasks and all levels of ability are well supported in individual and group work. In the best lessons positive appraisal by both peers and teachers means that students know how to improve their work and they are encouraged to take control of their own learning. Teachers use well directed questioning to check prior knowledge and to include everyone. All responses are valued. Occasionally, more questioning is needed to ensure new learning is consolidated. In a few lessons, a small minority of students indulged in intermittent background chatter but most students enjoy their lessons and work enthusiastically in a very good learning environment created by patient, lively teaching. Relationships are very good between students and teachers and students also work very well together.
159. Instrumental lessons are offered in a variety of instruments including brass, harmonium, keyboard, steel pans, tabla, violin, voice and woodwind and students make good progress in these lessons.
160. The department is very well led. Schemes of work and assessment procedures are thorough and there is a clear understanding of the role that music can play in both the school and the local community. Many extra-curricular activities are offered in a variety of musical styles. Resources are well deployed and the department makes good use of music technology to support practical skills, particularly for composing. Technology resources are limited, though, and more sequencers are needed to effectively develop composing skills at both key stages.
161. The previous report criticised the non-specialist teaching room for music and the limited curriculum time for teaching music at Key Stage 3. Both issues still need to be addressed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good standards of teaching and learning overall in Key Stage 4
- The very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships
- Good departmental leadership and subject documentation

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for independent learning
- Ensuring a clear link between skills introduced in the lesson and activities provided to apply them
- Making more use of new technology

162. Teacher assessments in the most recent year, for students at the age of 14, show that the overall standards are below the national average. During the inspection standards observed were variable and, overall, are slightly below the expectation. In just over half of the lessons observed standards were in line with the national expectation for students aged 14, but in the remaining lessons standards of achievement were below the expected level. The department considers that the skills of students entering the school at the age of 12 are below the levels expected. Attainment in gymnastics in Year 8 is above average with more able students able to hold balances, including handstands, and perform rotational movements on apparatus with control. They devise and refine their own sequences and can observe and contribute to the improvement of others. More able boys perform advanced dribbling skills in basketball but skills of passing are below the expected standard in Year 8 rugby lessons. The standards in girls' gymnastics in Year 9 are below average. When students are asked to perform balances with linking movements their control is not well developed and ideas are not adventurous or varied. There is no difference in the overall attainment of boys and girls or of different ethnic groups. Students with special educational needs make good progress and those with physical impairment are keenly involved as much as possible.
163. In 2001 the percentage of students achieving A*-C grades in the GCSE examination was well below the national average overall. These results were greatly affected by the girls' results which were significantly below the national average and thought by the school to reflect a poor cohort. Boys' attainment was slightly below the national average overall but the proportion achieving the higher grades A*-B was higher than the national average. In 2001, many boys who took the GCSE examination achieved a significantly higher grade in physical education than in the other examinations that they took. Standards in GCSE examination lessons are mainly good. In table tennis the more able play shots with control using spin and variations in speed and direction to outwit their partner. In Year 10 GCSE examination theory lessons the more able have good knowledge of the components of healthy diets and the effect that diet and exercise have on health. In Year 11 theory lessons they understand issues about amateur and professional status in sport. However, the students are given insufficient opportunity to work independently in theory lessons.
164. By the age of 16 the majority of students achieve at the expected level. More able boys show good skills in basketball. In weight training lessons students can observe and analyse techniques and offer suggestions for improvement. Attainment overall in mixed gender basketball core activities is unsatisfactory. Awareness of tactics, strategies and positional play are not well developed and passing and shooting skills are unsatisfactory. The time allocation for core physical education at Key Stage 4 is insufficient to develop the programmes of study in depth.
165. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and in almost half of the lessons observed it was good. In a third of lessons at Key Stage 3 teaching was good and in Key Stage 4 two lessons out of three were good, especially in GCSE examination classes.
166. Lessons are planned well by teachers who are all specialists with good subject knowledge. They all have high expectations for behaviour and performance and give clear instructions and explanations which enable students to know what to do to improve. In good lessons students are given responsibility to devise their own sequences and compose their own dances in pairs and groups, as seen in Year 8 gymnastics. When given opportunity students can evaluate their own and others' work and suggest ways to improve. They observe work in Year 8 gymnastics and dance, in Year 9 trampolining and in Year 11 volleyball and suggest ways to improve. In a minority of games lessons initial activities do not lead into games which enable students to apply

those skills very effectively. All lessons start with a warm-up activity but there is little opportunity for students to gain further knowledge and understanding of the influence of different types of activity on fitness and health. During the inspection there was no use of new technology.

167. Relationships are good and students work well together always showing good attitudes and behaviour. They are enthusiastic, interested and remain on task throughout showing good physical effort. They abide by rules and do not question any decisions made by referees in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
168. The department is mainly experienced and is led well. Documentation is very good with policies and procedures clearly identified. Schemes of work are well developed to support teaching and learning. Systems for assessing the progress of students are comprehensive and enable teachers to plan effectively and to make valid judgements about achievement. The quality of teaching is monitored, often using team teaching strategies, and there are opportunities for staff to gain further expertise through courses, especially in trampolining and ICT.
169. There are two gymnasias which are in reasonable condition and the department also has use of the main school hall for trampolining, dance and some minor games activities. Outdoor facilities are limited to extensive tennis/netball courts and one small playing field. There are many opportunities for extra-curricular activities which are accessible to all students. Individuals and teams have had success in local and regional competitions. The girls' football team are Middlesex champions, junior and senior trampoline teams are Harrow champions and the school achieved second place in borough athletics. One of the boys is a national petanque player.
170. Improvements since the last inspection include improved teaching, behaviour and concentration but attainment at Key Stage 3 is still below the standard expected.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory** as statutory requirements are not met at Key Stage 4. However, the limited provision is of **good** quality in itself.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning
- Leadership and management of the department
- Shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed

Areas for improvement

- Compliance with the statutory requirement to follow the LEA Agreed Syllabus

171. Observation of lessons and analysis of work show that students, including those with special needs, make good progress in Years 8 and 9 and that attainment is above expectation. Nearly all students are approaching the standard expected by the end of Year 9 and many are close to the first levels of GCSE. In their work on Islam and Hinduism students show their knowledge and understanding. They explain how practice of salat impacts on the lives of Muslims and how Hindu belief is expressed in a variety of forms. They begin to evaluate religion in relation to people's emotions, to ultimate questions and to contemporary issues.
172. In Years 10 and 11 some students follow the GCSE religious studies examination course and others follow the GCSE short course. In both courses students are on the way to achieving grades in line with the national average. The distribution of students who give only fragmentary or basic answers and those who give developed or fully coherent answers matches the distribution found nationally. Most students however, neither follow a GCSE course nor work at GCSE level. Therefore, the vast majority of students do not achieve the knowledge, understanding and skills expected by the end of Year 11. Their progress and attainment are well below expectation.
173. Results in the GCSE examination in religious studies in 2001, for all students entered, were well below the national average and well below what they achieved in other subjects. Boys' results were at the national average but below what they achieved in other subjects. Results previous to 2001 are not available and there is therefore no evidence of a trend. Students will be entered for the GCSE short course for the first time in 2002.

174. Low attainment in Year 11 is not the result of weaknesses in the department. Throughout the school teaching and learning are very good. Students make rapid progress in the development of the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing because teachers plan these aspects into the structure of their lessons. Teachers manage their classes exceptionally well and this motivates students to show keen interest and to give sustained attention. The excellent use of time and resources in lessons promotes maximum learning. Students gain confidence in the correct use of technical terms because of their teachers' specialist knowledge. They benefit too from the repeated and sharp focus on learning outcomes. They use ICT as both a resource for learning and a means of presenting information. Students with special educational needs are helped by extra attention and the skilful use of learning aids, such as writing frames. In most lessons the activities meet the needs of all students but in some lessons higher attaining students could move more quickly to more demanding work. An example of this was when all students drew a storyboard of a miracle of Jesus when some might have more usefully gone directly to the subsequent more demanding task. Formative assessment, with individual levels and targets, could be used more effectively to increase students' awareness of their progress in learning.
175. Students are very positive in attitude and their behaviour in lessons is very good. They show a strong interest in religion, are keen to learn and are mature and responsible in relation to their teachers and to each other. Such a good response is an acknowledgement by students that they value religious education and its contribution to their personal development. In Years 8 and 9 religious education not only informs students about religion but also introduces them to deeper aspects of themselves. In Years 10 and 11 students remain very positive despite the school's poor provision.
176. The curriculum for students in Years 8 and 9 is good. It is broad, balanced, relevant and in accordance with the agreed syllabus. The amount of time is below the minimum specified but the very good teaching overcomes this. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is unfavourable to students because religious education is not taught as a subject. Religious education contributes three units to the 'Society and the Individual' programme but the amount of time allocated is far below the minimum required. Lack of continuity and absence of homework exacerbate the shortage of time.
177. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The present head of department has improved the handbook, the schemes of work and the assessment procedures. Teachers measure each student's attainment at the end of Year 9 and preparations are underway to introduce baseline assessment in Year 8. Teachers will then be able to judge students' progress and use formative assessment for individual tracking and target setting. These planned improvements, and the others in the development plan, show a department at the forefront of developments in religious education.
178. The subject benefits from very good leadership and management and a very clear sense of direction. The aims and policies of the school are fully reflected in the work of the department and its commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed are excellent. The match between the qualifications and experience of the specialist teachers and the needs of the curriculum is exceptionally good. The accommodation and learning resources, and their use, are also very good. New technology is used as effectively as possible given the limited level of access.
179. The school's priority for religious education is low. The previous report indicated that the school failed to meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11. Despite a new agreed syllabus, it is still failing to provide students with their educational entitlement. The locally agreed syllabus, of statutory authority for religious education, requires as a minimum that the GCSE short course be taught to students in Years 10 and 11 with a time allocation of one hour per week. Compliance is a legal obligation but it would also strengthen the school's claim to welcome and affirm the culture, belief and experience of all its students. Consequently, at present the school's provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.